

fact that the membership of the Committee was due to expire at the end of 1961. However, since no report had been prepared, the Soviet Union at first objected to consideration of this item by the First Committee of the General Assembly. A number of countries, including Canada, immediately took the initiative in organizing a first, purely procedural, meeting of the Outer Space Committee, without accepting the Soviet argument that the item could not be taken up in the absence of a report. The meeting of the Outer Space Committee on November 26 did greatly facilitate the later discussions in the First Committee.

Renewed negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union produced agreement on the choice of officers for the Outer Space Committee. Sufficient agreement between them was also reached on the working methods of the Committee when the Soviet Union at long last gave up its insistence on formal recognition that the rule of unanimity should apply in that body. For their part United States, Canada and the majority of the other members of the Outer Space Committee, which had opposed the Soviet view, were prepared to accept that the Chairman would in his opening statement emphasize his intention to try to reach decisions without the necessity of formal voting.

In the meantime, the United States, Canadian and other interested delegations had prepared a far-reaching draft resolution which was tabled on December 2, 1962 with the sponsorship of Australia, Canada, Italy and the United States. After discussions and amendment in the First Committee, the draft eventually attracted the co-sponsorship of the 24 original members of the Outer Space Committee and was approved by the General Assembly as resolution 1721 on December 20, 1961.

This important decision enunciated for the first time two significant principles of the law applicable to outer space. First it was recognized that international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, applied in outer space. Second, it was affirmed that outer space is free for exploration and use by all states and that no part of it could be subject to national appropriation. The resolution also recognized that the United Nations is the focal point of world interest in the peaceful uses of outer space. In this context it requested the Outer Space Committee and the Secretary-General to maintain a registry of data on all launchings of objects into orbit or beyond. At the same time, the World Meteorological Organization and other Specialized Agencies were invited to collaborate in preparing a broad new programme for the use of satellites for meteorological research and forecasting. Similarly, it encouraged the International Telecommunication Union to foster international co-operation in regard to the use of satellites for communications purposes. Finally, resolution 1721 reaffirmed the original terms of reference of the Outer Space Committee as expressed in resolution 1472 and reappointed the original 24 members with four additional new members, Outer Mongolia, Morocco, Chad and Sierra Leone.