

For the coming period, the Committee's original mandate, amplified by any decisions we may now take, should continue to provide a useful framework for fruitful work. Within the broad area of international co-operation the Committee would be expected to foster research and to encourage mutual exchange of scientific and technical information. It would also be a helpful step forward in this regard if there were a means of recording, and eventually distributing, information supplied by states on the wide variety of their space ventures. There is much that can be done in the meteorological and telecommunications fields in respect of which the Committee might be able to play a worthwhile part. Furthermore, we would hope that the Committee would now be able to lay the groundwork for a successful international conference which could in turn greatly contribute to the exchange of the experience of all states in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The scientific and technical matters to which I have referred are among the important questions on which early progress towards international co-operation could be achieved. However, in the view of my delegation, the legal aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space provide the United Nations with the opportunity to play an even more significant role, especially in the long term. Certainly it is imperative that the world community recognize that international law, including the provisions of the Charter, applies to all of mankind's activities in outer space. It is also equally essential that there should be universal acceptance that outer space is free for peaceful exploration and use by all states whatever their strength or size, and that no nation or group of nations can lay claim to appropriate outer space or any planet or celestial body it contains. I do not think any country would dispute that this is now the case. Indeed, the public statements of Mr. Khrushchev and President Kennedy on these matters have encouraged my delegation to hope that there will be no opposition to these principles. Nonetheless, to record these principles in a United Nations resolution would be to take an immediate, significant and non-controversial step towards the orderly development of man's activities in outer space. That is, of course, our essential objective.

My delegation is aware that there will be no little difficulty in working out the details for the practical application of these principles to the peaceful uses of outer space by man. These and other matters of a legal nature, including the question of legal liability for damages which might be occasioned by outer space activities, merit early and thorough consideration in the Outer Space Committee. Considerable scientific and legal study will be required before even the lower boundary of outer space can be defined with a desirable degree of precision. The Outer Space Committee can also make a contribution to this important task in consultation with ICAO and other international bodies. However, even in the absence of precise definitions of this sort, it is still as possible as it is desirable to make substantial progress on the exhaustive studies which must precede the formulation of detailed rules specifically applicable to the peaceful use of outer space.