

in the peaceful uses of outer space. It also contains, in the sections dealing with the work of its technical and legal sub-committee, a broad indication of the problems of a scientific, technical, regulatory and legal nature which face mankind as it penetrates outer space, with some suggestions for possible approaches to the solution of these problems.

My Delegation considers that this report, which was adopted unanimously, is a very useful document, and we fully endorse the observations and tentative conclusions contained in it. We think that all concerned with its preparation are to be commended. They include the scientists and legal advisers to delegations, members of the Secretariat and above all the committee's distinguished chairman, Ambassador Matsudaira of Japan, as well as the other officers, Professor Ambrosini of Italy, who was chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, Doctor Rose of my own country, who was chairman of the Technical Sub-Committee, and Ambassador Nisot of Belgium, the committee's rapporteur.

The pace of developments in the exploration of outer space has been so rapid that conclusions arrived at even as recently as six months ago, however tentatively they may have been expressed, may no longer be completely valid. Indeed, this possibility finds recognition in one of the general conclusions set out on page 60 of Document A/4141 where it is stated, and I quote, "Progress, plans and needs in connection with the peaceful uses of outer space should be reviewed again by the United Nations in about one year".

If such an early review is required on the organizational side with respect to the scientific and technological aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space, it is even more necessary, in the view of my Delegation, in respect of legal problems. In the course of any review of the legal problems, we consider that early consideration should be given to the whole range of problems relating to sovereignty in outer space. We are in complete agreement with the view expressed in paragraph 7 on page 63 of Document A/4141 that a comprehensive codification of space law is not practicable or desirable at the present stage of knowledge and development. However, we are also in agreement with the recognition given by the *ad hoc* committee to the need both to take timely constructive action and to make the law of space responsive to the facts of space.

In view of the physical penetration by man of the space beyond the earth's atmosphere and even beyond the earth's field of gravitation, my Delegation considers that one of the questions which the new committee should consider as a matter of priority is the formulation of a rule, and the means to gain universal acceptance of that rule, that no part of space or of any celestial body may be appropriated by or be subjected to the jurisdiction of any state. Perhaps this result could be achieved by the adoption by the General Assembly, on the advice of its Outer Space Committee, of a suitably-phrased declaration establishing this principle. Failure to take some such measure now to prevent the acquisition of legal rights in outer space may very well prejudice the ability of the community of nations later to devise equitable and wise rules to reflect the common interest and rights of all mankind in the utilization of space.