

(c) Direct Broadcast Satellites (DBS)

A joint Canada/Sweden initiative led to the creation in 1968 of the Outer Space Committee's Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites, to examine the technological, social, cultural, political and legal implications of DBS. Canada and Sweden have jointly prepared detailed working papers in advance of each of five sessions of the Working Group and are recognized as being among the main proponents of guiding legal principles to govern future use of this technology.

At its fourth session in June, 1973, the Working Group considered a joint Canada/Sweden working paper which contained a draft of those principles designed to establish a realistic and responsible balance between the protection of a state's sovereign rights, and the facilitation of the important new technology, with obvious benefits for all countries. A draft convention tabled by the U.S.S.R. in the General Assembly in 1972 is thought by many countries to place too much emphasis on the former at the expense of the latter.

At its 1973 session, the General Assembly recommended that the Working Group should meet for a fifth session to continue its multi-disciplinary examination of the subject, with a view to making specific recommendations to the Legal Sub-Committee on the elaboration of appropriate principles.

The fifth session of the Working Group was held in Geneva in March 1974 and conducted a valuable comparative analysis of the principles which, by that time, had been proposed by the U.S.S.R., Argentina, U.S.A., and, of course, by Canada and Sweden.

The Legal Sub-Committee was able to draft preliminary texts of five less contentious principles covering applicability of international law, rights and benefits of states, international cooperation, State responsibility and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Agreement on the more difficult and fundamental principles pertaining to prior consent, the right of participation