

(Mr. Kalooshin, Byelorussian SSR)

It cannot be doubted that the conclusion of such a treaty on the moon is an absolute necessity and must timely, as it is based on the interests of all States, concerning as it does the whole international community and our common future. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR supports the initiative for the elaboration and conclusion of an international treaty on the moon and endorses the proposal that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee consider, as a matter of priority, the question of working out and preparing such a draft treaty.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR is happy to note that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has made significant progress in the past year. The Legal Sub-Committee has prepared the text of a draft convention on liability for damages caused by the launching of objects into outer space. This represents the crowning achievement of the many efforts made in the Committee in that direction.

Being the result of a compromise among States with differing legal and social systems, the draft convention is fully acceptable. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR supports the draft convention and urges its approval by the General Assembly and its opening for signature of States at the earliest possible time.

The Byelorussian delegation would also like to say a few words about the conclusions and recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, especially as concerns the creation and functions of the Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites. We should like to emphasize that in the approach towards the use of space technology for study of the subsoil of the earth the utmost care is indicated. It is indispensable that every State has inalienable sovereignty over its resources and therefore has the exclusive right to dispose of information relating to those resources. Therefore, together with exploration of the technical aspects of the problem, legal principles must be worked out regulating the practical implementation of space technology in the remote sensing of the earth's resources on a broad international basis.

We must also note that since the United Nations is confronted with complex and difficult problems relating to the further strengthening of international co-operation in the exploration and exploitation of outer space

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for peaceful purposes and the further clarification and progressive development of space law, the need therefore arises for increasing the role and effectiveness of the activities of the various bodies in the United Nations dealing with these questions, so that they may, to the greatest degree possible, assist the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Sub-Committees in their work. We hope that practical measures will be taken in this direction as they become necessary.

To conclude, may I say that successful collaboration in the exploration and exploitation of outer space is possible only on the basis of genuine reciprocal understanding and confidence, leading into account the interests of all States.

Mr. THEODOROUKIS (Greece): In the first place, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation for the work performed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as a whole, and by its two Sub-Committees in particular.

My intervention at this stage will refer to only one aspect of the items under discussion; that is the draft convention on international liability for damages caused by space objects. I would like to say quite frankly that we feel disappointed on two counts: first, on the solution which the draft convention gives to the problem of the applicable law, in article XII, which, in our view, should be the *lex loci*; and second, on the non-binding character of the awards of the claims commission. We realize that the text as it stands before us is the result of long and difficult negotiation; we understand that it represents the best possible compromise within the Sub-Committee; we are aware that a convention is better than no convention. Nevertheless, we feel disappointed that in a field which should mark a pioneering new beginning in a virgin area of international law, we find a spirit less far-sighted and open-minded than we had the right to expect.