

AGENDA ITEMS 33 and 32 (continued)

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/8420; A/C.1/L.565, L.570 and L.572)

PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY CONCERNING THE MOON (A/8392 and Corr.1; A/C.1/L.568)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Mr. LABUDA (Czechoslovakia): The Czechoslovak delegation has studied the report submitted to us by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We note with gratification that the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has once again yielded concrete results. We approach with no less interest new problems which we know must be solved in the future. During this year's deliberations concerning the problems of international peaceful co-operation in outer space our attention is drawn primarily to the following two questions:

(Mr. Labuda, Czechoslovakia)

First, draft convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects adopted by the outer space Committee on 10 September 1972 and submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session (A/8420);

Second, draft treaty concerning the moon submitted by the Government of the USSR in connection with one of the questions which should be given priority in the opinion of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The deliberations in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space demonstrated already last year the possibility to conclude successfully in a relatively short period of time the draft of the liability convention.

Already at that time it seemed evident that the finishing phase of work on the text of the draft convention has to reside in finding appropriate legal formulations of several open problems in the search for a generally acceptable compromise. At the same time, the very results of last year's discussions demonstrated that the attempts existing at that time also at seeking the solution of remaining open problems of the draft liability convention in a majority ruling would throw doubt on the perspectives and viability of the draft convention under preparation.

That was the reason why my delegation could not have endorsed the position underlying the last year's General Assembly resolution concerning this problem. That is the very reason why my delegation -- interpreted in a generally acceptable convention -- welcomed the course of discussion during the session of the Legal Sub-Committee last June which opened the road towards a compromise solution. We believe that the liability convention negotiated this summer is, in given circumstances, a fair and reasonable achievement though it does not represent a perfect solution for my viewpoint.

The Czechoslovak delegation supports the draft convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects submitted by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and is ready to vote in favour of it -- as presented in document A/8420 -- at the plenary session of the General Assembly.