

(Mr. St. Pierre, Canada)

For these reasons, my delegation will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution which commends the Convention. My Government's decision on whether we shall eventually sign and ratify the Convention will depend upon our careful consideration of a number of factors, including our evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention taking into account the statements and interpretations made by other States. We are aware from paragraph 24 of the present report that, in addition to Canada, Iran, Japan and Sweden, many delegations would have preferred binding arbitration awards even though willing to support the Convention as being the best compromise achievable. Accordingly, my delegation wishes to propose that States consider making declarations, when they sign and ratify the Convention or even at a later date, such declaration being to accept as binding the decision of any Claims Commission appointed under the Convention vis-à-vis any other State which makes a reciprocal declaration. Such declarations should, of course, be communicated to the Depositary States and, through them, to all the States party to the Convention. By making such declarations, States will be able to express their faith in the efficacy of international arbitration and they will be able to do so, we suggest, without placing themselves under any disadvantage vis-à-vis other States which do not make similar declarations.

This afternoon my delegation will submit an amendment to incorporate in the draft resolution the procedure for making voluntary declarations. We believe that the inclusion of a specific provision within the Convention will encourage States to make declarations, and a series of such declarations will make the arbitration system more effective. My delegation has deliberately refrained from proposing any substantive amendment at this late stage in our considerations. We decided to propose an amendment providing for the making of declarations after concluding that such an amendment would be non-controversial and could be approved speedily. We regard the amendment as non-substantive because it will be completely within the discretion of any State whether or not to make a declaration, and by making a declaration no State would place itself under any disadvantage vis-à-vis other States which do not.

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● Another subject, as noted in paragraph 44 of the present report, Canada intends to submit a draft Convention on the registration of objects launched into space for consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee at its 1972 session. This will follow the paper which we submitted in April 1970 to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. An international system for the registration of objects will be of much assistance in determining the identity of parties who may be liable for damage caused by space objects. Moreover, such a system will be consistent with the general obligation, contained in article XI of the outer space Treaty, to inform the Secretary-General of the nature, conduct, locations and results of space activities. As described in paragraph 28 of the present report, some information is already being received from launching States in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 1921 B (XVI). Helpful information has also been provided by the Secretariat in its paper entitled "Information on the Technical Aspects of Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space". However, the time has come to go beyond the exploratory stage and to draft a treaty. Accordingly, my delegation considers that the General Assembly should be asked to endorse the outer space Committee's recommendation that the Legal Sub-Committee should assign a high priority to registration in its work next year -- and Canada pledges its full co-operation.

On the question of remote sensing of the earth by satellites, Canada welcomes the decision of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to establish a Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites. Canada participated in the Working Group's organizational meeting on 9 September. We intend to take an active part in the Working Group under the capable chairmanship of Mr. Franco Pavia of Italy. We believe we shall be able to make a contribution as a result of our experience with NASA in the joint ERSS experimental programme. We are now solidifying a ground station to read out data about Canadian terrain and we are building facilities for processing and interpretation of data. We began fairly extensive studies in 1969 and we have focused our national planning on a Canadian programme of remote sensing which includes satellites, aircraft and field investigations. While it may not be unique, we think our experience is relevant to the studies of the