Work of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and of Action Team 14 on NEOs

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Origin of NEO issue in UNISPACE III

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• The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, Resolution 1, para (1) (c)

(i) To improve the scientific knowledge of near and outer space by promoting cooperative activities in such areas as astronomy, space biology and medicine, space physics, the study of near-Earth objects and planetary exploration;

(iii) To improve the international coordination of activities related to near-Earth objects, harmonizing the efforts directed at identification, follow-up observations and orbit prediction, while at the same time giving consideration to developing a common strategy that would include future activities related to near-Earth objects.
Establishment of Action Teams

- Mechanism to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III
  - 2001 STSC, Working Group of the Whole, (A/AC.105/761, annex II, paras. 3-14)

- Establishment of the Action Teams
  - 2001 Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/56/20, paras 44 – 61)
  - Two types of recommendations
    
    (a) *Group 1*. Those recommendations which were considered by Member States as of highest priority as indicated by the results of the survey;

    (b) *Group 2*. Those recommendations for which there were States that had offered to be coordinators of action teams to implement recommendations.
Establishment of Action Teams

- Recommendations for which an offer to be leader of the activity had been received (A/56/20, para 55):

...
Establishment of Action Teams

• Setting the mandates of Action Teams
  – For all ATs - Assessment phase & Implementation phase

• Assessment phase - by open-ended action team consisting of interested countries:
  – (a) examination of the current status;
  – (b) definition of actions to be taken during the implementation phase;
  – (c) preparation of a possible work plan.

• Assessment phase result - important to identify IGOs & NGOS with a strong interest in contributing to and participating in the implementation of the recommendations.

• COPUOS agreed that Action Teams should actively consider NGOs that could be invited to participate
Relationships: AT-14, STSC, COPUOS

- AT-14 composed of government and non-government members
  - Works intersessionally
  - Prepares an interim report for STSC

- STSC considers NEOs item (70 Member States; Dec. 2010)
  - in Plenary
  - through its Working Group on NEOs

- COPUOS considers the report by STSC on NEOs and sets STSC a new mandate
  - Set a multi-year work plan for STSC (2009 – 2011)
Work of STSC 2009

- NEOs process under a work plan – 2009 to 2011
  - Work carried out by STSC (and its WG) & COPUOS
  - Intersessionally by AT-14

- **STSC** 2009 – reports by international organizations, regional bodies, Member States
  - Presentations by ASE, IAA, IAF
  - Presentations by Member States
  - Information on research by MS, int’l orgs & others (A/AC.105/926)
STSC Status as of Feb. 2009 (A/AC.105/933)

• STSC noted with satisfaction that ... international teams ... were currently searching for, investigating and cataloguing near-Earth objects ...

• STSC noted with satisfaction that ... institutions were investigating possibilities for mitigating threats by NEOs

• STSC noted that ... to mitigate such threats would require coordinated international efforts, as well as increased knowledge of the properties of near-Earth objects.

• STSC noted with satisfaction that the ASE PATM had prepared a report ...“Asteroid threats: a call for a global response”, (submitted to AT-14 in 2008).
Working Group on Near-Earth Objects

(2009) The Working Group considered:

(a) Reports submitted in response to the annual request for information on NEO activities and intersessional work;

(b) Review of policies and procedures related to the handling of the NEO threat at the international level and drafting of international procedures for handling the NEO threat;

(c) Activities undertaken within the framework of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 to raise awareness of the NEO threat;

WG agreement on intersessional work

• WG agreed - ASE report is a good basis to continue drafting by the WG, and seeking agreement on, international procedures for handling the NEO threat.

• Action Team - 14 held 4 meetings in February 2009 to discuss its interim report and the report “Asteroid threats: a call for a global response”. On the basis of those discussions, the AT - 14 prepared “Draft recommendations for near-Earth objects threat mitigation” (A/AC.105/C.1/2009/CRP.13), for consideration by the WG.
WG agreement on intersessional work

• WG agreed that AT - 14 should continue intersessional work, under the multi-year workplan, to further review and develop draft recommendations for the international response to the threat of NEO impacts, for consideration at the session of the Subcommittee, in 2010.

• The WG encouraged member States to participate in the intersessional work on NEOs.

• AT-14 met on the margins of COPUOS in 2009 to continue preparation of its interim report for the period 2009 – 2010
Work of AT-14 and WG at STSC 2010

• AT-14 prepared its interim report for the period 2009–2010, (A/AC.105/C.1/L.301) for the 2010 session of the STSC

• Interim report, L.301, contains as an annex the revised “Draft Recommendations for international response to the Near-Earth Object Impact Threat” that resulted from its intersessional work.

• AT – 14 and WG reviewed L.310 and those updates will be incorporated in the interim report of AT – 14 for 2010 – 2011.
Intersessional Work in 2010

- January, 2010: ASE, SWF and CRECTEALC organized a workshop in Mexico City on to examine and analyze the needed makeup of a near-Earth-object Information, Warning and Analysis Network (IAWN) – Executive summary submitted to AT – 14 in February 2010

- Report and Exec. Summary on “Legal aspects of NEO threat response and related institutional issues” - prepared by U. of Nebraska-Lincoln to examine key legal and institutional issues linked to potential future threats by NEOs - submitted to AT – 14 in February 2010

- Above Exec. Summaries considered by AT – 14 during 2010 COPUOS; will included in 2010 – 2011 interim report
Intersessional Work in 2010

• Workshop on a NEO Mission Planning and Operations Group (MPOG) - Executive summary to be submitted to AT – 14 in November 2010

• Conclusions and recommendations of Exec. Summary will be considered by AT – 14 for its 2010 – 2011 interim report
Thank you

Any questions?

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