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Citizen

# Other life in outer space

By WILLIAM OATIS

LIFE and even civilisations probably exist on other planets besides the earth, according to a scientific paper prepared for the United Nations.

The Paper, titled "Current and future state of space science," was prepared for the second UN conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, scheduled in Vienna from August 9-21, 1982.

The authors of a chapter on "The search for extraterrestrial intelligence" are 15 scientists from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Japan, Indonesia and India.

They noted that the two Viking spacecraft that the United States sent to Mars in 1976 found no sign of life, but they argue that life may exist somewhere else on Mars, considered the likeliest of the other planets in the solar system to have living things.

Extending their speculation through

the Milky Way galaxy and beyond, they added:

"It is likely that life has emerged on some planets of some stars elsewhere in the Galaxy and the universe, just as it has emerged on Earth. It is also likely that it would, in some cases, have passed through various stages of biological evolution to a state of intelligence."

Noting that some stars may be 20 billion years old, compared to our solar system's 4.5-billion years, they say "there could be extraterrestrial civilisations many millions of years older than civilisation on Earth."

They suggest the best way to search for any such civilisations is to listen in the microwave region of the radio spectrum for signals — "either those from beacons transmitting deliberately for the purpose of establishing communications, or those emitted by other civilisations for their own purposes."

The authors note that "some have worried that a message from an advanced society might make man lose

faith in his own civilisation" or have other negative consequences.

"But man is free to ignore an offensive extraterritorial message," they argue. "Man is under no obligation to reply."

"If man chooses not to respond, there is no way that the transmitting civilisation can determine that its message was received and understood on the distant planet Earth."

"By holding a conversation with another civilisation, succeeding generations of mankind may gain new scientific results. These could range from an understanding of the past and the future of the universe to physical theories of the fundamental particles of which the universe is made and to new biologies."

"Man might be able to converse with distant and venerable thinkers on the deepest values of conscious beings and their societies. Many may then become linked with a vast galactic network." Sapa-AP