

Statement by

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UNISPACE+50 – High-level Segment

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I thank UNOOSA and its Director, Simonetta Di Pippo, for inviting ESCAP to be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations. UNISPACE+50 is a momentous occasion for the space community and all those who depend on or benefit from the peaceful use of outer space.

Over the past two decades, ESCAP's Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (known as RESAP), has operated as a regional hub for harnessing the latest advances in innovative technologies, and enhancing space applications for disaster management and sustainable development.

Today the adoption of Agenda 2030 has offered the space community a unique opportunity to scale-up the use of space applications and derived geospatial information for accelerated SDG implementation across the region.

ESCAP's work on promoting regional cooperation in space applications has focused on following areas:

1. Through a combination of knowledge products, information sharing and institutional capacity development programmes we contribute to improved awareness, knowledge, and skills of end users at national as well as local government levels. For example, a set of Procedural Guidelines for National Disaster Management Authorities in ASEAN countries, were issued last year, in collaboration with UNOSAT, UN-SPIDER and the ASEAN AHA Center. Similarly, with the support of Japan and Indonesia, the ESCAP secretariat has assisted Pacific island countries in building national geospatial-portals as key components of multi-hazard early warning systems for extreme weather-related disasters.
2. Through the Regional Drought Mechanism, which mobilizes resources in space and GIS applications available in regional service nodes, we have contributed to resilience-building of a number of communities. The regional service nodes were established with the support of China, India and Thailand and they have provided customised tools for Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka.
3. ESCAP when requested, has facilitated the timely provision of near real-time satellite imagery to countries affected by severe disasters. On average, over 400 satellite imagery and damage maps are provided annually.

In implementing this work, cooperation and partnership with United Nations agencies at the global and regional levels has been an essential enabler.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Taking stock of the significant progress made by the region, over the past 20 years or so, where an ever-increasing number of countries are using space applications for sustainable development, significant gaps remain in terms of knowledge and information sharing, as well as the evolution of a common understanding for measurement, analysis and best practice norms.

With the completion of our five year Plan in 2017, ESCAP is working with member States to formulate a new Plan that is regional in focus and aligned with global frameworks. The objective is to enable space applications and geospatial information services to contribute to the fullest extent possible to SDG implementation

Based on the 6 thematic issues prioritised by member States in ESCAP's "Regional Roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda", a Drafting Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Thailand selected 48 among 169 SDG Targets, where space applications can significantly contribute, namely a) disaster risk reduction and resilience, b) climate change, c) management of natural resources, d) seamless connectivity, e) energy and f) social development. Implementation will be carried out over three-phases of roughly four years each, and action areas will focus on a) research and knowledge sharing; b) capacity building and technical support and c) regional norms and standards and the Intergovernmental platform. For that reason, the action plan under development goes by the name of "Space+".

On 10 October this year, at the region's Third Ministerial Conference ('Space+' Ministerial Conference), we expect Ministers to adopt of the Plan of Action (on Space Applications for Sustainable Development 2018 – 2030).

Excellencies, the Asia-Pacific region has a lot to gain from enhanced cooperation, as well as much to offer. I thank our member States as well as UN partners for the past, present as well as future support in the promotion of peaceful uses of outer space and sustainable development.

Thank you.