



INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations/Austria/European Space Agency Symposium on Space Applications for Sustainable Development to Support the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

“SPACE TOOLS FOR MONITORING AIR POLLUTION AND ENERGY USE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

12 – 15 September 2006, Graz, Austria

1. Introduction

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Government of Austria and the European Space Agency (ESA) are jointly organizing the second series of three consecutive symposia to promote activities to carry out the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The first symposium, in the current series of symposia, will address the benefits provided by space technologies for monitoring air pollution and energy production and use for sustainable development. Further symposia of the current series may explore the possibilities to develop and implement pilot projects in this area, and address the issues related to policy development in order to make operational the successful space applications for monitoring air pollution and energy use.

The Symposium will be hosted and co-sponsored by the Government of Austria (Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology), the State of Styria and the City of Graz. It will also be co-sponsored by ESA. This will be the thirteenth in a series of symposia organized through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in cooperation with these co-sponsors since 1994.

2. Background

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, more than one hundred Heads of States and Governments reaffirmed their strong commitment to the full implementation of Agenda 21, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. They also committed themselves to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

At the same time, the resolution entitled “Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration for Space and Human Development”,* which was adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), contains a strategy for enhancing the use of space science and technology to contribute to the solutions of major global issues. In particular, the Declaration notes the benefits and applications of space technologies in addressing the challenges to sustainable development, and the effectiveness of space instruments for dealing with the challenges posed by the pollution of the environment and depletion of natural resources.

The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration could support many of the actions called for in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. In particular, the existing space-based tools could contribute to and strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to measure, reduce and assess the impacts of air pollution. Space technology could provide tools for monitoring and managing energy supply and consumption by providing information on resource location and availability as well as by providing energy-saving spin-off technologies.

Recognizing the pressing need to achieve sustainable energy supply and consumption as well as the importance of combating air pollution, the United Nations included both issues for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission is an inter-governmental body set up in 1992 to consider the implementation of the recommendations on sustainable development made during major global conferences, such as the Earth Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The United Nations also established an inter-agency mechanism on energy, UN-Energy. The mechanism consists of agencies of the United Nations family and aims to ensure coherence in the UN system’s multi-disciplinary response to WSSD and to ensure the effective engagement of non-UN stakeholders in implementing WSSD energy-related decisions.

In 2002, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs organized a symposium in Stellenbosch, South Africa, immediately prior to WSSD to consider steps to carry out actions proposed for inclusion in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. That symposium recommended that pilot projects should be launched to demonstrate operational capabilities of space technologies to support sustainable development. In follow up to that recommendation, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, with the sponsorship of the Government of Austria and ESA, held a series of symposia from 2003 to 2005 to examine how such projects could be initiated, in particular in water resource management. Based on the positive experience of that series of symposia, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, with the support of the Government of Austria and ESA, is organizing the next series of symposia to consider how space applications could contribute to other areas addressed during WSSD, in particular air pollution monitoring and use of energy resources.

3. Objectives and Outcomes

The goal of the current series of three symposia, to be held from 2006 to 2008, is to promote the use of the demonstrated capabilities of space technology to support some of the actions called for in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. The specific objectives of the Symposium in 2006 are:

- (i) Promote and inform about the uses of the demonstrated capabilities of space technology to support the actions called for in the Plan of Implementation of WSSD related to monitoring air pollution and energy production and use;
- (ii) Examine what low-cost space-related technologies and informational resources are available for addressing air pollution and energy use;

* A/RES/54/68

- (iii) Examine what type and level of training is required, and for which target groups, in using space technologies for addressing air pollution and energy use and production;
- (iv) Examine the strategy for including space technology based tools and information in the decision-making process in monitoring air pollution and energy use;
- (v) Identify a functional partnership that could be established in order to promote the use of space technologies for monitoring air pollution and energy use and production, as well as recommend how such a partnership could be established through voluntary actions that could include Governments, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders;
- (vi) Enhance the participation of women in decision-making related to monitoring air pollution and energy use and production.

Having attended this symposium, the participants will gain:

- (i) understanding of capabilities of space technology in monitoring air pollution and energy use and production, as well as the strategies for including space technology based tools and information in the decision-making process in this area;
- (ii) knowledge of low-cost space-related technologies and informational resources for addressing air pollution and energy use, and knowledge of ways how to establish functional partnerships to promote the operational use of space technologies for monitoring air pollution and energy use and production; and
- (iii) understanding of international strategies to promote sustainable development, in particular with regard to air pollution monitoring and energy use and production.

4. Programme

The programme of the Symposium will include a series of technical presentations of successful applications of space technologies that provide cost-effective solutions or essential information for planning and implementing programmes or projects to enhance the monitoring of air pollution and energy use and production. The Symposium will feature presentations on the needs of end users engaged in monitoring air pollution and managing energy resources, that could be met through the use of space technology. The Symposium will also address the use of space technologies to combat air pollution, develop alternative sources of energy, locate possible sources of energy and monitor consumption of energy with a view to reaching a balance between energy consumption and air pollution. The programme will include sufficient time for discussions among participants to identify the priority areas where pilot projects should be launched and examine possible partnerships that could be established.

5. Dates and Location

The Symposium will be held in Graz, Austria, at the Space Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences **from 12 to 15 September 2006**. All selected and invited participants will receive an information package with details on board and lodging and other local arrangements.

6. Language of the Symposium

Applicants must have a good working knowledge of English, which will be the only language of the Symposium.

7. Qualifications for Participation in the Symposium

Applicants must be in managerial or decision-making positions within governmental or research institutions with responsibilities for carrying out programmes or projects in the areas of monitoring air pollution and energy use and production. Other applicants would work in space-related institutions or companies that carry out activities that could support programmes or projects related to such activities. Individuals who have started space application projects or outreach activities in their institutions and female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

Applicants are encouraged to become familiar with the WSSD Plan of Implementation and with the recommendations of UNISPACE III (see item 13 below). Selected applicants will be asked to become familiar with those recommendations prior to their arrival at Graz and to prepare some ideas on how to implement particular recommendations.

8. Deadline for Applications

A copy of the completed application form should be directly submitted to the Office for Outer Space Affairs:

Office for Outer Space Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
Vienna International Centre,
P.O. BOX 500
A - 1400 VIENNA - AUSTRIA
Fax: (+43-1) 26060-5830
E-mail: oosa@unvienna.org

The original application must be submitted through the office of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in the applicant's country. Applicants seeking financial assistance should ensure that their applications are received in Vienna **no later than 16 June 2006**. In view of a large number of individuals that are expected to express interest in participating in the Symposium with funding support by the co-sponsors, financial support will be considered on the basis of merit and on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications received at a later date will also be considered for invitation to participate, although it may be without funding support.

9. Selection of Participants

Participants will be selected by the co-sponsors of the Symposium on a competitive basis from those who meet the qualifications indicated in section 7 above. The selection will be based on the information provided in the application form. Selected participants will be notified in due course.

10. Financial Arrangements

Within the limited funds available to the co-sponsors, a number of selected participants from developing countries and countries with economies in transition will be offered financial support to attend the Symposium. Funded participants will be provided with a round-trip air ticket between their international airports of departure and Graz, Austria, and daily subsistence allowances to cover board and lodging for the duration of the Symposium. Any cost associated with en-route expenses or any changes made to the air ticket must be borne by the participants.

Due to the limited availability of financial support, participants and their nominating organizations are strongly encouraged to find additional sources of sponsorship to allow them to attend the Symposium. In the past, nominating organizations have often provided for air-travel of participants while the co-sponsors of the Symposium covered all other expenses.

11. Life and Health Insurance

The co-sponsors will not assume any responsibility for life and major health insurance, nor for expenses related to medical treatment or accidental events. This will be the responsibility of each selected participant or of the nominating institution.

12. Points of contact

For the submission of nominations for attendance and funding, please contact Ms. Ayoni Oyeneyin, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, at the above address and fax number, or at the following e-mail address: Ayoni.Oyeneyin@unvienna.org

For the programme of the Symposium as well as co-sponsorship, please contact Mr. Shuhrat Sulaymanov, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, at the above address and fax number, or at the following e-mail address: Shuhrat.Sulaymanov@unvienna.org.

For the local arrangements, such as hotel accommodation, local transportation and meeting facilities and exhibit, please contact Ms. Birgit Reisenberger, Joanneum Research (Telephone: +43 316 876 1256; Fax: +43 316 876 1404; E-mail: birgit.reisenberger@joanneum.at).

13. Additional Information

The latest information on this Symposium and its relevant documentation, including the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD, are available from the web site of the Office for Outer Space Affairs at <<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/SAP/act2006/graz/index.html>>. The report of UNISPACE III can be found at <<http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/unisp-3/index.html>>.