



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
27 January 2003

Original: English

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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space**

## **Report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities on its twenty-third session\***

**(Vienna, 22-24 January 2003)**

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\* The present report was adopted by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held from 22 to 24 January 2003.



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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities held its twenty-third session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2003. Donald Hinsman of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) was elected Chairman. The list of participants is attached as annex I to the present report.
2. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat opened the Meeting. He noted that the space community had been well represented at the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in contrast to the situation 10 years before at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. For that reason, the report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>1</sup> reflected more accurately how space technology was being used for sustainable development. That demonstrated the importance of the space community's participation in the development of major international policy initiatives. The Director pointed out that, through the Inter-Agency Meeting, United Nations entities could successfully stress the usefulness of space in global conferences. The Director also informed the Meeting that the Office for Outer Space Affairs was in the process of negotiating an agreement with the Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technological Disasters (the "International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters'") that would allow the provision of data free of charge to various United Nations entities.
3. The Meeting adopted the agenda contained in annex II to the present report.

## **II. Substantive issues considered at the Meeting**

### **A. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas**

1. **Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of how the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications relate to their mandated programmes**
  4. The Secretary of the Meeting briefed participants on the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, bringing to their attention matters relating to inter-agency coordination. A representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs reported on the future orientation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and on activities planned for the Programme in 2003 and 2004, inviting organizations of the United Nations system to participate in activities of interest to them.
  5. Representatives of participating United Nations entities reported on their activities and plans for 2003, 2004 and beyond. Reports highlighted activities involving significant cooperation between United Nations entities.

6. The Meeting took note of the invitation from the Office for Outer Space Affairs to other United Nations entities to provide various types of in-kind support, such as expertise, educational materials and data, to the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations. The Meeting noted that the regional centres complemented training programmes being offered by other United Nations entities and should be supported.

7. The Meeting noted that participating entities were making efforts to ensure that contributions of space technology would be considered at the World Summit on the Information Society.

**2. Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related areas**

8. The Meeting noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would, in 2003, finish its work plan entitled "Means and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system". The Meeting agreed that it should provide input to be considered by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee during the final year of the work plan.

9. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that a brochure, entitled "Space solutions for the world's problems: how the United Nations family is using space technology for sustainable development", had been distributed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a contribution of the Inter-Agency Meeting. The Meeting agreed that the brochure could be of continuing value in explaining in a user-friendly format how space technology was being used for sustainable development, especially within the United Nations system. The Meeting noted that the brochure was available on the web site of the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

10. The Meeting agreed that United Nations entities that had contributed information to the brochure could place it on their web sites and establish links to the new Internet site created by the Office for Outer Space Affairs ([www.uncosa.unvienna.org/reports/wssdpub/](http://www.uncosa.unvienna.org/reports/wssdpub/)). Each entity would also assume responsibility for keeping up to date sections of the brochure falling within its sphere of activities and would provide the Office with hypertext links to sites containing more detail on the subjects covered in the brochure.

11. The Meeting requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to invite additional United Nations entities to contribute to the contents of the brochure and noted that any new sponsors should send their official contact information and an electronic version of their emblem to the Office.

12. The Meeting noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would print a revised version of the brochure, to be distributed at the World Summit on the Information Society and the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003. The Meeting agreed that two pages would be added to the brochure with appropriate generic information from the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The Meeting also agreed to consider at its twenty-fourth session, in 2004, a future, full revision of the brochure.

13. The Meeting considered a proposal for the sharing of space-related educational activities or events among United Nations entities and agreed that the latter should be encouraged to participate in or co-sponsor educational events organized by other agencies whenever possible. The Meeting also agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should request focal points of United Nations entities for the Inter-Agency Meeting to provide information on their educational activities or events and should post a list of such events on its web site.

14. The Meeting noted that United Nations organizations such as WMO and ICAO provided services to their member States that relied on access to specific bands of the radio frequency spectrum. Those organizations had formulated positions on the protection of radio frequency bands needed for their activities and had approached their member States to support those positions at World Radiocommunication Conferences. The Meeting agreed that the agencies concerned should keep other interested agencies informed about the issue.

15. The Meeting was informed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs was in the process of negotiating an agreement to become a cooperating body of the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters". The Charter was an agreement between the European Space Agency, the Centre nationale d'études spatiales of France, the Canadian Space Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America and the Indian Space Research Organization to task their Earth observation satellites and provide data from those satellites free of charge in the event of major natural or technological disasters meeting the Charter's criteria. The Office's agreement with the Charter, while signed only on behalf of the United Nations, would allow United Nations entities to request and receive space-based data under the Charter. Data provided to those entities under the Charter would thereafter be available free of charge to any other United Nations entity.

16. The Meeting agreed that the Charter was an important initiative and fully supported its goals. For that reason, the Meeting agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should keep all United Nations entities with space activities fully informed about its negotiations towards becoming a cooperating body of the Charter. The Meeting also agreed that more discussion was needed on certain issues relating to the Charter, for instance the possibility and circumstances for the Charter to be triggered during humanitarian or refugee crises.

17. The Meeting agreed that the aim should be for all United Nations entities active in the field of disaster response to request and receive data in the context of the Charter.

18. The Meeting was informed about the Workshop on the Contribution of Satellite Communication Technology to Bridging the Digital Divide, to be organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the region of Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok from 12 to 16 May 2003. The Workshop would develop a possible contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society from the viewpoint of the satellite communications sector. The Meeting noted the Workshop and requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to keep other United Nations entities informed about the preparations for it.

19. The Meeting had before it a proposal by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to convene a half-day informal open session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer

Space Activities, with the participation of interested member States of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and interested entities of the United Nations system. The open session would be held on the afternoon immediately following the annual session of the Meeting, which normally concluded on the morning of the third day.

20. The Meeting agreed that an open informal session, to which representatives of member States of the Committee would be invited, should be held in conjunction with the Meeting's annual session. The Meeting noted that the open informal session could be held starting from its session in 2004, if such an initiative was supported by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fortieth session, in 2003.

21. The Meeting agreed that, in view of the limited time available during the open session, its agenda should be focused on a particular topic, or topics, to be selected in advance through discussions among the focal points for the Inter-Agency Meeting.

22. The Meeting agreed that United Nations entities and member States of the Committee should be invited to indicate their interest in participating in the open session a few months in advance. The open session should take place only if five or more United Nations entities and five or more member States of the Committee had confirmed their participation one month in advance.

23. The Meeting also had before it a proposal by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to convene an inter-agency symposium on the benefits of space science and technology and their applications in achieving the development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.<sup>2</sup> The symposium could include a high-level round-table discussion with the participation of heads of United Nations entities and would aim to bring to their attention the usefulness of space science and technology and its applications.

24. The Meeting noted that, if well prepared and carefully organized, convening such a symposium could be one way to increase the visibility of space-related activities within the United Nations system. In that regard, the Meeting agreed that one of the topics for the first open informal session that might be held in conjunction with its twenty-fourth session, if approved (see para. 19), could be how to raise the visibility of space-related activities within the United Nations system and their contribution to achieving United Nations development goals.

### **3. Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system**

25. The Meeting had before it the draft report of the Secretary-General entitled "Coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system: programme of work for 2003 and 2004 and future years". It was the twenty-seventh report on the subject, containing information from United Nations entities in an integrated form and describing planned activities by field of application.

26. The Meeting reviewed and amended the draft report and approved a revised version. The Meeting was informed that the final text of the report (A/AC.105/792) would be before the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fortieth session.

#### **4. Review of the content and structure of the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system**

27. The Meeting noted that the maximum length of reports originating from the United Nations Secretariat was 16 pages. The Meeting agreed that future reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system should adhere to that page limit.

28. To achieve a reduction in length, the Meeting agreed that submissions of United Nations entities to future reports of the Secretary-General should contain information based on two general criteria: major, new initiatives and/or activities that involved coordination and cooperation by two or more United Nations entities.

29. The Meeting also noted the desire of participating United Nations entities to find ways to keep the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space fully informed about their important ongoing space activities.

30. The Meeting therefore agreed to invite the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to consider requesting annual reports from United Nations entities on specific themes.

31. The Meeting also noted that any United Nations entity could attend the annual session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as an observer and circulate publications on its space activities among member States. United Nations entities had also been invited to participate in the Legal Subcommittee and to submit reports under the item entitled "Activities of international organizations relating to space law".

32. The Meeting reviewed and revised the structure of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system and adopted the revised structure for the report contained in annex III to the present report, which would be followed in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report for the period 2004-2005. Additionally, the Meeting agreed that detailed information provided by participants with regard to specific activities could be included in its report, within the guidelines for the maximum number of pages allowed for the report.

#### **B. Space-related outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

33. The Meeting noted that, in its resolution 57/116 of 11 December 2002, the General Assembly had noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to bring the benefits of space science and technology and their applications to the attention of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Meeting also noted that the actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> had made specific reference to space technologies. The Meeting further noted that the Assembly, in its resolution 57/116, had urged United Nations entities, in particular those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical

Subcommittee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the implementation of the Political Declaration<sup>4</sup> and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit.

34. The Meeting invited participants to report on the status of their organizations' plans for follow-up to the World Summit. The Meeting noted that some entities of the United Nations system would need to have their plans endorsed by their governing bodies.

35. The Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Office for Outer Space Affairs that contained a preliminary draft list of actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation with direct or potential relevance to space science and technology and their applications. The draft list also included actions that addressed cross-cutting issues to which the use of space science and technology and their applications could contribute.

36. The Meeting agreed that United Nations entities should be invited to complete the list with space-related initiatives and programmes that they would carry out in response to the recommendations. The Meeting recommended that members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space also consider completing the list, which, once completed, could serve as a comprehensive survey of the space community's response to the outcomes of the World Summit. The document could also include links to web sites relevant to the listed initiatives and programmes to provide further information to those interested.

37. The Meeting requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to circulate the table electronically to the focal points of the entities of the United Nations system. The Meeting agreed that at its next session, in 2004, it would review the completed list to ensure the harmonized and balanced presentation of all relevant initiatives and programmes within the United Nations system.

### **C. Electronic information networking in the United Nations system**

38. The Secretary reminded the Meeting that the web site on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system ([www.uncosa.unvienna.org](http://www.uncosa.unvienna.org)) had been created by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and encouraged the United Nations entities that had not already done so to provide the Office with information on news and announcements, a schedule of upcoming activities, background information for the directory of participating organizations and information relating to the Inter-Agency Meeting.

39. The Meeting agreed that the focal points of the Inter-Agency Meeting should review the information contained in the above web site and submit updated information. The Meeting requested the Office to send reminders to the focal points on a regular basis.

40. The Meeting recalled that it had requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to work with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to develop a proposal to use electronic networking for electronic document handling, such as in preparing the draft of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities and for information-sharing in a user-friendly format.



41. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to ITU and the Office for Outer Space Affairs for their efforts to create a web board for the Inter-Agency Meeting. The Meeting welcomed the offer by ITU to host and administer the web board. While the Meeting agreed that electronic mail should continue to be used, it also agreed that the web board would be used for the preparation of the session of the Inter-Agency Meeting in 2004.

42. The Meeting noted that focal points of the Meeting would be provided with user names and passwords for access to the web board. The Meeting agreed that at its next session, in 2004, it would review the experience with the use of the web board.

#### **D. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)**

43. The Secretary briefed the Meeting on the progress made in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and the status of the work of the 11 action teams that had been established by the Committee at its forty-fourth session, in 2001. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to assist the action teams, if requested.

44. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the significant progress achieved by the Integrated Global Observing Strategy (IGOS)-Partnership (IGOS-P) in implementing IGOS, among other things by preparing reports on selected IGOS themes and implementing recommendations contained in those reports. The IGOS themes currently consisted of the following: integrated global carbon observations theme; integrated global water cycle observations theme; coral reefs sub-theme/potential coastal theme; global atmospheric chemistry theme; global oceans theme; and geohazards theme.

45. The Meeting noted that the work conducted by IGOS-P was acting on recommendation 3 of UNISPACE III to develop and implement IGOS so as to enable access to and the use of space-based and other Earth observation data. The Meeting noted that the work accomplished by IGOS-P would benefit the work being carried out by some other action teams. In that regard, the Meeting noted with satisfaction that, at the invitation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee, IGOS-P would make a presentation at the fortieth session of the Subcommittee on the accomplishments and activities of IGOS-P.

46. The Meeting recalled that the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, would review the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Secretary informed the Meeting that the Committee, at its forty-fifth session, had established a working group to prepare a report for submission to the Assembly for the review. The Meeting was informed that the working group had agreed to review, among other things, specific contributions that had or were being made by United Nations entities. The Meeting was also informed that the working group would review results of global conferences held by United Nations entities, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the first

phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the General Conference of UNESCO to be held in 2003, that had relevance to the work of the Committee and to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The indicative, preliminary draft outline of the report to be prepared by the working group and the actions to be taken and timetable for preparing the report are contained in the report of the working group.<sup>5</sup>

47. The Meeting noted that United Nations entities had been invited by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to indicate any other global conferences that should be brought to the attention of the working group and to provide inputs that should be taken into account in preparing the report to the General Assembly.

48. The Meeting noted that ICAO had provided inputs in response to that invitation by the Office. The Meeting also noted that the First International Conference on Science and Technology Education, to be held in Africa in September 2003, would contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

49. The Meeting agreed that United Nations entities should be provided with further guidelines on the inputs from them that would best assist the working group of the Committee in preparing its report. The Meeting noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would work with the chairman of the working group of the Committee to develop such guidelines.

## **E. Other matters**

50. The Meeting agreed that proposals and any other documents requiring decisions and actions by the Meeting should be distributed at least a week before the start of the session concerned. If submitted later than a week before the start of the session, the Meeting would postpone a decision on the proposals until the next year's session, unless the Meeting agreed that it was important to consider the proposals immediately. The Meeting also agreed that when United Nations entities were requested to contribute to documents that would be considered for decision or action by the Meeting, maximum efforts should be made to submit contributions by the requested deadline.

51. The Meeting agreed that it was desirable to have a uniform format for presenting the documents for its consideration. The Meeting agreed that each document should have a cover page that would indicate under which agenda item it should be considered, a summary of the content and the recommended actions for the Meeting. The Meeting requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to develop a format for the cover page.

52. The Meeting was informed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had requested that the United Nations Office at Vienna represent it at the present session of the Meeting. While appreciating the efforts of the Department to be represented at the Meeting and briefed on the results of its work, the Meeting agreed that it was important for each entity of the United Nations system to be represented by its designated focal point.

### III. Future programme of work

53. The Meeting agreed that, at its twenty-fourth session, in 2004, it would consider the following items:

1. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:
  - (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of how the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications relate to their mandated programmes;
  - (b) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for 2004-2005 and a report to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on major accomplishments and work of the United Nations system in space-related areas;
  - (c) Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities.
2. Involvement of the United Nations entities in the Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technological Disasters.
3. Space-related outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
4. Electronic information networking in the United Nations system.
5. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).
6. Draft revised brochure on "Space solutions for the world's problems: how the United Nations family is using space technology for sustainable development".
7. Other matters.

54. The participants expressed their appreciation to WMO for its offer to host the twenty-fourth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting. The Meeting noted that the exact date of that session, to be held in Geneva a few weeks before the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, would be determined in due course and communicated to United Nations entities.

55. The Meeting agreed that, in order to increase awareness and visibility of the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities within the United Nations system, it would be desirable that its future sessions be hosted by interested organizations of the United Nations system both in Vienna and at other venues. The Meeting therefore agreed in principle that the venue of the annual session of the Meeting should alternate between Vienna and other cities. In that regard, the Meeting expressed its appreciation to UNESCO for its offer to host the

twenty-sixth session of the Meeting in Paris in 2006. The Meeting noted that the twenty-fifth session, in 2005, would be convened in Vienna.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1).

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>5</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/57/20)*, annex I, paras. 10-14.

## Annex I

### List of participants at the twenty-third session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2003

*Chairman:* D. Hinsman (World Meteorological Organization)

*Secretary:* T. Chiku (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

*United Nations Secretariat*

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	S. Camacho
United Nations Office for Project Services	E. Bjorgo
Office for Outer Space Affairs	S. Camacho H. Haubold S. Chernikov V. Kotelnikov D. Stevens C. Davies
Economic Commission for Africa	A. Gulaid

*United Nations programmes and funds*

United Nations Environment Programme	R. G. Witt
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	J.-Y. Bouchardy

*Specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	R. Missotten
International Civil Aviation Organization	M. Paydar
World Health Organization	J. Lemarchand

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International Atomic Energy Agency	A. Stanculescu
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## **Annex II**

### **Agenda for the twenty-third session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2003**

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of the Chairperson.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:
  - (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of how the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications relate to their mandated programmes;
  - (b) Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related areas;
  - (c) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system;
  - (d) Review of the content and structure of the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system.
5. Space-related outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
6. Electronic information networking in the United Nations system.
7. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).
8. Other matters:
  - (a) Future meetings;
  - (b) Additional matters.

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## Annex III

### **Revised structure of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system: programme of work for 2003 and 2004 and future years**

#### *Title*

Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2004-2005

#### *Contents*

Summary (input from participating United Nations entities should be of a generic nature, reflecting important milestones and new capabilities within the United Nations system)

- I. Introduction (one paragraph, including a matrix of participants and space-related programmes of the United Nations system)
  - II. Policies and strategies pertaining to coordination of space-related activities
  - III. Upcoming space-related activities
    - A. Protecting the Earth's environment and managing natural resources
    - B. Using space applications for human security, humanitarian assistance, development and welfare
    - C. Development of law, guidelines and ethics relating to space activities
    - D. Utilizing and facilitating information and communication technology for development
    - E. Using and improving satellite positioning and location capabilities
    - F. Capacity-building and education in space applications for sustainable development
    - G. Advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment
    - H. Other activities
-