

Canadian Statement
Agenda Item 6 – Space Technology for Sustainable Socioeconomic Development
delivered by: Michel Doyon, GAC

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-seventh Session, Vienna, February 3-14, 2020

Madame Chair,

Space brings an abundance and diversity of unique and fundamental benefits to Earth. As the space community moves forward with its space exploration endeavours, space will continue to inspire, innovate and provide real-world applications for the benefit of humankind. From environmental monitoring and disaster management, to agriculture, rural connectivity, and job creation; space technologies and their applications provide tremendous benefit to people and the planet and are a dynamic driver for sustainable socioeconomic development.

Canada has a long history of advancing socioeconomic development through space activities. In 1962, Canada became the third country to build and operate its own satellite with the launch of Alouette-1, which studied radio frequency interactions with the ionosphere and laid the foundation for radio communications essential to socioeconomic development. In 1972, Telesat's Anik F1 became the first domestic communications satellite in geostationary orbit. Canada's RADARSAT-1, launched in 1995, and RADARSAT-2, launched in 2007, were important assets for space-based earth observation, not only for Canada, but also for partners around the world who obtained data. Canadian atmospheric science instruments, such as MOPITT (on NASA's Terra satellite), Osiris (on Sweden's Odin satellite) and SCISAT have been taking key measurements of Earth's atmosphere for years and continue to make concrete contributions to humanity's understanding of the key indicators related to climate change and the environment.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

To continue this important work, three satellites from Canada's RADARSAT Constellation Mission (RCM) were successfully launched on June 12, 2019. RCM will provide daily revisits of Canada's vast territory and maritime approaches, as well as daily access to 90% of the world's surface. It will help lead our efforts to monitor our changing northern lands and coastal waterways, providing valuable information on how these remote regions are responding to both climate change and increasing resource development. RCM will have a significant role to play in supporting and tracking progress in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Canada is also in the initial development phase of a new WildFireSat satellite mission to study indicators related to wildfires and better support forest fire management.

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With the second largest landmass in the world, Canada relies heavily on Earth Observation as an essential and sometimes only source of information. Canada's longstanding expertise and advancement in space based earth observation is a key asset supporting decision making in sustainable development. Canada, through its national space program, is fully committed and actively working to ensure that space science and technology provide fundamental social and economic benefits to all Canadians, as well as the global community.

The Canadian Space Agency examines and monitors the socio-economic benefits of space through various mechanisms, including surveys and studies, such as the State of the Canadian Space Sector report. This annual report, based on CSA's annual survey, provides factual information about the Canadian space sector. Now in its 21st edition, this report is based on a questionnaire sent to organizations involved in space activities across Canada, including companies, not-for-profit organizations, research centres and universities. The most recent report is based on data from 192 organizations. Further details of the report can found in Canada's Annual Report on Space Activities.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

The CSA also recently commissioned a study to better measure the socioeconomic value of space utilization on Canadians across three key domains: satellite communication, satellite navigation, and Earth observation (EO). A series of metrics and indicators were developed to provide data on six key topic areas, including disaster management, agriculture, air traffic management, environmental monitoring, rural connectivity, and transport and logistics. This report, which was released in the fall of 2019, has helped illustrate the socioeconomic benefits that space brings to everyday lives by providing current and future qualitative and quantitative benefits in all six areas, including costs savings. The report is now available on the CSA website.

The results of the study will also help inform Canada's national implementation of the UN Sustainable Development goals. Canada is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development goals at home while we also work with our international partners to achieve them around the world.

Finally, Madame Chair,

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Canada is proud to support the work of UNCOPUOS and the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the Space 2030 agenda, and will continue to leverage space and its space assets to support and bring awareness to the socio-economic benefits to humankind.

Thank you for your kind attention.