

INFORMATION NOTE

THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES (UN-SPACE)

29 October 2018

Conference Room 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Co-organized by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP)

1. Introduction

The United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) is a formal inter-agency mechanism aimed at enhancing coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system. UN-Space aims at promoting synergies and preventing duplication of efforts related to the use of space technology and applications in the work of United Nations entities.

In its resolution 72/77 of 7 December 2017, the General Assembly urged UN-Space, under the leadership of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, to continue to examine how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encouraged entities of the United Nations system to participate, as appropriate, in UN-Space coordination efforts.

At its thirty-seventh session held on 24 August 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland, UN-Space agreed to organize a workshop, to be held in New York in the second half of 2018, to consider public/private partnership models and cooperation with the private sector to increase the use of space science, technology and applications for economic growth and sustainable development, as well as the legal and ethical aspects of cooperation models involving non-State actors. UN-Space further agreed that its thirty-eighth session should be held in conjunction with the workshop.

The UN-Space event will be held in New York on 29 October 2018, co-organized by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), and will comprise both workshop and annual session components.

2. Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a universal framework for all countries to help eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030, requires bold and transformative steps and innovative tools to support its implementation. Among those tools are the ones offered by space science and technology, which could act as important enablers of economic, social and cultural development and contributors to poverty eradication, and which have the potential — as yet unfulfilled — to catalyse efforts by both developed and developing countries to achieve the seventeen internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As enshrined in SDG17, the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda will depend on partnerships among governments and between governments, private sector and other stakeholders. While traditionally space has been mostly a government-only domain, in view of its investment- and technology-intensive nature and its ability to serve strategic, political and scientific interests of States, this status is rapidly changing. Space telecommunication sector was the pioneer in

the commercial use of outer space, followed by the emergence of private space launch service providers. Nowadays, private sector augments all segments of the space domain, from ground equipment and commercial space transportation to satellite manufacturing and Earth observation services.

With the developments in space sector, now more than ever it is becoming crucial to build effective partnerships and address the larger involvement of the private sector in space-related activities of the United Nations, in particular, in view of the universal role that space could play for all of the SDGs. Under SDG2, wider use of space technology applications can significantly advance efforts to combat hunger. Remotely sensed data is a key component needed to effectively monitor agricultural production, to provide reliable information for decision-making in agriculture, and to provide timely interventions in countries or regions affected by floods, droughts, or other forms of natural or man-made disasters that can affect agricultural output.

Health-related sustainable development goals (SDG3) is another example of an area in which the use of satellite communications and remote sensing is vital. Space-derived Information has increasingly been used to identify the ecological, environmental, climatic and other factors that can have a negative effect on public health or can contribute to the spread of certain diseases. Space technology is indispensable for telemedicine, tele-health, disease surveillance systems and health mapping. Space science and technology provide innovative research platforms for advancing medical knowledge and spin-offs for the development of health-care equipment, operational activities and procedures.

The use of satellites to monitor processes and trends at the global scale is essential for understanding climate change (SDG13); for using sustainably terrestrial ecosystems (SDG15), oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG14); and for effectively managing land, water, forests and other natural resources (SDG12). Space tools provide information to address the critical drawback that hinders the ability of Governments to completely understand greenhouse gas emissions and ozone loss, the status of water resources at the basin and continental levels, the extent of land degradation, deforestation and desertification, and to set up measures to increase the resiliency of human settlements (SDG11) and the ability of humankind to cope with existing and future crises.

Space sector is rapidly gaining weight in global economy and leads to the development of new institutional links at all levels (SDG16). Space-related research and developments stimulate quality education (SDG4), contribute to better understanding of solar energy (SDG7), foster innovations and industrialization (SDG9), and create employment opportunities (SDG8), all of which have a potential to reduce poverty (SDG1) and inequalities (SDG5 and 10). The space sector as a whole is changing and moving towards new partnership models, with industry and private sector being essential partners in the development of innovative space solutions and activities for the benefit of humankind. It is the time to respond to demand from the United Nations system, governments and non-State actors to catalyse public-private partnerships and review opportunities and good practices to promote the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for action.

3. Objectives

The workshop will be a forum to share experiences in forming partnerships in undertaking space-related activities for the implementation of specific mandates of individual UN entities. Participants will identify challenges in building successful partnerships with partners outside the United Nations system in support of the sustainable development agenda and share practices to overcome those challenges. The workshop participants will share information on future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas, undertaken by their entities, with the focus on cooperation with

private sector. The event will also provide networking opportunities to build stronger partnership also within the United Nations system. Participants will be better informed on the outcomes of UNISPACE+50 high-level segment held in June 2018 and on preparations for “Space2030” and will agree on the focus of the upcoming UN-Space Special report to be submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its session in June 2019.

4. Preliminary Programme

The preliminary programme has been developed taking into account the following agreements of UN-Space:

- The agreement of UN-Space at its thirty-seventh session in 2017 to organize a workshop to consider public/private partnership models and cooperation with the private sector to increase the use of space science, technology and applications for economic growth and sustainable development, as well as the legal and ethical aspects of cooperation models involving non-State actors; and to hold its thirty-eighth session in conjunction with the workshop.
- The agreement of UN-Space at its thirty-seventh session in 2017 to include the following substantive items in the provisional agenda for its thirty-eighth session: Orientation on the outcomes of UNISPACE+50 high-level segment and preparations for “Space2030”; Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities for the period 2018–2019; UN-Space Special report; and Coordination of space-related activities.
- The agreement of UN-Space at its thirty-fourth session held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in May 2014 to adopt a flexible approach to the setting of its agenda in order to be more adaptive to current needs and interests of participating United Nations entities.

Preliminary Programme

I. Opening Session

9:00 – 9:45

The session/workshop will be opened by the representatives of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Office for Partnerships. The representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in his capacity as Secretary of UN-Space, will introduce the new format of the UN-Space event, which combines both workshop component and the UN-Space annual session, and provide orientation on provisional agenda for its thirty-eighth session and its items.

II. Thematic session: Partnerships in space-related activities

9:45 – 11:15

The session will consider specific examples in cooperation with private sector in space related activities of United Nations entities and serve a forum to exchange views on current and future space-related plans and programmes. Proposed speakers: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Geospatial Information Section, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, International Telecommunications Union, World Health Organization, Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, [...].

III. Thematic session: Partnerships in the UN System
11:30 – 13:00

The session will look at the practices, experiences and lessons learnt in forming partnerships between United Nations entities and private sector, and will discuss legal, ethical, programmatic, financial, budgetary, operational and other aspects of such cooperation. Proposed speakers: United Nations Office for Partnerships, Office of Legal Affairs, Ethics Office, Global Compact, Programme Planning and Budget Division, Office for Internal Oversight Services, UN-WOMEN, Procurement Division[...].

IV. Thematic session: Leveraging partnerships through stronger cooperation mechanisms
14:00 – 15:30

The session will look at the experiences of other coordination mechanisms in building partnerships. Proposed speakers: UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs, UN-Water, UN-Oceans, UN-Energy, United Nations Geographical Information Working Group (UNGIWG), United Nations System Network, UN Innovation Network, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF on FFD), [...].

V. Closing session
15:30 – 16:00

In closing, participants will discuss the theme of upcoming UN-Space Special Report, dates, venue and agenda of the 39th session.

5. Point of contact:

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