

## History

1. By its resolution 54/68, the General Assembly endorsed the resolution entitled “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”<sup>1</sup> adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) in 1999. The Vienna Declaration called for action, inter alia, to improve the efficiency and security of transport, search and rescue, geodesy and other activities by promoting the enhancement of, universal access to and compatibility of space-based navigation and positioning systems. In response to that call, in 2001 the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space established the Action Team on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), under the chairmanship of Italy and the United States of America.
2. The Action Team on GNSS produced a final report, entitled *Report of the Action Team on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS): Follow-up to the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)*.<sup>2</sup> That report was presented at the United Nations/United States of America International Meeting on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, convened from 13 to 17 December 2004 in Vienna as a meeting of GNSS experts who had attended one or more of the four United Nations/United States of America regional workshops, held in 2001 and 2002, or two international meetings, held between 2001 and 2003 (see para. 6 below). The report of the International Meeting in 2004 is contained in document A/AC.105/846.
3. The work of the Action Team on GNSS included comprehensive reviews of existing and planned GNSS and augmentations, their applications by system-provider and user communities, as well as activities carried out by various entities to promote GNSS. The Action Team also examined the requirements of developing countries and gaps in meeting those requirements, as well as existing education and training opportunities in the field of GNSS.
4. The Action Team on GNSS, consisting of 38 member States and 15 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, recommended, inter alia, that an international committee on GNSS should be established to promote the use of GNSS infrastructure on a global basis and to facilitate exchange of information. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space included this recommendation in the Plan of Action proposed in its report to the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III (see A/59/174). In 2004, in its resolution 59/2, the Assembly endorsed the Plan of Action. In the same resolution, the Assembly invited GNSS and augmentation system providers to consider establishing an international committee on GNSS in order to maximize the benefits of the use and applications of GNSS to support sustainable development.
5. The work of the Action Team on GNSS serves as a model for how the United Nations can undertake action to follow up on global conferences and yield tangible results within a fixed time frame.
6. To implement the recommendation of UNISPACE III related to the use of global navigation and positioning systems and to support the work of the Action

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999 (A/CONF.184/6, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3)*, chap. I, resolution 1.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.I.30.

Team on GNSS, starting in 2001 the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat organized regional workshops and international meetings focusing on capacity-building in the use of GNSS in various areas of applications that support sustainable development, as follows:

(a) United Nations/United States of America Workshop on the Use of Global Navigation Satellite Systems for the benefit of countries in Asia and the Pacific, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 24 August 2001 (see A/AC.105/771);

(b) United Nations/United States of America Second Regional Workshop on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems for the benefit of countries in Eastern Europe, held in Vienna from 26 to 30 November 2001 (see A/AC.105/776);

(c) United Nations/United States of America Third Regional Workshop on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems for the benefit of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago from 1 to 5 April 2002 (see A/AC.105/795);

(d) United Nations/United States of America Workshop on the Use of Global Navigation Satellite Systems for the benefit of countries in Africa, held in Lusaka from 15 to 19 July 2002 (see A/AC.105/785);

(e) International Meeting on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, held in Vienna from 11 to 15 November 2002;

(f) United Nations/United States of America International Workshop on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, held in Vienna from 8 to 12 December 2003;

(g) United Nations/United States of America International Meeting on the Use and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, held in Vienna from 13 to 17 December 2004 (see A/AC.105/846);

(h) United Nations International Meeting for the Establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, held in Vienna on 1 and 2 December 2005.

7. The above workshops and meetings were co-sponsored by the Government of the United States, which also provided substantive technical support for the workshops and meetings. The European Space Agency co-sponsored the workshops held in Santiago and Lusaka in 2002. Starting in 2001, additional meetings of the Action Team on GNSS and other interested parties were held in the margins of the meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The participants in the international and additional meetings developed the draft terms of reference for the international committee on GNSS. At the international meeting held in December 2005, interested Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations agreed to establish the international committee.

8. Those participating in the establishment of the international committee on GNSS agreed that an open-ended ad hoc working group would be established to discuss pending issues already identified in the draft terms of reference. The working group would also consider by electronic mail the development of the substantive work plan of the international committee and its tentative schedule of work. The first meeting of the international committee would consider the proposals made by the working group. It was also agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would serve as the focal point for matters relating to organizing the first meeting of the international committee.

9. In its resolution 61/111, the General Assembly noted with appreciation that the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems had been established on a voluntary basis as an informal body to promote cooperation, as appropriate, on matters of mutual interest related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and value-added services, as well as the compatibility and interoperability of global navigation satellite systems, while increasing their use to support sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.