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

Final Report of the Action Team on Increasing Awareness

The present document contains the final report submitted by the Action Team on Increasing Awareness (recommendation no. 18 of UNISPACE III) for consideration by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-first session. The final report will be issued in all languages of the United Nations as document A/AC.105/L.252 prior to the forty-seventh session of the Committee, to be held in Vienna from 2 to 11 June 2004.

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

Draft Final report of the Action Team on recommendation no. 18, “Increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of space activities”

I. Introduction

1. While reaffirming the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the recommendations contained in the resolution entitled “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses Of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, are in themselves a major contribution to promoting effective means of using space technology to assist in the solution of problems of regional or global significance, and of strengthening capabilities to use the space applications for economic, social and cultural development.

2. With reference to the need of ensuring public awareness of the importance of space activities, the Vienna Declaration recommends, *inter alia*, that action should be taken **to increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of peaceful space activities for improving the common economic and social welfare of humanity.**

3. Since UNISPACE III has been successfully concluded in 1999, a number of major United Nations conferences and events took place which have significantly shaped the global agenda and our collective approaches to meeting present and future challenges. These included the **United Nations Millennium Summit** (2000), the **World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 2002)** and the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS Phase I, 2003)**. The summits produced results which have important implications with respect to the global priorities to be addressed in the 21st century. Implicitly or explicitly, their final documents also highlight the relevance of space science and technology in this connection.

4. Referring to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly with resolution 55/2 on 8 September 2000, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, after consultations including the United Nations Secretariat, IMF, OECD and the World Bank, in his report entitled “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration” (A/56/326), presented a list of eight **Millennium Development Goals** to be achieved by 2015: 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) Improve maternal health, 3) Achieve universal primary education, 4) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, 5) Promote gender equality and empower women, 6) Ensure environmental sustainability, 7) Reduce child mortality and 8) Develop a global partnership for development. The General Assembly recognized the Millennium Development Goals as part of the road map for implementing the Millennium Declaration in its resolution 56/95 of 14 December 2001.

5. By adopting the **Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development** and the **Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**, the Governments represented at the WSSD agreed on a very wide range of concrete commitments and actions related to five priority areas which had been identified by the UN Secretary-General: water, energy, health, agriculture, and biodiversity (WEHAB). The Declaration contains a number of explicit references to space based technology, in particular related to water, disaster management, climate change, environmental protection, the development and wider use of earth observation technologies, and data collection.

6. Likewise, the **Plan of Action adopted by the WSIS**, in addressing issues of information and communication infrastructure, clearly identifies the role of space based technology in achieving the goal of digital inclusion.

7. Peaceful uses of outer Space certainly contribute to meet the aforementioned goals and priorities, set by the international community with the aim to improve the common economic and social welfare of humanity. **The challenge is to match space capabilities with specific targets in a way that yields tangible results through concrete action, and to enhance awareness in this regard.**

8. Against this backdrop, the Action Team on Increasing Awareness embarked on 1) evaluating ongoing efforts to increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the value of space activities and the role space activities can play in key areas, such as sustainable development; 2) preparing a listing of illustrative examples of successful outreach activities, 3) identifying potential outreach activities, in particular with regard to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and 4) providing recommendations on future outreach activities.

II. Evaluation of ongoing efforts

9. Activities relevant to increasing awareness of the importance of space activities are being carried out at various levels - intergovernmental, governmental, and non-governmental - partly within the framework of specifically designed activities. As it was considered impossible to compile a complete account of relevant activities worldwide, the Action Team focused on examining and selecting illustrative examples. With regard to the intergovernmental field, the main emphasis was placed on relevant global conferences, the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and the activity of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA).

10. As to facilitate the process of gathering specific information from Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities, the Action Team, assisted by the OOSA, conducted an Internet-based survey through specially designed questionnaires among all Member States as well as all organisations having permanent observer status with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, on their efforts to increase awareness of the importance of space activities. The compilation will be made available electronically and continue to be updated as to become a comprehensive, dynamic source of information on awareness-increasing efforts.

III. Illustrative examples

A. The multilateral field

11. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000 agreed that the **benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences** organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

12. In a letter dated 19 July 2001 (A/56/306), the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space informed the Secretary-General, as requested by the Committee, about the Committee's recommendation **that major United Nations conferences should consider the contributions of space science and technology to a greater extent, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries.**

13. In its report on its 40th session, held in Vienna from 17 to 28 February 2003 (A/AC.105/804), the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that through the **presentations made by national and international space agencies and organizations at the WSSD**, the usefulness of space applications in advancing sustainable development had been demonstrated. That accomplishment was supportive of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, namely, those seeking to increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of space activities; to promote sustainable development by applying results of space research; to increase the use of space-related systems and services by the entities of the United Nations system and by the private sector; and to improve the management of the Earth's natural resources.

14. In its resolution 58/89 of 9 December 2003 the General Assembly noted with satisfaction the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

15. Very important work aimed at further enhancing awareness and coordination regarding space-related activities within the **United Nations system** is carried out at the annual sessions of the **Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities**. The twenty-fourth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held at the World Meteorological Organization Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland from 21 to 23 January 2004, which also included an open, informal session, was of particular significance in this regard.

16. OOSA increased its efforts to bring to the attention of the global conferences held within the United Nations system the potential benefits of space science and technology and their applications to assist in achieving the objectives of such conferences. On the occasion of WSSD, the office issued a special publication entitled "**Space Solutions for the World's Problems: How the United Nations Family is Using Space Technology for Sustainable Development**". The publication was prepared in cooperation with the organizations of the United Nations system that participate in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and was distributed to the delegations at the World Summit. Immediately prior to the World Summit, the Office organized a **symposium on the use of space technology for sustainable development** in Stellenbosch, South Africa, from 21 to 23 August 2002. The symposium aimed at increasing the awareness of the decision makers

participating in the World Summit of the usefulness of space technology and its applications to promote sustainable development. The Office also initiated a survey among Governments and UN entities on relevant initiatives and programmes that respond to the action items contained in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. Once completed, the survey will be made available through the Office's homepage to be used as a tool both by decision-makers as well as programme managers and others responsible for implementing programmes or projects at the national, regional or global levels.

17. With the support of the Government of Austria, the Office is organizing a series of three annual symposiums, in 2003-2005, to promote the use of demonstrated capabilities to support actions called for in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit.

18. The **Workshop on the Contribution of Space Communication Technology to Bridging the Digital Divide**, organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the region of Asia and the Pacific and held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 May 2003, aimed at developing a contribution to the WSIS from the viewpoint of the satellite communications sector (see report A/AC.105/810). The observations and recommendations made by participants were communicated to the secretariat of the Summit. The Office also organised an ad hoc panel of internationally known satellite experts in the margins of the Summit in Geneva on 12 December 2003.

19. Among the multilateral initiatives outside the United Nations, the **Earth Observation Summit**, hosted by the United States and held in Washington, DC, on 31 July 2003, and the establishment of an **ad hoc Group on Earth Observations (GEO)** as a result of the Summit, deserve first mention as an example on how decision makers have been reached and how they have committed, or are about to commit, major resources for better space-based Earth observations at global level.

B. Regional approaches

20. Governments are key in promoting awareness of the benefits of space activities, technology and applications through their concerned authorities, agencies and relevant programmes. At the same time they have to keep themselves up to date. Governments' respective efforts and capabilities are related to a variety of factors, including financial, technological and administrative capacities.

21. In a field which is not only conditioned by immense scientific and technological progress, an increasingly competitive environment, a complex diversity of actors and interests, but also by growing gaps in countries' capabilities to use space technology for the common benefit, the benefits for States which cooperate in translating scientific and technological progress into policies and programmes for applications are obvious. Regional approaches to cooperation can offer particular advantages in this regard.

22. The Asian and Pacific region provides an enlightening example in this respect. Many of the leading innovators in the region, some of them space-faring, are developing countries with a particular interest in using space technology in the service of sustainable development. The **Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP)** of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) proves to be a very useful permanent mechanism to further the effective uses of space-based technologies and applications for achieving sustainable development in the region.

23. In addressing the priority of raising awareness on the part of policy planners and decision makers, involving all sectors at all levels of decision-making, RESAP is setting successful examples which could serve as models for other regions and sub-regions.

24. In Europe, the **Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)** provides an outstanding example of an initiative aimed at co-ordinating existing as well as new technologies and systems to better meet a structured demand for information on the part of national, regional and local decision-makers and users. GMES addresses the (potentially common) needs of public authorities in various policy areas, as, for example, in the case of information on land cover, which will contribute to prediction and management of floods, forest fires and crop yields, as well as monitoring of carbon sinks and sources in the framework of the Kyoto protocol.

C. Space organizations

25. International and national space organisations are important actors in promoting awareness of space activities. While international space organisations provide the necessary frameworks for cooperation, coordination and the development of global policy perspectives, national agencies act as interfaces between international networks, the public and private sectors, science and research, and the end users. They are placed ideally to facilitate and promote effective partnerships between stakeholders, users as well as providers.

26. Comprising 41 space agencies and other national and international organizations, the **Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS)** is the major international forum for the coordination of Earth observation satellite programs and for interaction of these programs with users of satellite data worldwide. CEOS' individual members are committed to use their best efforts to implement CEOS recommendations in their respective Earth observation programmes.

27. In its statement at the WSSD, the CEOS-chair underlined its commitment to assist in raising awareness of the value of Earth observation satellite data and equipping developing countries with the knowledge necessary to benefit from key applications. It also referred to specific initiatives taken in this connection by CEOS members and associates. The CEOS Members and Associates also agreed to launch a "WSSD Follow-up Programme" as a visible concrete action by the international space community in support of sustainable development.

D. Non-Governmental Organisations

28. The role of the of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to the implementation of conference outcomes is widely recognized and has recently been underlined by the General Assembly in its Resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

29. In the space community, NGOs have been traditionally very active. Their contribution to UNISPACE III - the first UN conference in which industry and civil society took part in partnership with Governments - has been vital. Their presence at the sessions of the COPUOS and its subcommittees forms part of a continuous process of opening up the Committee, to include relevant non governmental actors in the efforts to promote the peaceful uses of outer space with a view to increasing global awareness of the importance and benefits of peaceful space activities.

30. Some of them, as for instance the **International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS)** combine longstanding expertise and worldwide, numerous membership. The ISPRS network comprises Societies/Associations from more than 120 countries around the world, representing approximately 50.000 professions who undertake activities in the photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences. ISPRS holds a quadrennial Congress as well as symposia, workshops and tutorials on a regular basis in many parts of the world. Several of these events have laid particular emphasis on issues concerning space applications and sustainable development and provides very valuable contributions in this respect.

31. Likewise, the **Spaceweek International Association (SIA)**, one of the oldest space advocacy organizations in the world, recruits and supports a worldwide network of coordinators and participants. SIA supports the United Nations in the global coordination of **World Space Week**, which was declared in 1999 by the General Assembly, implementing a recommendation of the UNISPACE III conference. The objective of World Space Week, which is held yearly from 4 to 10 October, is to increase awareness among decision makers and the public at large of the benefits of the peaceful uses of space. For World Space Week 2004, which will address the theme "**Space for Sustainable Development**", all World Space Week participants and supporters have been requested to plan corresponding programmes, incorporate the theme into their World Space Week publicity materials, communicate it to other organizations and encourage them to address it as well.

32. The issue of enhancing awareness regarding the role of space activities in supporting internationally agreed development goals is also addressed by other non governmental organisations attending the meetings of COPUOS as observers, such as the European Association for the International Space Year (EURISY), the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC).

IV. Potential outreach activities

33. Promoting awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of peaceful space activities is not an end in itself. Seen from a UN-perspective, taking into account the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the requirements of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, as set out by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/270 B, there are very clear priorities regarding efforts to be made in this respect.

34. The internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, provide a comprehensive basis for action at the national, regional and international levels with the key objectives of poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Consequently, they also provide a valuable base for potential outreach activities aimed at increasing awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of peaceful space activities for improving the common economic and social welfare of humanity.

V. Recommendations

35. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should assess efforts aimed at promoting awareness of the importance of space activities, including its own, applying the measure of the internationally agreed development goals and taking into particular account the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable

Development and the WSIS Plan of Action, and their correlations to the recommendations contained in the “Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”.

36. Major United Nations conferences as well as activities related to the implementation and follow-up to their outcome should continue to consider the contributions of space science and technology to a greater extent, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. The Committee should continue to consider possibilities to provide specific contributions to that end, including with a view to Phase II of the WSIS.

37. In addressing the priority of raising awareness on the part of policy planners and decision makers, involving all sectors at all levels of decision-making, the Committee and its Subcommittees, should underline the possibility of regional approaches, which might involve, in particular, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), taking into account the example of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

38. The Committee and its Member States should draw the attention of international and national space organisations to the role of space technology in support of achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and encourage them to promote awareness in this respect.

39. Likewise, the Committee and its Technical and Scientific Subcommittee should encourage relevant non-governmental space organisations to promote awareness on the role of space activities in support of achieving the internationally agreed development goals, and to provide the Committee with information on their respective outreach activities.

40. Building on the Internet-based survey conducted by the Action Team among the Member States and organisations having observer status with the Committee on their efforts to increase awareness of the importance of space activities, information on awareness-increasing efforts should be made available electronically through the Offices homepage and continue to be updated.