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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space****Implementation of the Plan of Action of the Committee on
the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the implementation of
the recommendations of the Third United Nations
Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer
Space: strategy of the Office for Outer Space Affairs****Note by the Secretariat**

1. In its resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004, the General Assembly endorsed the Plan of Action as proposed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in its report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) (A/59/174) and agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat should review the activities included in the Plan of Action for implementation by the Office and submit its proposal to the Committee at its forty-eighth session, in 2005, on how those activities could be included in its programme of work.
2. The strategy of the Office for carrying out the activities identified for implementation by the Office in the Plan of Action was presented to and considered by the Committee during its forty-eighth session, from 8 to 17 June 2005.¹
3. The annex to the present document contains the strategy of the Office as agreed upon by the Committee at its forty-eighth session. (The paragraph numbers in parentheses in the attached report refer to paragraphs in document A/59/174.)

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/60/20), para. 42.*



Annex

Implementation of the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: strategy of the Office for Outer Space Affairs

I. Introduction

1. On 20 October 2004, the General Assembly conducted a five-year review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), which had been held in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999.^a For its review, the Assembly had before it the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, entitled “Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space” (A/59/174).

2. The report of the Committee demonstrated the important progress that had been achieved in turning into reality the possibilities enunciated in “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”,^b adopted by UNISPACE III. The report presented the findings of the Committee following its analysis of the results of the follow-up actions taken to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the activities it proposed to turn those results into tangible benefits and indicated what those expected benefits would be. Together, those proposed activities represent the Plan of Action of the Committee to further develop and utilize space capabilities to meet the development goals emphasized by UNISPACE III, as well as by other global conferences held within the United Nations system, in particular the Millennium Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society (see paras. 130-166).

3. In its resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004, the General Assembly endorsed the Plan of Action as proposed by the Committee. The specific activities proposed in the Plan of Action are to be undertaken by Member States, entities of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other national and regional institutions, as well as by industry, to ensure that space is used to support comprehensive global agendas for sustainable development, to meet human development needs at the global level and for multisectoral capacity development. The Plan of Action also calls for the development of coordinated, global space capabilities. Within that framework the Committee identified specific activities that could be carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

4. The strategy of the Office to implement the activities contained in the Plan of Action of the Committee is described below.

II. Implementation of the activities contained in the Plan of Action

5. In reviewing the activities contained in the Plan of Action, the Office considered those which had been identified by the Committee to be carried out by the Office. The Office also considered the broader goals of the Plan with a view to providing support, where possible and appropriate, for other activities in the Plan that would be implemented by the Committee, Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

6. Following a review of the current programme of work of the Office, as well as of its existing human and financial resources, the Office determined that a number of activities could be incorporated into its programme of work by redefining operational priorities while maintaining current commitments and without the need for additional human or financial resources. A few actions were identified as requiring a minimal amount of additional human and/or financial resources. The Office also concluded, however, that some of the activities identified in the Plan of Action for implementation by the Office could only be carried out if adequate additional human and financial resources were provided for them.

A. The use of space to support comprehensive global agendas for sustainable development

7. The Office will be able to incorporate into its programme of work a number of activities that can support and strengthen the work of the Committee relating to the use of space to support comprehensive global agendas for sustainable development. Those activities include:

(a) Assisting the Committee to establish a closer link between it and the Commission on Sustainable Development (para. 232);

(b) Assisting the Committee to coordinate the compilation of specific inputs proposed by the action teams that are relevant to the thematic clusters of the Commission (para. 232);

(c) Assisting the Committee in coordinating the implementation of the work plan to develop a comprehensive, worldwide environmental monitoring strategy (para. 243). This would involve coordination between the implementation of the work plan proposed by the action team on this subject and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems being established by the Group on Earth Observations and similar work being carried out by others.

8. To promote and advocate the operational use of Earth observations and its role in managing natural resources, the Office will be able to incorporate into its programme of work the following activities: hosting the compilation of best practices in the use of Earth observation data in natural resource management, building on those developed by the Action Team on the Management of Natural Resources, on the website of the Office (para. 248). The regular maintenance of those best practices (collecting, compiling and updating the information for best practices) would require minimal voluntary financial contributions to cover the cost of two to three months of short-term contractual work.

9. The Office could incorporate into its programme of work the organization of specialized training courses on the operational use of Earth observations, in cooperation with the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations (para. 248). While the Office could cover the expenses of a small number of trainees from its fellowship budget, additional voluntary financial contributions would be required to cover the air travel and living expenses for others. The Office would also need to reach agreement with each of the centres on the cost implications for the centres.

B. Developing coordinated, global space capabilities

10. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 59/2, the General Assembly, agreed that a study should be conducted on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means for realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management and that the study should be prepared by an ad hoc expert group, with experts to be provided by interested Member States and relevant international organizations, as proposed in the Plan of Action of the Committee (A/59/174, paras. 256-261). The Office has already incorporated into its programme of work substantive and secretariat support for these activities. The activities the Office has already taken pursuant to resolution 59/2 and those which it will take in the future are the following:

(a) Issuance of invitations to Governments to nominate participants for the ad hoc expert group to conduct the study on the possibility of establishing a disaster management international space coordination entity and coordination of organization of the work involved;

(b) Participation in the steering committee established by the ad hoc expert group and assistance with the preparation of the draft terms of reference for the group and the outline of the study, including the preparation of a case history of the benefits of using space technologies for disaster management;

(c) Arrangements for the steering committee to present its draft terms of reference to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session, as well as the proposal on how the study could be reviewed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

(d) Organization of a meeting of the expert group in May 2005 to discuss all the aspects of the study and a further meeting on 13 June 2005 for the group to finalize its progress report to the Committee;

(e) The Office will study, together with the ad hoc expert group, the possibility of establishing pages on its website for improved access to archives of Earth observation data. This would require voluntary cash or in-kind contributions for the development of the structure, content and updating of the web pages;

(f) Following review by the Committee of the progress made by the expert group, the Office will continue to provide secretariat and substantive support for the final preparation of the study.

11. Should the Committee recommend the establishment of a disaster management international space coordination entity, and depending on the governance model

adopted, the Office would need to assess what its resource requirements would be for its continued support to the coordination entity.

12. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 59/2, the General Assembly invited global navigation satellite system (GNSS) and augmentation providers to consider establishing an international committee on GNSS as proposed in the Plan of Action of the Committee (A/59/174, paras. 265-269). The Office has already incorporated secretariat and substantive support for this activity. The activities that the Office has undertaken pursuant to resolution 59/2 and will take in the near future are the following:

(a) Organization of three meetings for interested providers and organizations representing large groups of users of GNSS in order to discuss the objectives and draft terms of reference for an international committee on GNSS;

(b) The Office will invite Governments of GNSS and augmentation providers, as well as the relevant organizations, to a meeting organized by it to establish the international committee on GNSS;

(c) The Office will offer to act as a transitional secretariat for the international committee on GNSS while the committee establishes its operating procedures;

(d) The Office will develop and maintain a website to include information, inter alia, on recent application developments, training opportunities and sources for obtaining assistance in integrating GNSS into national infrastructure. The maintenance of the website would require minimal voluntary financial contributions to cover the cost of two to three months of short-term contractual work.

C. The use of space to support specific agendas to meet human development needs at the global level

13. The Office can integrate into its regular programme of work the provision of basic secretariat services required to support the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies to improve medical and public health services through the use of space technologies (para. 276). The following activities could be considered:

(a) The organization of workshops and short-term training courses to improve medical and public health services through the use of space technologies could be included in the schedule of regular activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications making use of existing human and financial resources;

(b) Convening, in cooperation with the World Health Organization and other relevant entities of the United Nations system, international organizations and Member States, of an international conference on telemedicine for experts and government officials, as well as decision makers, would require the commitment of significant additional human and financial resources and could only be undertaken if the necessary additional human and financial resources were provided;

(c) The organization of workshops and short-term training courses to improve medical and public health services through the use of space technologies could also be included in the schedule of the regional centres for space science and

technology education affiliated to the United Nations, under conditions similar to those indicated in paragraph 9 above.

D. Comprehensive capacity development

14. The Office carries out activities to increase awareness, promote knowledge-sharing and improve capacity-building on all matters related to space activities. To further increase awareness of the benefits of space in improving the economic and social welfare of humanity, the Office would need additional resources to be able to incorporate into its programme of work all the activities needed to support the Committee's initiatives to contribute to the work of other United Nations conferences and their outcomes (para. 288). Activities that could be undertaken by the Office would include the following:

(a) Strengthening contacts between the Office and the secretariats of other United Nations entities;

(b) Monitoring of work being conducted by those bodies and carrying out research to prepare background information materials for the Committee on the subjects of upcoming global conferences and outcomes of past conferences that could be of interest to the Committee. Additional human resources in the form of voluntary contributions for associate experts and/or voluntary contributions to cover the cost of short-term contracts at the Professional level would be required;

(c) If the secretariat were to be authorized or requested to present the views of the Committee at intergovernmental meetings, additional financial resources for the related travel expenses would be required.

15. The electronic dissemination of information to increase awareness of the importance of space activities could be integrated into the current efforts of the Office in this regard (para. 293). Minimal additional financial resources to cover the cost of short-term contracts might be necessary to ensure continuity in the regular collection, management and updating of that information.

16. To enhance capacity-building in space-related activities, the Office could, without the need for additional human or financial resources, integrate into its programme of work the following activities:

(a) Creation of a link to the Earth observation education and training Internet web portal of the Working Group on Education, Training and Capacity-Building of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (para. 301);

(b) Contribution to the information available in portal education;

(c) Dissemination, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the regional centres, of a list of international activities carried out around the world through the website of the Office to strengthen the capacity of developing countries (para. 303);

(d) Enhancement of efforts to include teachers, young professionals and decision makers in its ongoing capacity-building activities in order to support the Space Education Programme of UNESCO as a contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 to 2014) (para. 304);

(e) Increased efforts to encourage the participation of youth in workshops and symposiums organized by the Office and, in cooperation with the Space Generation Advisory Council, to promote their participation also in workshops of relevant organizations as a means of encouraging youth to take part in space activities (para. 306);

(f) Inclusion on the agenda of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities of an item relating to discussion of ways and means of coordinating capacity-building activities in space-related areas at the policy level (para. 305);

(g) Organization of a meeting of interested member States, space agencies and other relevant space institutions to identify parties willing to support the activities listed above and those mentioned in paragraph 17 below (para. 308).

17. To support the activities of the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, the Office could carry out the following:

(a) Support to Member States that have established space agencies in the development of a database of experts from space agencies who could assist the regional centres in providing specialized training, as well as making space-related education and training materials available for use by the regional centres (para. 302). This would require minimal additional financial resources, to cover the cost of short-term contracts;

(b) Support to space agencies in the development and distribution of educational booklets covering the fundamentals of space science that could serve as educational tools for young people in all countries (para. 307). This would require voluntary contributions to cover the costs of reproduction and shipping of materials that could not be placed on the website of the Office.

18. In order to identify sources of financing to support development activities with space activities, the Office could include in its programme of work the following activity within existing resources: assistance to the Action Team on New and Innovative Sources of Funding, or to member States and space-related organizations interested in implementing the recommendations of the Action Team, to organize workshops for experts in development banks and aid agencies by conducting the basic groundwork research necessary and assisting with programme development (para. 313).

19. Building capacity in space law is one of the priority areas to which the Office will continue to devote particular attention. To enhance its workshops and training courses, the Office will approach member States and national and international space law institutions to invite them to co-sponsor activities in this area in a similar manner as the scientific and technical activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications are co-sponsored. In addition to organizing the annual workshops on space law, the Office will carry out the following activities within its programme of work:

(a) Enhancement, with the assistance of Member States, of the collection of national space legislation and policy documents;

(b) Regular updating of the directory of institutions that offer education in space law and related issues;

(c) Provision of assistance, within the currently available human and financial resources, to the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, in organizing short-term workshops on space law by developing a model education curriculum for short-term training courses on space law, to be integrated into the programme of the regional centres (para. 321).

20. To maximize the impact of current efforts, the Office could improve its services in the area of space law through the following activities, which could be included in the programme of work of the Office if additional human and financial resources were made available:

(a) Provision of support for national and other regional/international efforts to build capacity in space law;

(b) Provision of technical legal assistance to Member States requiring assistance in the implementation of the United Nations treaties on outer space in the development of their national space legislation and policy;

(c) Improvement of the availability of space law education in national institutions.

21. The Office, with the assistance of member States, can strengthen its capacity to provide technical assistance to support the operational use of space technologies in such areas as environmental monitoring, management of natural resources, disaster management, GNSS and telemedicine (para. 322). The following activities could be included in the programme of work of the Office within existing resources:

(a) Establishment of a roster of experts who could provide technical advice in some of the above-mentioned areas as well as in space law;

(b) Preparation and/or compilation of information materials and reference resources relating to space applications.

22. The provision of technical assistance to Member States and relevant regional and international organizations to initiate pilot projects to build national and regional capacity relating to space science, technology and their applications and in space law (para. 322) would require a reorientation of priorities and/or additional resources.

III. Definition of operational priorities

23. In preparing to accommodate as many of the activities called for in the Plan of Action of the Committee as possible in its programme of work, the Office is redefining its internal operational priorities. In this still ongoing process, the Office has reviewed its strengths and weaknesses bearing in mind the changing context and nature of demands on the Office. The operational priorities of the Office will build upon its strengths and will reflect changes needed to improve programme delivery and give greater value to all Member States and their institutions as well as to other stakeholders (e.g. specialized agencies of the United Nations and space-related intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations).

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24. Integrating space capabilities into national development programmes and strengthening the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, are among the operational priorities being formulated by the Office.
25. With an increase in the awareness of the capabilities of space applications and a decrease in the cost of space products and ancillary equipment, a growing number of developing countries are requesting assistance in developing pilot projects that could demonstrate to high-level decision makers the cost-effectiveness of those applications in economic and social national development programmes (e.g. management of water resources, disaster reduction, tele-health and telemedicine for rural areas). The technological capabilities have already been amply demonstrated; what is at stake is determining the cost-benefit ratio. The pilot projects would also serve to establish the methodology and initial “know-how” within space- or non-space-related national institutions wishing to incorporate the use of the technology into their programmes at an operational level.
26. The type of capacity-building that is required is different from what is provided by a workshop that discusses issues or raises awareness; it is also different from the specific but narrow education or training that is provided by training courses. Rather, what is required is the ability to clearly identify a problem to be solved (in terms of the non-space final user or beneficiary) and the solution(s) that can be provided by space technology and to include these in a project proposal that would be carried out by a multidisciplinary team, including relevant local or external funding entities. The Office has some experience in launching such projects.
27. To enhance the Office’s capacity to provide technical and legal advisory services and to initiate pilot projects, the Office would need to increase its extrabudgetary funding sources.
28. The regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, located in Africa (Morocco and Nigeria), Asia and the Pacific (India) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil and Mexico), are well placed to provide the needed capacity-building. To strengthen those efforts, the Office will promote cooperation with and support for the centres among member States at the regional and international levels. The Office will also launch a support campaign for the centres among space-related institutions and relevant companies.
29. In addition, in order to improve its capacity to implement all the activities listed, the Office will need to develop a fund-raising strategy. As mentioned above, the Office can only implement a number of important activities if additional staff and financial resources can be found. Among those are the provision of technical assistance to Member States in relation to space science and technology and space law and the development and implementation of pilot projects that build operational capacity.
30. One of the immediate priorities for the Office will be to improve awareness of the benefits of space science and technology. As the website of the Office is proving to be an extremely useful and powerful tool for disseminating information, the Office will be undertaking a major overhaul of the site to significantly improve the management of information and to accommodate the various recommendations of the Committee with regard to the website.

IV. Conclusion

31. As the body responsible for implementing the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space, the Office for Outer Space Affairs remains fully committed to assisting Member States as well as space-related intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in their efforts to translate into reality the vision imparted by UNISPACE III and the five-year review.

Notes

^a *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3).

^b *Ibid.*, chap. I, resolution 1.
