Opening Speech by Mr. Niklas Hedman
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UNITED NATIONS/UKRAINE WORKSHOP ON SPACE LAW 2006

"Status, Application and Progressive Development of International and National Space Law"

6-9 November 2006
Kyiv, Ukraine

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, to the Fifth United Nations Workshop on Space Law, which is being jointly organized by the United Nations, the Government of Ukraine, and the International Center for Space Law.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Ukraine, the National Space Agency and the International Center for Space Law, which have provided essential assistance to the Office in making the workshop happen by supporting the participation of a number of experts, organizing special events for the participants and providing the excellent meeting facilities for the duration of this workshop.

I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank our speakers and chairpersons, who have generously given us their time and expertise to ensure that participants enjoy the maximum benefits from this workshop.

This workshop on space law is the fifth in a series of workshops that the Office has organized with the intention to build capacity in space law. The series of workshops uses a multi-leveled approach that seeks to increase knowledge and awareness of the international treaties and principles on outer space developed under the auspices of the United Nations, and to provide a basis for their implementation on a practical level through the development and administration of domestic legislation and regulatory regimes.

I would like to recall the Action Plan of the United Nations Strategy for an Era of Applications of International Law, which was disseminated by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2000. Under that Action Plan, United Nations Offices were encouraged to promote the understanding and acceptance of international law as it related to their work.

I would also like to recall the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna in 1999, which called for action to promote the development of space law to meet the needs of the international community. The importance of the development of space law was re-affirmed by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in its report to the General Assembly on the occasion of the Assembly's review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in 2004. In its Plan of Action to further develop space capabilities to meet

the development goals emphasized by UNISPACE III, the Committee agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should strengthen its capacity building activities in space law and continue to organize the series of workshops on space law. The first workshop was held in the Netherlands in 2002, the second in the Republic of Korea in 2003, the third in Brazil in 2004 and the fourth in Nigeria last year.

It is within this context that, together with the Government of Ukraine, we have organized this fifth workshop to provide an overview of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space; to examine and compare various aspects of existing national space laws and the further development of national space legislation; and, to consider the current state of university level studies/programmes in space law, and ways of enhancing their availability for the benefit of countries in the region.

Bearing this in mind, I would like to briefly touch upon the aims of this workshop:

First, the Office hopes this workshop will promote understanding, acceptance and implementation of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, particularly in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, taking into consideration that a successful implementation and application of the international legal framework governing space activities depends on the understanding and acceptance of those legal treaties and principles, by policy-and-decision makers. Today it has become increasingly important to ensure that space law and policy, including the ratification of the United Nations treaties on outer space, is

considered a matter of priority by all countries involved in space activities.

Given the growing number of benefits derived from the use of space applications, the conduct of space activities by States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, continues to expand. These advances, together with the emphasis placed annually by the General Assembly and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the importance of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, have made the development of space law and policy a priority for a growing number of countries.

A second objective of this workshop is to promote the exchange of information on national space laws and policies, for the benefit of professionals involved in their development and implementation, bearing in mind that the development of space law and policy in a country relies on the presence of suitable professionals able to disseminate information and knowledge on the existing legal framework governing activities in outer space.

Third, this workshop will also consider the development of university level studies and programmes in space law, with a view to promoting national expertise and capability in this field. The availability of such professionals is determined by the availability of educational opportunities and institutions that address the subject of space law and policy.

And, *fourth*, the workshop will consider issues relating to the commercial activities in the field of exploration and use of outer space. As the space sector is increasingly becoming part of the general civil economy of states, corresponding legal regulations, developed at efficient and effective regulatory level, are required. It is important to recognize the prevailing authority of international space law and its fundamental principles, in emerging national norms relating to commercial space activities.

Distinguished Participants,

The Office is continuously building up an information network for professionals interested or actively involved in the development of space law. We will be adding the names and contact details of all participants of this workshop to a mailing list of the Office, for the purpose of disseminating updated information on space law in the future.

We look forward to staying in touch with as many of you as possible, and will do our utmost to meet any requests for information in the years ahead.

I trust that you are looking forward to a particularly work-intensive and interesting session, and I sincerely hope that this workshop will be useful to your current and future work.

Thank you for your attention.