

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space***Unedited transcript*534th Meeting

Wednesday, 8 June 2005, 10 a.m.

Vienna

*Chairman: Mr. A. A. Abiodun (Nigeria)**The meeting was called to order at 10.21 a.m.*

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, Mr. Ping, the President of the General Assembly, distinguished delegates and representatives, let me say good morning and welcome to Austria.

I now declare open the forty-eighth session and the 534th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

In this connection, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency, Mr. Jean Ping, the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon, who has kindly agreed to attend this opening meeting and to address us this morning.

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 12)

Distinguished delegates, you have before you, for your approval and adoption, the Provisional Agenda for the session, contained in document A/AC.105/L.258 and Corrigendum 1. This Provisional Agenda has been prepared on the basis of the agreement reached at the 2004 session of the Committee, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/116, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/2 that resulted from the Assembly's review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, otherwise known as UNISPACE III, five years after the Conference. An indicative schedule of work is set out in the Annex to that document. Please note that the annotations and the indicative schedule of work are not part of the agenda

for adoption by the Committee and we should proceed with the adoption of the agenda itself.

Any comments on the agenda?

If I hear no objections, may I take it that the agenda is agreeable to you all and, therefore, adopted?

It is so decided.

Attendance by non-members of the Committee

Distinguished delegates, I would like to inform the Committee that I have received requests from the Governments of Angola, Bolivia, Finland, Holy See, Paraguay, Switzerland, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe seeking permission to attend the current session of the Committee as observers. I, therefore, suggest that, in conformity with past practice, we invite these representatives of those States to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate.

That is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decisions of the Committee concerning status. It is a courtesy that we customarily extend to such delegations.

Do we all agree that these observers that I have mentioned be invited without any objections?

I see none.

It is so decided.

Statement by the Chairman Part 1 (agenda item 3)

In its resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that, beginning with its thirty-ninth session, the Committee would be provided with unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. This record contains the texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages as transcribed from taped recordings. The transcripts have not been edited or revised.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week of the date of publication, to the Chief, Conference Management Service, Room D0708, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria. Corrections will be issued in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Distinguished delegates, I would now like to move to the next item on the agenda and present part of my statement to the Committee, that I am saying that my statement this morning is divided into two parts which is unusual but in order to give our august visitor ample time to carry out his business here in Vienna, I will only make the first part of my statement and give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ping to make his own statement. And following His Excellency's statement, I will highlight the major issues that are before the Committee at the current session.

Is this agreeable to you all?

It is so decided.

Distinguished delegates, Your Excellency Mr. Ping, President of the General Assembly, distinguished representatives, I am pleased to see all of you again coming from all parts of the world to participate in, as well as contribute to the deliberations of the forty-eighth session of this august body, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. As you are all aware, for almost half a century, this Committee has witnessed and has been at the centre of humankind's amazing journey through outer space, particularly the solar system and beyond. In just over 50 years, the progress achieved and the benefits being derived from the exploration and use of outer space have been breathtaking. In the footsteps of these advances, the Committee has actively promoted efforts aimed at bringing the benefits of space technology to Earth in order to ensure sustainable development for all. Thus, I am honoured to appear before you all as your Chairman for the second year.

Distinguished delegates, you would recollect that at our meeting last June, you all, by consensus, recommended to the General Assembly to admit the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Royal Kingdom of Thailand as new members of this Committee. You would also recollect that in its resolution 59/116, the General Assembly accepted your recommendations and approved both Libya and Thailand as new members of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I am very pleased to welcome and congratulate our two new members of the Committee, Libya and Thailand. As observers, both countries participated actively in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees. I am confident that both Libya and Thailand will strengthen the Committee and contribute to furthering its goals of promoting international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, since we met in this room last June, several developments have taken place in the area of the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space. Many countries represented here today can proudly celebrate their great achievements.

For example, this past May, India successfully launched its first satellites to be used for helping mapmakers and amateur radio operators. NASA and ESA missions to Mars continue to operate and send back home very valuable data. In January of this year, the Huygens Probe landed successfully on the surface of Saturn's Moon, Titan. That was the first landing to take place in the outer solar system and the furthest from Earth. A Deep Impact mission was successfully launched in January to impact Comet Tempel 1. The first mission to orbit Mercury, the Messenger spacecraft was launched in August 2004 to enter orbit around Mercury in the year 2011.

I would also like to highlight the importance of the successful missions by SpaceShipOne, the first manned space launch vehicle, developed entirely by the private sector, including its financing. Events such as this open new horizons for speedier and more comprehensive exploration of outer space.

I would like to commend the efforts of those members of this Committee that maintain and further develop the International Space Station. Expedition-10, consisting of Astronaut Leroy Chiao of the United States and Cosmonaut Salidjan Sharipov of the Russian Federation, successfully arrived to the Station in October 2004. They were replaced by Expedition-11, consisting of Astronaut John Phillips of the United States and Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev of the Russian Federation, in April this year. It is my pleasure to congratulate these explorers.

In the same breath, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on the fiftieth anniversary of the Baikonur Cosmodrome, which has been the launching point for numerous successful space missions.

Distinguished delegates, in order to have a better appreciation of the importance of our work, let me place the work of this Committee in a historical perspective. Forty years ago, the Soviet Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov became the first human every to perform a space walk. It was also 40 years ago that the United States of America launched its manned space programme. These spectacular and great achievements became the forerunners of and set the pace for today's accomplishments and the aspirations that members of

this Committee hold for the future. Today, humankind is able to discover and observe planets beyond the solar system. In the next 10 to 15 years, we are likely to see numerous successful missions to asteroids and to the Moon and the planets in our solar system. How long it may be to reach these planets or particularly those planets that are beyond our solar system is a fascinating question that is being addressed in many quarters globally. For example, the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. initiated the Human Space Exploration Initiative in June 2003. This initiative is meant to be a visionary project as well as an international assessment of the near-term realities of space exploration. In October last year, the French Centre for the United States at IFRI and the International Space University, co-organized the first workshop, under this initiative, on the Future of Human Space Exploration. It was organized in October last year in Paris. Similarly, the Foundation for the Future, an organization based in Bellevue in the State of Washington, United States, will organize its Humanity Three Thousand Workshop No. 3, in Bellevue, 23 to 26 June this year. The focus of that particular Workshop is "Humans and Space: The Next Thousand Years".

As we look to the future, one of the most revolutionary achievements that we expect at this stage is the development and operation of a Crew Exploration Vehicle, which the scientists and engineers of the United States have already started work.

We are also observing significant progress in various applications of space technology for the improvement of life here on Earth. The agenda items before this Committee at this session, which include space applications for tele-health and tele-education, water resource management, disaster management and navigation systems for civil transportation and rescue operations, and even archaeology, are a testimony to that development.

Another positive development in more recent times is the growing number of States that are demonstrating space capabilities. Only 20 years ago, no more than six States owned most of the Earth observing satellites. Today, over 20 nations own and operate such satellites. Satellites are now also owned, launched and operated by private companies. Looking towards the future, we expect that more than a hundred Earth observation satellites will be launched in the coming decade. As satellite-acquired data are integrated with non-space-acquired information to produce total knowledge-based information, decision makers around the world will be able to view changes to the Earth's environment and monitor the impact of

disasters as they unfold. In the coming decade, software applications that are updated by satellites, in real-time, will allow managers to better visualize the Earth and to immediately model their decisions accordingly.

Mr. President of the General Assembly, distinguished delegates and representatives, all of you are also witnesses to the efforts of the United Nations in becoming a better fitted organization for today's challenges. A case in point is the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, established by the United Nations Secretary-General. In its final report, titled "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility", this Panel identified six clusters of threats that should be of concern for the world now and in the years ahead. Space applications are instrumental means in meeting a number of these clusters, including the threats of poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation. May I emphasize to you all that this Committee is committed to serve as a vital forum for new initiatives aimed at meeting these and other challenges that face humanity.

Distinguished delegates, let me also remind all of us of the historical antecedents of this Committee. Such a reflection, I believe, will bring into sharper focus what is expected of this Committee and its Subcommittees in the years ahead. Since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1959, that is fifty years ago, this Committee has successfully resolved various complex issues and has registered an outstanding record of achievements, while maintaining consensus in the process. I wish to specifically note that the Committee was instrumental in the adoption, by the General Assembly, of five United Nations treaties and five sets of principles, all of which have collectively established the international legal framework for peaceful space activities.

The Committee also played a key role in the organization of three United Nations conferences on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. One of the main by-products of the first of these conferences was the establishment of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Since its inception, the Programme has provided effective ways for developing and strengthening the indigenous capacity of developing countries to master and apply relevant aspects of space science and technology in their social and economic development programmes. Following UNISPACE '82, this Committee strengthened the Programme and supported its drive to establish United Nations affiliate Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, which are a reality today. And as we are all aware, UNISPACE III

has provided additional impetus for reinforcing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefits of humanity.

Distinguished delegates, the year 2004 was a milestone in our work. As you are all aware, in October last year, the General Assembly, under the leadership of the President, who is sitting right here with us, reviewed the progress attained in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, and endorsed the Plan of Action, as proposed by the Committee in its report to the General Assembly. You will also recall that the Plan of Action calls for a number of activities to further implement the recommendations of "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" that was adopted by UNISPACE III. The Plan of Action also aimed at contributing to the achievement of the targets set by the Millennium Declaration, particularly as articulated in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

I am particularly pleased to associate myself with the conclusion of the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that we have now entered a new phase in the way we work and that further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III should build upon the work already accomplished by the Action Teams established by this Committee.

Specifically, this Committee should go beyond the reports of the Action Teams and engage itself with concrete implementation of the recommendations of the Action Teams. In case there are any impediments foreclosing their implementation, we need to know in order that we could collectively work towards overcoming such obstacles.

The report of the High Level Panel and the outcome of a number of United Nations global conferences, such as the 1992 Rio United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the Earth Summit, the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction have all identified many of the challenges currently faced by the world. Since the holding of UNISPACE III, it is apparent and very encouraging that this Committee has been synchronizing its work with the policy issues that have surfaced from these global conferences and initiatives. This is the context in which the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space operates today and will continue to organize its work in the future.

In this regard, and on behalf of this Committee, I hereby extend my sincere appreciation to the President of the fifty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency, Mr. Jean Ping, for his very kind support of the Committee and its work during the UNISPACE III + 5 review at the General Assembly last October. The President not only presided over the General Assembly session that reviewed the report of the Committee and subsequently endorsed its Plan of Action on UNISPACE III recommendations, he also participated in the panel organized that we organized during the fifty-ninth session on "Outer Space and the Global Agenda". I am pleased to note that the General Assembly also recommended in resolution 59/2 the organization of interactive panels as a means of conveying the essence of space-related issues to the General Assembly in the immediate future.

At this juncture, I would like to congratulate and sincerely thank Mr. Niklas Hedman of Sweden for skilfully guiding the Working Group established by the Committee to prepare the UNISPACE III + 5 report to the General Assembly. Both he and the Secretariat deserve our heartfelt appreciation for their commitment to the successful execution of this particular task. I am equally grateful to all of you that provided your support through your presence at both the 2004 General Assembly and the panel sessions. Finally, I hereby acknowledge all the governments and organizations that contributed to the work of all the Action Teams and who continue to support the Action Teams that are still working towards the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. But we maintain the momentum if we are to fully meet the goals we set ourselves at UNISPACE III and contribute to the global development objectives of the United Nations Millennium Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other similar world summits.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is encouraging that, following the UNISPACE III + 5 review and recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration to establish a global system to manage natural disasters, efforts have been taken here within the Committee to take the implementation to the next phase. In this connection, I want to address you about the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee this past February, particularly in its efforts to establish the terms of reference of an Ad Hoc Group of Experts to study the possibility of creating an international entity to coordinate and optimize the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management.

I am told that that particular exercise is going on particularly taking into consideration the 26 December 2004 tsunami that we had last year.

Again, in addition to the work of the Action Teams on GNSS, the General Assembly in resolution 59/2 noted that this particular Committee is going to establish what is known as an International Committee on GNSS. This Committee, before it finishes its work, will be briefed by this particular group on the progress attained up till now.

Mr. President and distinguished delegates, at the fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly charged this Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimensions of space science and technology. This Committee has, indeed, been contributing much towards the meeting of these targets, as set out in the Millennium Declaration. Our work on tele-health, education and the strengthening of decision in the management of natural resources, such as water and the mitigation of natural disasters exemplify the commitment and efforts of this Committee.

The above, notwithstanding, the Committee should and will continue to consider ways of raising the awareness of policy makers worldwide of the tremendous opportunities offered by space applications to the achievement of development goals. During the course of this session of the Committee, we will examine ways in which this Committee could contribute to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly this September.

Distinguished delegates, I am confident that this Committee will continue to find innovative space-related solutions to the world's problems, while simultaneously promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

At this juncture, I would like to interrupt my presentation and suspend this statement while giving the floor to the President of the General Assembly to address us.

Sir, you have the floor..

Mr. J. PING (President, United Nations General Assembly): Thank you very much Mr. President.

(Continued in English) Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and representatives. It gives me great pleasure to address the opening meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The application of space science and technology to the issues confronting humanity has witnessed an increasingly important role over the past few years and the work of this Committee in promoting cooperation among nations in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space is an integral component of this positive trend.

Allow me, at the outset, to thank you, Chairman, in your capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and might I also thank the entire Committee, via you Sir, thank you for inviting me to take part in this meeting. I believe that the work conducted by the Committee is closely linked to the work of the other entities of the United Nations system and addresses a large number of the priority goals set by the General Assembly and, in particular, issues of sustainable economic and social development. And in such a context, I agree that this Committee has a particular sensitive task to accomplish during this session.

Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, the General Assembly will hold a High Level Plenary Meeting later this year at the beginning of its sixtieth session from the 14 to 16 September in order to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration as well as the integrated follow-up to other major United Nations conferences and summits in economic, social and other related fields.

The application of space science and technology has already made a valuable contribution to a number of the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, space techniques contribute to improving the effectiveness of areas as varied as the _____ *(not clear)* environment, the management of natural resources such as water and also the management of natural disasters and the improvement of public health.

In October 2004, the General Assembly reviewed the implementation of the recommendations of the major conferences held in the last decade and in particular the recommendations that resulted from the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Use of Outer Space, better known under the name of UNISPACE III.

The report of the Committee on the implementation of those recommendations has provided tangible examples of the contribution that space can make to the global development agenda. This contribution, for example, includes improving public health services by expanding and coordinating space-based services in order to control infectious diseases, as well as later on setting up an early warning system in this regard. The use of satellite techniques to help rural populations that do not have access to public health is important, in particular, because it can lead to communication with hospitals and provide access to medical expertise which is very often confined to cities and towns and in this way, in the health sector, space techniques could contribute more broadly to the implementation of the Sixth Millennium Development Goal, namely the campaign against HIV/AIDS and could also help in stemming and reversing malaria and other infectious diseases by 2015.

In the area of education, space science and technology could, thanks to programmes spread by satellite in the use of low-cost ESA(?) terminals, could contribute to the improvement of efforts in the rural areas, as well as looking into the Second Millennium Development Goal for the development which is designed to provide primary education for all.

These are just a few examples which demonstrate quite clearly the impact of space techniques and the role that such techniques can play when it comes to improving a destiny in the life of millions of people in the world. I welcome the fact that the Committee's report underlines the synergies which exist between the UNISPACE III recommendations, the conclusions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other global initiatives. However, I should underline that in order to succeed any assessment process must take into account two fundamental components, namely, assessing progress accomplished and developing a long-term vision for the future.

Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and representatives, the fact that the Action Plan set out by the Committee's report does, indeed, contain such a vision demonstrates quite appropriately to what extent the peaceful uses of outer space can contribute to the implementation of the international development agenda with the aim of achieving a fairer and more prosperous world. And it is this conviction that all the Member States of the United Nations continue to re-state, as is demonstrated by the preliminary conclusions of the draft Declaration of the High Level Plenary Meeting September 2005 and these are preliminary conclusions that I presented on Friday

3 June at the end of consultations held in New York between 6 April and 2 May. And I feel that a vision of this kind could be more effective and more promising by involving the establishment and improving of things between this Committee and the Sustainable Development Commission and I welcome the fact that in this session the Committee will be looking at all these issues of major importance. But whilst it is clear that the work done by the Committee by way of promoting international cooperation in the area of exploration and the peaceful uses of outer space, it is clear that this is an essential contribution to the United Nations agenda in terms of development, whilst this is clear it is important that such action should be backed and supported by strong political will. And at a time where the United Nations Organization is involved in an ambitious and necessary reform process and on the eve of the September 2005 Summit Meeting where our leaders will be taking major decisions, it is appropriate that we be really conscious and aware of the whole range of science and technology in general and space technology in particular when it comes to improving the circumstances of human life.

Therefore, I should like to take the opportunity of this meeting, once again, to encourage you in your work and to assure you once again of the full support of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. President, on behalf of all the delegates and representatives present in this room, I want to thank you for honouring us with your presence this morning and for addressing us so eloquently. I have been advised that you are just about to leave but I am wondering whether one or two of our delegates who are wishing, itching to ask one or two questions from you, whether you have time to.

We have five minutes. So distinguished delegates, the floor is open for His Excellency to take one or two comments or questions on his address to you this morning or even beyond his address on the work he is undertaking at the High Level Panel.

Any questions? Any comments?

No comments?

OK. Thank you very much Sir and we are very grateful for your presence.

Statement by the Chairman Part 2 (agenda item 3)

Distinguished delegates and representatives, we shall now continue with our work and I will conclude my statement by going through the agenda before us. But before doing so, because I was conscious of time limitation for the President of the General Assembly, I omitted one or two paragraphs and I am sure some people noted that when I was speaking.

Particular what I omitted could be shared among us very easily and that is, what I wanted to say was the following that UNISPACE III, the Committee and its two Subcommittees had reviewed their agendas to better suit the spirit of the Vienna Declaration. Accordingly, the Committee now spends more time on issues that are crucial to achieving and sustaining human development globally. In this connection, I would like to commend the Committee on this new dimension of its work and emphasize that it is important to continuously review and update our agenda, bearing in mind that space is a rapidly developing and expanding frontier.

In this connection, I would like to express my deep appreciation and that of the Committee, to Ambassador Dumitru Dorin Prunariou of Romania and Professor Sergio Marchisio of Italy, respectively the Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical and the Legal Subcommittees for the vast and important work they both accomplished this year through their Subcommittees. They both utilized their outstanding skills in diplomacy and hands-on experience in space exploration in the various uses of space applications as well as on the legal issues. Specifically, they successfully moved forward the implementation of the Plan of Action for the further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and contributed profound understanding to the various legal issues before their Subcommittees.

I would also like to thank all the Chairs of the Working Groups that were convened during the two Subcommittees for their support, excellent work and commitment. Their proficient handling of the issues before the Working Groups was vital to the success of the Subcommittees.

So that was the part of the Part 1 that I never made.

While I am continuing, let me say to all of you that we have a very heavy work schedule before us. Before we move to the next agenda item, I would like to outline the major issues that the Committee has before it at this session. In the process, I will also

highlight the achievements of the Scientific and Technical and the Legal Subcommittees, which held their sessions earlier this year.

As I noted in the first part of my opening statement this morning, the year 2004 was an important year for this Committee. Through its successful five-year review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, the Committee added one more accomplishment to its record of work. The review was a necessary and an important exercise. It allowed us to take stock of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done in implementing the recommendations contained in "The Space Millennium". A few recommendations are now in their implementation stage and I look forward to the report on the progress attained to date on those recommendations during the course of our deliberations at this session.

Under the agenda item on the implementation of UNISPACE III, we will have an opportunity to examine the Plan of Action itself as adopted by the General Assembly in October last year and consider its implementation. In order to engage ourselves in constructive discussions, I would like to urge all of you to review the report of the Committee as contained in document A/59/174, and in particular its Chapter VI, which sets out the goals ahead of us.

I would now like to turn your attention to the work conducted this year by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee themselves.

As mentioned earlier, we are witnessing a significant expansion of space applications into initiatives to promote sustainable development. The past session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee provided us with up-to-date information on the most recent achievements in the space exploration and related applications. The Subcommittee also provided opportunities for discussions of the pressing scientific and technical issues related to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The Working Group of the Whole reconvened under the able chairmanship of Mr. Nasim Shah of Pakistan in order to consider the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. On behalf of the Committee, I hereby warmly congratulate Mr.

Nasim Shah for skilfully guiding the Working Group to achieve significant progress on all these matters.

The Working Group of the Whole also examined the outcome of the General Assembly's review of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and considered the Plan of Action to further implement those recommendations. At this session of the Committee itself, we will build upon the work conducted by the Subcommittee in relation to the Plan of Action.

Specifically, the Working Group focused on the following selected key areas.

One, maximizing the benefits of existing space capabilities for disaster management.

Two, maximizing the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems to support sustainable development.

And, three, enhancing capacity-building in space-related activities.

The Working Group also considered the contribution of the Committee to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, which will be held in September this year. At that time, the General Assembly will undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. I understand that the Office for Outer Space Affairs has done some preliminary research on this subject and will circulate relevant information to all of us at this session of the Committee. I look forward to our discussions on how we should contribute to the General Assembly's High Level Plenary Meeting in September.

I am pleased to note that the Action Teams on the Environmental Monitoring Strategy, that is Action Team 1, Weather and Climate Forecasting, Action Team 4, Knowledge-Sharing, Action Team 9, Sustainable Development, Action Team 11, and Near-Earth Objects, Action Team 14, will be continuing their work on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. I am also happy to note the efforts of the members of the Action Team on Global Navigation Systems, that is Action Team 10, towards the establishment of an International Committee on GNSS.

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications continues to play an important role in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III,

particularly in improving the capacity of developing countries to apply space technology to support their sustainable development efforts. On the basis of proposals made by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recommended the proposed activities of the Programme for approval by the Committee at this session as contained in the report of the Subcommittee.

As a former United Nations Expert on Space Applications, I, myself, am particularly pleased to note that the Programme on Space Applications is enhancing its scope of operation. For example, it is now focusing its attention on initiating and supporting the implementation of pilot projects as follow-up to past activities of the Programme. Such projects should be able to rely on the broad support of local experts, particularly those trained by the Programme over the years. We all look forward to the presentations of the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the implementation of such projects in the immediate future.

On this occasion, I wish to congratulate Ms. Alice Lee, the United Nations Expert on Space Applications and her staff for the excellent work of the Programme. The essential role that the Programme plays in assisting developing countries to build their space applications-related capacities is well known to us and globally as well. I wish all Member States to especially note that the success of the Programme in carrying out its mandate depends on your full and unflinching support.

The people and Government of Sweden have demonstrated such an unflinching support for the Programme for the past 15 years, by hosting and funding, for the benefit of 30 educators from the developing countries, an annual six-week "Remote Sensing Education for Educators" at both Stockholm University and at other supporting establishments in Sweden. As your Chairman and on your behalf, I sincerely congratulate and thank the people and Government of Sweden for their unswerving support of capacity-building in developing countries. It was our experience in Sweden that guided our approach to the establishment of the United Nations-affiliated Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education. Today, these Centres are a reality. Thus, I hereby challenge all other countries that are represented in this room here this morning, to kindly emulate the people and Government of Sweden. I know you can do it and I trust you will.

On matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, we shall continue to focus on those applications that contribute to a number of

development areas that feature prominently on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Given its tremendous benefits, building capacity in the application of remote sensing technology, particularly in developing countries, is critical to the acceleration of their social and economic development.

This Committee can also play a crucial role in promoting the sharing of expertise and knowledge in remote sensing through initiatives involving international cooperation. In this regard, I am pleased to note the international collaborative endeavours of several entities, such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, otherwise known as CEOS, the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, that is ISPRS, the International Astronautical Federation, IAF, and the Committee on Space Research, COSPAR. I am also pleased to draw your attention to the success of the third Earth Observation Summit, where over 50 countries established the Group on Earth Observations and endorsed a 10-year implementation plan for a "Global Earth Observation System of Systems", otherwise known as GEOS, which, among other things, will provide long-lasting benefits to the entire world by coordinating current and efficient(?) investments in Earth observation systems.

Space debris remains a major agenda item of the Subcommittee. This year, the Subcommittee reconvened its Working Group to consider the proposals of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, otherwise known as IADC, on space debris mitigation and the comments received by Member States on those proposals. On behalf of the Committee, I hereby thank Mr. Claudio Portelli of Italy for efficiently guiding the discussions in the Working Group on Space Debris. I am pleased to note that the Working Group agreed on a new multi-year work plan in developing a document on space debris mitigation. I would also like to emphasize and commend the constructive dialogue between the members of the Committee and IADC, as well as the Working Group's continuous intersessional work. In accordance with the agreement of the Subcommittee, the Working Group will hold an intersessional meeting on the margins of this session of the Committee next week, that is from 13 through 16 June in Conference Room VII.

The Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space made substantial progress this year. The Working Group amended the multi-year work plan of the Subcommittee to include the holding of a Joint Workshop with the International Atomic Energy Agency, that is IAEA, in February 2006. It also discussed a set of potential implementation options for establishing an

international technically-based framework _____ (*not clear*) and also the recommendations for the safety of planned and currently foreseeable nuclear power source applications in outer space. In accordance with the agreement reached at the Subcommittee, the Working Group will continue its work on the margins of this Committee and an intersessional meeting of the Working Group will be held next week beginning on Monday 13 June in Room C0713 at a time to be decided by the Chairman of the Working Group. We are all grateful to Ms. Alice Caponiti of the United States who successfully led the discussions of the Working Group during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in the absence of the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee continued to consider space-system-based tele-medicine under a three-year work plan. The Subcommittee heard a number of technical presentations and heard experiences and expertise in this field. I was really pleased to learn that the WHO and the International Society for Tele-Medicine participated in this session and presented their work on space-based tele-medicine systems to the Subcommittee. Through its work towards the cooperation of possible bilateral and multilateral projects aimed at developing space-system-based tele-medicine applications, the Subcommittee has a unique opportunity to bring new approaches to meeting internationally-agreed health-related development goals.

This also was the first year that the Subcommittee considered the item on near-Earth objects. In accordance with the work plan agreed under this item, the Subcommittee heard a number of interesting and very educative presentations on this subject. The Subcommittee provides an important forum for the exchange of information on activities on the detection and mitigation of potential threats to our planet from near-Earth objects. I would like to thank all delegations, and in particular the members of the Action Team on Near-Earth Objects, that is Action Team 14, for their active participation and contributions to the work of the Subcommittee on this subject.

The Subcommittee also started its consideration of space-system-based disaster management support under a three-year work plan. The discussions on this item were influenced, in part, by the devastating tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean region on 26 December last year. That tsunami was a

sobering realization of the destructive force of disasters and it certainly jarred the global community to evolve effective mechanisms for disaster prevention, reduction and mitigation.

Under this item, the Subcommittee heard a number of presentations that led to constructive discussions by delegates on various national and cooperative efforts in the use of space-based technologies to support disaster preparedness and response activities. The Subcommittee also considered the possible establishment of a global system to manage natural disaster mitigation, relief and prevention, as recommended in the Vienna Declaration and the General Assembly resolution 59/2 on the UNISPACE III + 5 review.

I am further pleased to note that the Ad Hoc Group of Experts conducting a study on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management has been very active during the intersessional period and will be holding a meeting on Monday 13 June to continue their work. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will present its progress report to the Committee at this session. I would like to express the Committee's appreciation to the experts for their hard work and I look forward to receiving their progress report.

During this year's session of the Subcommittee, the Committee on Space Research and the IAF organized a Symposium on "High-Resolution and Hyperspectral Satellite Data Integration for Precision Farming, Environmental Monitoring and Possible New Applications". On behalf of the Committee, I thank both COSPAR and IAF for organizing such a knowledge-rich and informative symposium and for their continued support of the work of the Subcommittee.

The draft agenda for next year's session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as recommended, includes amended and new work plans for the agenda items on space debris, use of nuclear power sources in outer space, near-Earth objects and space-system-based disaster management support. The Subcommittee has also recommended that it begin considering an agenda item on International Heliophysical Year 2007 under a three-year work plan.

At this juncture, distinguished delegates and representatives, I would now like to draw your attention to the work accomplished this year by the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session.

The Subcommittee reconvened its Working Groups on Matters relating to the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space, and Examination of the Preliminary Draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. The Subcommittee also established a Working Group on Practice of States and International Organizations in Registering Space Objects. The Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space was suspended until next year.

The Working Group on Matters Relating to the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space developed a plan for its future work. The Working Group on the Preliminary Draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment made substantial progress. The Subcommittee subsequently endorsed a report on the appropriateness of the United Nations serving as Supervisory Authority under the future Protocol on matters specific to space assets which is now before this Committee. The progress of the Working Group was made possible by the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group which had been established to work intersessionally, by electronic means, to consider the question of the appropriateness of the United Nations serving in such a capacity.

The Working Group on Practice of States and International Organizations in Registering Space Objects examined the reports submitted by Member States and international organizations on their practices in registering space objects, with a view to identifying common practices and making recommendations for enhancing adherence to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. The Subcommittee endorsed the agreement reached by the Working Group that, at its next session, the Working Group would focus on the harmonization of practices; the non-registration of space objects; the practice relating to the transfer of ownership of space objects in orbit; and the practice with regard to the registration and/or non-registration of foreign space objects.

On behalf of this Committee, I hereby congratulate Mr. José Monserrat Filho of Brazil, Mr. Vladimír Kopal of the Czech Republic and Mr. Niklas Hedman of Sweden for their skilful guidance as Chairpersons of these three Working Groups. I would also like to congratulate and thank Mr. René Lefeber of The Netherlands for his hard work and commitment as he ably coordinated the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Group that considered the question of the appropriateness of

the United Nations acting as Supervisory Authority under the future space assets Protocol.

Following past practices, the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law organized a symposium at the opening session of the Legal Subcommittee. This year, the Symposium examined recent developments in remote sensing of the Earth from outer space and discussed the desirability or otherwise of reviewing the 1986 United Nations Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space. The Symposium was very informative and generated great interest and educated input from the delegates of the Subcommittee. On behalf of this Committee, I commend the efforts of both IISL and ECSL in organizing this symposium.

The third United Nations Workshop on Space Law was hosted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro in November 2004. The Workshop increased awareness among government and public officials and representatives of academia in Latin America and the Caribbean of the importance of adherence to and implementation of the outer space treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation. I sincerely thank the organizers of that particular Workshop and I am pleased to note that the next United Nations Workshop on Space Law will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, in November this year for the benefit of Member States in Africa. I have been advised by the Nigerian delegation that it would tell this particular Committee at this session the exact timing of that particular Workshop.

Distinguished delegates, I would now like to turn our attention to other items on the agenda of this Committee at this session.

You all will recall that under the agenda item of Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes, the General Assembly agreed that the Committee could consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas. Under this agenda item, the Assembly also agreed that the Committee could consider the role that space technology could play in the implementation of the recommendations that emerged from the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the updated list of space-related initiatives and programmes carried out by relevant entities of the United Nations system and by members of this Committee that respond to the specific recommendations contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit. This list was distributed at the forty-second session of the Scientific

and Technical Subcommittee as document A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.4 and can be found on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in the documentation for that session of the Subcommittee. I am also told that copies indicated at CRP.5, if I am correct, will be distributed at this session of our Committee. I hereby urge all members of this Committee to make wide use of this valuable resource. I also invite you to continue to contribute relevant information in order to make the list as comprehensive and complete as possible so that it can continue to serve as a useful tool for end-users and space-capability providers who are implementing, or plan to implement, actions called for by the World Summit.

Under our agenda item on Spin-Off Benefits of Space Technology, we will have an opportunity to exchange information and learn from the experiences of members of this Committee in applying state-of-the-art developments in space to everyday life. Directly or indirectly, we are all daily consumers of space-related services and derived products and can thus attest to the fact that space science and technology and their applications make important contributions to improving our lives. I look forward to our discussions and presentations under this agenda item.

Space exploration and developments in space science motivate and inspire young people to study science and engineering. Education is one of the priority areas of our work and the work of the United Nations. Education is very critical to meeting the goals enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. I urge all delegates to actively participate in the discussions of the Committee on Space and Education under the agenda item on Space and Society. At this session we will particularly address: space applications to enhance educational opportunities, in particular for women and girls; benefits of space applications to medicine in rural areas; existing impediments to expanding the use of such space-based services and systems in developing countries as well as solutions to eliminating those impediments; and finally on development of a plan of action that would include plans for possible small projects.

I am very encouraged by the recent worldwide attention to finding appropriate solutions to global water-related problems. Worthy of note are the several initiatives launched by the United Nations in an effort to achieve sustainable water resources management. As you are all aware, last year, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed a group of high-level experts to his Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. The Board subsequently considered ways for mobilizing political support and financial resources to

ensure that the development targets on water and sanitation are met. Similarly, in the year 2002, the United Nations Millennium Project established a Task Force on Water and Sanitation. The Task Force considered the status of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation and developed an Action Plan to achieve Target 10 of Millennium Development goal 7 which calls for cutting in half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. And on 22 March this year, in order to ensure a greater focus of the international community on water-related issues, the United Nations launched the International Water for Life Decade.

At the operational level, I wish to call the attention of this Committee to the important work accomplished by Austria, the European Space Agency and the Office for Outer Space Affairs at a Symposium organized in Graz, Austria, last September. At that time, the three co-sponsors of the Symposium brought together decision makers from space agencies and national and international bodies dealing with water resource management. The deliberations of the Symposium were elaborated in a document titled "Graz Vision" which will be put into practice in a pilot project for the co-basin countries of Lake Chad.

Given all of the above, the decision of this Committee in 2003 to begin its consideration of Space and Water as an agenda item in 2004 could not have been more timely. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 59/116, we will continue to consider Space and Water as one of our agenda items at this session of this Committee. Apart from further elaborating on the discussions of this subject at the Committee's last session, in order to achieve more viable results, I would like to encourage all delegations to look into creating synergies with the other initiatives that I mentioned earlier, including, in particular, the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

In this connection, in its resolution 59/2, the General Assembly also requested this Committee to examine the contributions that could be made by space science and technology and their applications to one or more of the issues selected by the Commission on Sustainable Development as a thematic cluster and to provide substantive inputs for consideration by the Commission. This will be one of the issues for discussion by this Committee at this session, particularly on how to develop such a substantive contribution to the work of the Commission. I look forward to the constructive discussion on this issue.

On the question of the composition of the Bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, you all would recall that the General Assembly requested the Committee to reach agreement on all the officers of the Bureaux for the next two-year term starting in 2006. Reaching that agreement means at this particular session of this Committee. All delegates should kindly note that, in addition to the officers endorsed by their respective regional groups in 2004, the Group of Eastern European States has nominated Mr. Elöd Both of Hungary for the office of First Vice-Chairman of the Committee. I look forward to hearing from the Group of Asian States at this session of our Committee on its candidate for the office of Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee beginning next year. The decision to be communicated to us at this session.

Distinguished delegates, I would also like to recall that in its resolution 59/116, the General Assembly requested this Committee to consider ways to improve participation in its work by Member States and entities with observer status, with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard. I would like to bring to your attention that the General Assembly noted that each of the regional groups had responsibility to promote the participation of its Member States that are also members of this Committee in the work of this Committee and its subsidiary bodies. I look forward to our discussions at this Committee on this issue under this agenda item, that is Other Matters.

At this juncture, it is my pleasure to recall our collective invitation last session to Dr. Karl Doetsch of Canada, to address this session through a special presentation on the "Scientific and Technical Aspects of the Work of the Committee and the Way Ahead". At that time, Dr. Doetsch accepted our invitation. I spoke with him yesterday and he is fully prepared to inspire us with his visionary lecture. I ask you all to give him your maximum undivided attention when he addresses us at a time to be arranged by the Secretariat.

Following the decision of the Committee at its last session, the Office for Outer Space Affairs has organized a Symposium on "Space and Archaeology". The Symposium was organized in close collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, that is UNESCO, and the Institute for Global Mapping and Research of Austria. I look forward to the interesting presentations of the Symposium, which will be chaired by Mr. Mario Hernandez of UNESCO.

As we gather here for the forty-eighth session of our Committee, we do so with the full knowledge that our success in carrying out our tasks in the next eight working days is, in part, in the hands of the Secretariat. We recognize the invaluable contributions of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and its staff to the success of the General Assembly session last October, including the associated panel. Our work on UNISPACE III is continuing and the Action Teams will continue to count on the Office for Outer Space Affairs for necessary support. Dr. Camacho, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, on behalf of this Committee, I want to thank you personally and thank all the staff at the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the arduous tasks your office had undertaken to prepare for this session and the non-stop manner in which all of you would have to work during this session of this Committee, just as you have ably done in the past for all activities associated with COPUOS and its two Subcommittees. In that connection, may I also add the word "Gracias".

Before concluding, distinguished delegates and representatives, allow me to extend the warm congratulations of this Committee to Dr. V. E. Belov of Russia on his election, by the Board of the Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications, in April this year when they met in India. At that time, Dr. Belov was elected as the new Director-General of Intersputnik. His appointment, which is for a period of four years in the first instance, took effect from 15 April 2005. This Committee looks forward to continuing its excellent relationship with Intersputnik. I am confident that the new Director-General of Intersputnik will use his office to deepen the cooperation between COPUOS and Intersputnik for the benefit of all mankind.

On behalf of all of you, I want to thank the Austrian people who arranged to have the President of the General Assembly to be with us this morning and in particular we salute you Ambassador Walther Lichem for making that possible.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, our Committee should fully immerse itself in the issues I have hereby presented to you all. Together, and through the hard work of each and everyone of us at this session of this Committee, I am confident that we will meet our common goals and challenges.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Organization of work

Distinguished delegates, I would now like to make a few additional comments about the organization of our work, particularly in terms of schedule and practical arrangements for this session.

As in the past, the indicative schedule of work annexed to the Agenda, which was adopted by the Committee earlier this morning, will be followed in a flexible manner as much as possible and can be adjusted as we proceed with our work.

Our meetings will be held from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. It is important that we adhere to these starting times because we have only eight working days, let me say seven and a half working days because today is already cut in half. We need to make maximum use of the time allotted to us in order to be able to accomplish our mission and conclude our task next week, Friday.

I would also like to remind delegates that all meetings of the Committee will be held in this room, that is Conference Room III.

Before I introduce the next agenda item, which is the general exchange of views, do I have any comment from any delegate?

General exchange of views (agenda item 4)

If not, I would now like to begin our consideration of item 4 of our agenda, General Exchange of Views.

And the first speaker on my list is Bolivia, on behalf of GRULAC. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. Horacio Bazoberry OTERO (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you Mr. Chairman. First and foremost, I would like to express to you our gratitude for making possible in this forty-eighth session the visit of Mr. Jean Ping, the President of the fifty-ninth United Nations General Assembly session.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, I would like to express our satisfaction at seeing you elected to Chair the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

GRULAC is convinced that, under your stewardship, the work of this forty-eighth session will be successful. Likewise, we would like to extend greetings to the authorities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs that are at the Bureau with you and I

would like to congratulate them on their very efficient efforts.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, we would like to highlight, first and foremost, the Space Applications Programme and the results of the Working Group on Space Debris. We would also like to highlight the implementation of a global system for natural disaster management, a subject which is under ongoing discussion in this session and it is an issue which is of the highest priority for GRULAC.

With regard to the Legal Subcommittee, I would like to highlight the establishment of a Working Group in order to examine the viability and the appropriateness of the United Nations acting as Supervisory Authority in the area of the Protocol on Mobile Equipment, the Protocol which was open to signature in Cabot(?) City in November 2001.

It is our hope that the results of the Working Group's meetings will be clarity on this issue to which GRULAC assigns great importance.

Mr. Chairman, GRULAC is very pleased with the announcement by Ecuador that, in the context of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, they would be holding the Space Conference of the Americas, the Fifth Conference, in Quito, Ecuador, in July 2006. This decision on Ecuador's part contributes to the institutionalization of this very important regional event, promoting thereby the interests of the countries in the continent in the area of space. Likewise, GRULAC applauds the decision by the Government of Chile to offer to hold a preparatory meeting for the Conference during the International Air and Space Fair, FIDAE, which will be held in Santiago, Chile, in March of 2006.

In this regard, GRULAC wishes to convey its recognition to Colombia for their very efficient work in their capacity as the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Conference of the Americas which was held in Cartagena in May 2002 in compliance with the Cartagena Declaration and Plan of Action.

In developing this, the Assembly _____ (*not clear*) the United Nations acknowledged in resolution 57/20 the importance of this Conference in providing a mechanism for coordination and cooperation in the various areas of space science and technology in remote sensing, in tele-medicine, environmental protection and law in the region.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit, its use and applications including, amongst others, this fear of space communications, GRULAC wishes to reiterate its position that this is a natural resource, which is limited and which is running the risk of saturation. Therefore, GRULAC believes that its exploitation should be rational and should be extended to all countries regardless of their current technical capacities in order to provide them, in this way, with access to the geostationary orbit in equitable conditions, taking into account more specifically the needs and interests of developing nations, as well as the geographic co-position of specific countries and the agreement of the ITU.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of GRULAC for his statement.

I now invite Ambassador Lichem of Austria to address the Committee.

Mr. W. LICHEM (Austria): Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. We have been truly honoured this morning to have been able to initiate our deliberations in the presence of President Jean Ping, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon. What has been special about his presence was that we have had with a personality who in his personal, professional and political career has touched upon several of the issues which we have been dealing with here in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to articulate again our profound gratitude also to President Ping for his personal participation in and contribution to the High Level Panel organized at the United Nations in New York last fall on "Space for Development". We have also been grateful for his personally chairing the plenary session of the General Assembly dedicated to deliberations on UNISPACE III + 5.

Mr. Chairman, these are indeed historical times we are living for and with the United Nations. We have been asked to understand history, to respond, speaking with Arnold Toynbee, the classical definition of history, to the challenges of our times. As we meet here in Vienna in the presence of the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we may be asked as to how we relate our deliberations and conclusions to the key global agenda items of the community of nations, as they articulated in New York right now, and as they are debated in New York right

now, they will be decided on in a few months in New York, the challenges of advancing our development agenda, our security agenda, all of that in a setting of human rights, as the Secretary-General in his report has so clearly said, and the challenge, this fourth cluster of defining new policies and of moving towards global institutional innovation.

Mr. Chairman, in the context of this current discourse on the need for new policies and institutional reform, it is noteworthy that this Committee meets under the Chairmanship of an African expert in outer space affairs. The report by Geoffrey Sachs "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals" and by the Secretary-General "In Larger Freedom", as well as President Ping's now just last week published Draft Outcome Document recognize the international community's priority to meet the special needs of Africa. The members of this Committee are convinced that space can make an important and cost-effective contribution to meeting our objectives in both human development and in human security. This pertains in particular to the management, now I come to my hobby then right, of natural and environmental resources, including land and water resources.

One should mention in this context that, at the invitation of the United Nations and the European Space Agency, a meeting will take place at the VIC this coming Saturday, a meeting that will try to put into operation the application of space technology to the management of the water resources of the Lake Chad Basin shared by six African countries. It will be an important first attempt to move the exploratory and scientific work on space and water onto the operational level. This has been largely due to the Tiger Programme of the European Space Agency which has focused precisely on furthering space technology applications for water management in Africa. In regional workshops the interest and the preparedness of African countries to use space-based data in water management was tested and at the last meeting in Pretoria more than 90 pilot projects were submitted by African countries for future implementation. The Chad Basin project should thus not only be a concrete case of technology application but would be expected to act as a stimulator and a leader for other water management systems, national and, what we believe to be particularly important, international, throughout the African continent.

Mr. Chairman, Austria has strongly supported the creation of the agenda item Space and Water and has contributed to the preparatory work of both the space community and of the water managers. Last

year's Graz Symposium, which was mentioned by you, Mr. Chairman, worked on designing the concrete elements of a pilot project in this field. What are the elements of a pilot project? What has to be there? What do we have to think of? And I am pleased to mention here that next year's, or this year's Graz Symposium, with the title "Water For The World: Space Solutions for Water Management" will address the contribution of space to the sustainable management of water systems and convene again in an inter-disciplinary fashion space experts and water managers under the topic "Space Systems – Protecting and Restoring Water Resources".

Mr. Chairman, apart from the already traditional symposium in Graz, this past year was again a very successful period for the space community and the space institutions in Austria. Let me just mention a few dimensions of this Austrian work on Space. A principle highlight was the new creation of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency, which is the central Austrian institution for the promotion of research and innovation. The Aeronautics and Space Agency has been established within this Agency as the Austrian focal point for national and international space activities. It plays an important role in achieving the objectives in research and development, as defined by the Austrian Government and by the European Union.

During this past year, second calls of the Austrian Space Applications Programme and the Austrian test-bed for satellite-based navigation applications were launched. Within this Programme, funded by the Federal Ministry for Transportation, Innovation and Technology, priorities were set in tourism and leisure, personal navigation, search and rescue services, as well as fleet management as principle applications.

The large number of project proposals received reflected, to the satisfaction of the Government, the broad interest and an impressive response to the Ministry's efforts to support and strengthen the navigation market in Austria. Project results will be evaluated within a reasonable period of time and follow-up activities initiated in the most promising areas.

The Austrian Space Applications Programme is addressed to Austrian scientists, research institutions, small- and medium-sized enterprises and industry. Fifteen selected projects are currently supported.

In addition to its national activities in space research and space technology applications, Austria

continues to contribute to and participate in the European Space Agency and EUMETSAT programmes related to science and exploration, launches, Earth observation, meteorology, telecommunications and navigation. The financial contribution to the European Space Agency and EUMETSAT in 2005 amounted to 36 million Euros which allows Austrian industries, research institutions and operational entities to actively participate in the relevant programmes.

Austria also supported the creation of the European Space Policy Institute, now headquartered in Vienna, and which is benefiting from an active cooperation with the ESPI, in particular in preparing the forthcoming Austrian EU Presidency. A Conference on "Space for the People" is being organized in the framework of this EU Presidency with a strong focus on space applications. Three preparatory workshops will be organized in Southern and Western Europe and in the Baltic Region respectively.

Mr. Chairman, talking of the future must include our continued concerns for the young and future experts and decision makers. In this regard, mention should be made of the Alpbach Summer School organized by the Aeronautics and Space Agency of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency in cooperation with the European Space Agency and the national space authorities of its 16 member countries.

Held annually since 1975, the Alpbach Summer School enjoys a long tradition in providing in-depth teaching on aspects of space science and space technology with the aim of advancing the training and working experience of European graduates, post-graduate students, young scientists and engineers.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, let me underline again that Austria continues to be fully committed to contribute to international cooperation in space and to its applications. We look forward to participate in this important work of the United Nations for the benefit of humankind.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Ambassador Lichem for his statement.

And I now give the floor to Ambassador Morimoto of Japan to address the Committee.

Mr. S. MORIMOTO (Japan): Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, on behalf of the

Japanese delegation, I am honoured to address the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It was a particular honour for us to have the presence of the President of the United Nations General Assembly at the beginning of this session. My delegation appreciates this arrangement.

I am glad to see you again, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this important session. I would also like to express our sincere gratitude and respect for the efforts of Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and his staff.

Mr. Chairman, before I mention some of the space-related events that have taken place in Japan in the past year, please allow me to draw your attention to the fifty-sixth International Astronautical Congress, IAC, to be held this October in Fukuoka, Japan. As the host country, we sincerely hope that the Congress will contribute to the development of academic research and the promotion of international cooperation on space development. Prior to the IAC, the United Nations/IAF Workshop will be held in Kitakyushu, Japan. There, we will discuss "Space Education and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Development". We wish that the countries and organizations in attendance actively participate in discussions on space education.

Mr. Chairman, let me now return to the noteworthy space-related events that have taken place in Japan since the last session.

First, taking a central role in investigating a policy for space development and utilization in Japan, the Council for Science and Technology Policy last September adopted the report "Basic Strategy for Space Development and Utilization". This report, which provides a framework for the next 10 years, confirms the importance of space development and utilization in national strategic terms and proposes that we should place the highest priority on ensuring technological reliability and sustaining, developing and strengthening fundamental technologies.

In addition, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, so-called JAXA, as the core organization for R&D and applications in the aerospace area, adopted last April the JAXA's Long-Term Vision, which provides a framework for the next two decades. This report includes both concepts and measures to realize Japanese aerospace development and application.

Second, we would like to report on the resumed launches of Japan's mainstay rocket, the H-IIA. After the H-IIA No. 6 launch failure in 2003, we made a thorough investigation into its cause and have

been taking all possible measures to improve both engineering and management. Recently, technical measures and the establishment of a responsible management structure were completed and H-IIA was successfully launched. It put MTSAT-1R, Himawari No. 6, which executes meteorological observation and air traffic control, into orbit last February.

In this fiscal year, three H-IIA launches are planned, including the launch of the Advanced Land Observing Satellite, so-called ALOS, which contributes to the observation through disaster monitoring. Japan will strive to carry out reliable launches and to improve the reliability of our national rocket technology.

Mr. Chairman, Japan has also been promoting international cooperation in various fields.

In the field of Earth observation, we closely cooperate with space-related organizations through CEOS, Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, and contribute to promoting IGOS, Integrated Global Observing Strategy.

Reflecting the world's growing concerns about global environmental problems, a 10-year Implementation Plan was discussed by the Ad Hoc Group on Earth Observations, which was established as a result of the Earth Observation Summit. As co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Group on Earth Observations, Japan actively contributed to the endorsement of the 10-year Implementation Plan. The Plan was endorsed, indeed, at the Third Earth Observation Summit, held in Brussels last February, and the Group on Earth Observations will proceed with implementation of GEOSS, based on the Implementation Plan.

Japan is committed to the implementation of the 10-year Implementation Plan. Through this international initiative, Japan can help make progress towards the solution of global problems.

Furthermore, at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January in Kobe, which Mr. Chairman kindly referred to in his opening statement, we held a session on "Reducing Risk Through Effective Use of Earth Observations", and the Asian Workshop on Satellite Technology Data Utilization for Disaster Monitoring, under the auspices of JAXA.

Through JAXA's participation in the Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technical Disasters, we will also contribute to making a hazard

map and to detecting disaster threats promptly via data provided by the Advanced Land Observing Satellite, ALOS, which will be launched in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, we opened a Space Education Centre at JAXA last May. This Centre actively promotes a broad range of educational activities including accepting students, supporting teachers and providing teaching materials. The Centre's slogan is "space awakens children's curiosity". We hope the Centre will provide the next generation with education and training in the field of space development and space science.

Mr. Chairman, space is a common frontier for all mankind and as such offers indefinite possibilities. We should look beyond national borders to help bring the benefits derived from space activities not only to the people who live in countries engaged in space activities but to all mankind.

Japan is committed to work towards prosperity for mankind by engaging in international space activities, such as those promoted by the United Nations and this Committee, so that space activities can be of benefit to all mankind.

Thank you for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Japan, for your statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Lydia Greyling of South Africa. Madam, you have the floor.

Ms. L. GREYLING (South Africa): Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the South African delegation wishes to express its pleasure to again see you presiding over the forty-eighth session of the COPUOS.

We would also like to express our appreciation to all delegations which have offered their condolences on the death of the South African Ambassador, Professor Alfred Tokollo Moleah.

South Africa has been involved in the development and exploitation of space technology since the dawn of the Space Age in 1957 and the following decades have seen our country and people become critically reliant on space technology for their day-to-day needs. The South African Government has recognized the fundamental importance of space science and technology, not only as the foundation of the modern knowledge-based society, but as an integral

part of a wider political and economic strategy to address national and regional development priorities.

The commitment of the South African Government to seriously address space as a vehicle for development is strengthened by our aim to consolidate our space efforts through a single space agency. Inspired by our partners in the South, we have begun a process to integrate the diverse space-related activities of our various government departments and institutions into a single strategic platform.

As both a user and a provider of space science and technology, South Africa believes that the harmonization of its national space programme will enhance the use of space for the effective implementation of our development policies. The coordination of our user needs will also provide useful direction to the technological and innovation capacity of the South African industry and science.

Mr. Chairman, South Africa has taken this step forward in solidarity with our partners in Africa in the African Resource Management Constellation and we add our voice to the calls for more sustained action on the use of global space capabilities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

South Africa is committed to playing a constructive role in advancing international cooperation in Earth observation in support of the global sustainable development agenda. We share with China the mandate of the developing world as co-Chairs of the Group on Earth Observations. My Government has already mandated the development of a South African Earth Observation Strategy to provide a framework for the coordination and integration of South Africa's various existing Earth observation capacities. Our development agenda demands that we further link our Earth observation capacities to complementary systems in our neighbouring countries as well as to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems.

In line with this initiative and our NEPAD development priorities, South Africa already provides free access to LandSat images to the entire Southern African Development Community in order to facilitate implementation of national and regional policies in agriculture, forestry, natural resource and environment monitoring, land use mapping, as well as geological and hydrological applications.

In support of NEPAD, the South African Government is supporting the African Resource Management Constellation with its partners Nigeria,

Algeria and other African countries. The ARM Constellation initiative is an expression in the spirit of NEPAD through investing in human resource development and the creation of a sustainable infrastructure for remote sensing.

In line with our belief that the developing world need not only be users of space technology, South Africa's Satellite Application Centre is currently working on the architecture of an adaptable sensor network as a national technology platform for Earth observation. The SensorWeb is to be designed as a pervasive, embedded monitoring presence that can constantly reconfigure itself to answer user-defined queries within the Earth observation environment.

Mr. Chairman, South Africa has identified space as a sector that can significantly impact on the development of our human capacity, not only in the stimulation of interest in learners in mathematics and science, but also promoting industrial and technology innovation and capacity. South Africa, therefore, established the Astronomy Geographical Advantage Programme in order to leverage our competitive advantage in the outward observation of space, through innovation in optical, cosmic ray and radio telescopes.

The South African Government has identified the proposed Square Kilometre Array as an extraordinary opportunity for the development of our regional scientific capacity and infrastructure. The South African Government is firmly behind the bid to host this innovative software-driven radio telescope that is designed to see into the dark matter that records the very beginnings of our universe. We have indeed already harnessed the full potential of this bid to develop mission-driven technology innovation and support human capital development in our region.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, South Africa strongly supports the use of space science and technology to place Africa and developing countries on a path of sustainable growth and development. We look forward and are committed to enhancing our contribution to the development and effective utilization of space for the benefit of our citizens, our continent and our world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of South Africa for her statement.

I now invite Mr. Su Wei of China to address the Committee.

Mr. W. SU (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Mr. Chairman, like other delegations, our delegation would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Jean Ping, for his presence in our meeting.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, please allow me in the name of my delegation to express our thanks to you and other members of the Bureaux for your positive efforts made and the contributions made over the past year. We are confident that, under the guidance of the Bureaux, and with the joint efforts of all the Member States representatives, this session would achieve new results in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and promoting international cooperation in this area. Our delegation will, as always, continue to support and take an active part in the various activities of this Committee and make contributions to the peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. Chairman, here I would also like to congratulate Bolivia (Libya?) and Thailand on their becoming full members of COPUOS. We are confident that their membership will make important contributions to the work of this Committee.

Over the past year, China has made new progress in the area of space technology and space scientific research. We have successfully launched the scientific experiments satellites, such as the Probe-2 polar orbiting satellite, the SZ-6 scientific experiments satellites A and B, among others. These satellites will contribute to social and economic development in China and the Asia-Pacific region.

In the area of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the Chinese Government has intensified and expanded bilateral exchange and cooperation and took an active part in regional cooperation yielding gratifying results.

Mr. Chairman, in the next 10 years also, the Chinese Government will, in light of the country's current needs and long-terms goals for economic development and social progress, focus its efforts on developing large capacity high-performance and long-life broadcasting communications satellites and gradually building out its satellite communications industry, developing the next generation non-toxic, non-polluting, high-performance and low-cost launch vehicles and improving the performance and reliability of existing of long-march(?) series of launchers, building up an Earth observation system of all-time, all-weather and high-temporal resolution disaster and environmental monitoring satellites, made up mainly of

meteorological satellite series, resource satellites series, OCEAN satellites series and Earth environmental monitoring small satellite constellations continue with the space physics studies on solar, terrestrial or system, continue to implement a manned space flights programme and implement its lunar project and conduct deep space probes and studies.

Mr. Chairman, our Government has always been of the view that the ultimate goal of exploring and using outer space is to advance solar development and human progress and create a better living and development environment for humanity. We are very pleased to note that the giant strides made by humanity in the exploration and utilization of outer space have significantly contributed to economic, scientific and technological and solar development and progress around the world.

However, as space activities become increasingly frequent and space technologies develop constantly, the danger of the militarization of outer space is becoming more and more prominent. The deployment of weapons and weapon systems in outer space will inevitably trigger an arms race in outer space and turn outer space into a battle ground which runs counter to the Principles governing the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space and has serious consequences.

The Chinese Government has always supported and actively participated in all efforts in the peaceful uses of outer space and is against the militarization and weaponization of outer space. We hope that this Committee will make greater efforts to prevent the militarization of an arms race in outer space, including exploring ways and means of establishing a comprehensive and effective legal mechanism.

In this regard, last March, China, the Russian Federation and the United Nations Disarmament Institute jointly organized in Geneva an International Seminar entitled "Ensuring the Security of and Preventing an Arms Race in Outer Space", attended by government officials from 65 countries. The Seminar explores the grave concern over the danger of the militarization of outer space and called on various bodies to preserve the security and prevent the weaponization of outer space by legal means.

Mr. Chairman, China has always been of the view that countries should increase and strengthen international cooperation in the outer space on the basis of the peaceful utilization, equality and mutual benefit, complementarity and a common development. We

believe promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space so that more and more countries, developing countries in particular, may benefit from space activities, will, no doubt, contribute to the objectives of the peaceful uses of outer space.

China is prepared to join with the international community in an unremitting effort to explore and use outer space positively and peacefully for the common benefit of humanity and create a peaceful and tranquil outer space environment by concluding a relevant treaty at an early date.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement.

I now invite the Ambassador of Italy, Ambassador de Ceglie to address the Committee.

Mr. G. DE CEGLIE (Italy): Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Like previous speakers, I should also like to register the pleasure and satisfaction of my delegation for the presence among us this morning of the President of the General Assembly, as well as for the interesting comments which he addressed to us.

Mr. Chairman, I am honoured to address the forty-eighth session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I also welcome the opportunity to work with you again during this session of the Committee. My delegation appreciated your commitment in presiding over our deliberations, particularly those concerning the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III for the benefit of all countries, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries. The deliberations of this Committee will be all the more successful, thanks to your able chairmanship.

My delegation would also like to thank Mr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and his staff for their very professional work.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to highlight some agenda items which will be discussed in the next days, and which, in my opinion, deserve particular attention.

With regard to agenda item 5, Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes, our delegation believes that the Committee should continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation as the main tool for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

Concerning item 6 of the agenda, The Implementation of the recommendations of the UNISPACE III, we firmly support the process towards the promotion of space-technology and space applications for the benefit of mankind. In this perspective, it is our understanding that the Committee will consider its possible contribution to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly in September 2005 and the mechanism by which that contribution could be made. The Committee will also examine the contributions that could be made by space science and technology and their applications to the issues selected by the Commission on Sustainable Development as a thematic cluster and provide substantive inputs for consideration by the Commission. One of these inputs should certainly concern, in our opinion, the Earth observation.

In this regard, I would like to confirm that the Italian delegation is following with great interest, the progress made in the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Group which is conducting a study on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services in disaster management.

With regard to navigation, Italy will continue to support the work for maximizing the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems, GNSS, for sustainable development. To this end, we are actively participating to the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, ICG.

Mr. Chairman, the Italian delegation carefully followed the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as of the Legal Subcommittee held in February and April this year respectively.

Firstly, the Italian delegation keeps on supporting the Subcommittee Working Group on Space Debris, chaired by Mr. Portelli of Italy, and welcomes the endorsement by the Subcommittee. We are committed to contribute to the ongoing process, which will continue during this session with an intersessional meeting and also in the next years, on the basis of the work plan adopted last February.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, the Italian delegation welcomes the results achieved by the Legal Subcommittee during its forty-fourth session, under the chairmanship of Professor Marchisio, also an Italian, I would like to recall. A new agenda item with a work

plan was established in 2004 on the important issue of "Practice of States and International Organizations in Registering Space Objects". In 2005, the Legal Subcommittee continued its deliberations on this topic, aimed at identifying common practices and ways and means for enhancing adherence to the 1975 Registration Convention.

The Subcommittee also addressed the UNIDROIT draft Space Assets Protocol and even though no consensus could be reached on the desirability of the United Nations assuming the function of Supervisory Authority, a remarkable work was done in order to assess the main legal implications of this complex matter. We welcome that the Subcommittee agreed that the item should remain on its agenda at its next session under the title "Examination and Review of the Developments Concerning the Draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets to the Cape Town Convention".

More in general, we believe that Member States should make an effort in order to agree on the inclusion of new items within the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee, taking into account the broad range of proposals presented by Member States.

Mr. Chairman, after these general comments on the work of the Committee, I would like now to briefly report on the most important Italian space activities carried out this year in the field of space science and planetary exploration.

The Cassini-Huygens mission represents a successful and fruitful joint cooperation between NASA, ESA and the Italian Space Agency. Huygens Probe is the first to land in the outer solar system, on the surface of Titan, Saturn's largest moon. This unprecedented and exciting event occurred on 14 January. The Cassini-Huygens is a historic mission, which is providing enough data from Saturn and its moons, to keep scientists busy for months and even years to come.

The Italian astronaut, Roberto Vittori, flew into space in the framework of the Italian Soyuz mission ENEIDE last April. His 10-day flight included eight days aboard the International Space Station.

The principle objects of the mission were to carry out a full programme of scientific experiments, technological demonstrations and educational activities. The mission was developed with a great contribution of the Italian researchers and built mainly by Italian industry and research institutes.

The mission also had an educational focus and Mr. Vittori carried out various activities with the specific objective of stimulating primary and secondary school pupils and university students of technology and space.

On 10 May, ESA flight controllers have successfully completed the deployment of the first boom of the MARSIS radar onboard ESA's Mars Express spacecraft. MARSIS, that is the Mars Express Sub-Surface Sounding Radar Altimeter, is an Italian instrument for mapping the Martian sub-surface structure to a depth of a few kilometres.

Italy is looking forward to the launch of NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, scheduled for next August, taking onboard the Italian instrument SHARAD, which will seek liquid or frozen water under the crust of Mars.

Last month, the Swift Space Telescope made by NASA in partnership with the Italian Space Agency, has detected the location of a short gamma ray burst for the first time. This is a fundamental step forward towards the understanding of these mysterious violent explosions in the universe, which appear and vanish very rapidly.

Mr. Chairman, I would like in conclusion to state that Italy is deeply involved in the space exploration process. In fact, Italy is one of the main contributors to the ESA AURORA Programme.

Finally, the Italian Space Agency is open to explore and discuss with all international partners the possibilities to cooperate in challenging projects, in order to allow man's flight towards the Moon and other planets and is paying great attention to the NASA approach to the strategic sustainable roadmaps for the space vision.

I would like, in fact, to take this opportunity to wish the United States of America great success of the Space Shuttle return to flight, for which NASA is devoting special and admirable efforts.

This mission will see the flight of the Italian Multi-Purpose Logistics Module, named Raffaello, which will carry different equipment to the International Space Station. I, therefore, believe there should be no doubt about the great involvement of Italy in these activities for the benefit of all the world.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Your Excellency, Ambassador de Ceglie, for your comments.

And I now invite Ambassador Byron Morejón-Almeida of Ecuador to address the Committee. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

Mr. B. MOREJÓN-ALMEIDA (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you Mr. Chairman. It is truly a pleasure for my delegation to convey to you, like other delegations have done, our pleasure and congratulations at seeing you preside over this Committee meeting. We are convinced that under your excellent stewardship, the forty-eighth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will continue with the understanding and cooperation that have characterized the discussions and conclusions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

Likewise, we would like to convey our congratulations to the other members of the Bureaux.

We would like to most especially thank Mr. Sergio Camacho for the very professional and efficient work done under him in the Office for Outer Space Affairs. We would further like to congratulate the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing this session.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Chair of GRULAC.

Mr. Chairman, we are very stimulated by the variety of topics on the agenda in this session. This variety shows the broad range of endeavours undertaken by COPUOS with a positive balance in terms of management of the Subcommittees, both of the Scientific and Technical and Legal. These were very skilfully led by Mr. Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu of Romania and Mr. Sergio Marchisio of Italy respectively.

My country attaches particular importance to the application of UNISPACE III recommendations and, therefore, my country is very pleased to see the progress achieved thus far. These activities are of great benefit for research and space activities will have a positive impact on the quality of life of human beings in general through international cooperation.

In keeping with this spirit, Ecuador fully agrees with the conclusions in the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in terms of applying recommendations of UNISPACE III. This has awakened a more clear awareness amongst Member States of the benefits of space technology for mankind and, therefore, we must make even greater

efforts so the developing nations may also benefit from such applications.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, it is also very heartening to be aware of the evolution of the subjects that we discuss here, issues such as the activities of the United Nations in applying space technologies, the goals of which in 2004 were satisfactorily met in keeping with the report of the Group of Experts on this subject.

My country wishes to actively participate in all activities related to outer space activities and to benefit from them. UNISPACE III recommendations are clear, particularly those contained in the Vienna Declaration on space and human development. Having said that, in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary for the players who have space technology available to them to contribute to and work with developing nations in order to strengthen their own space technology capacity.

In this context, Ecuador very much appreciates the participation of experts in the various training courses that were held and that had benefited from. And yet we believe there is a much broader field of action available in order to meet the goals of the programme and to contribute to the development of my country.

And that is why we echo the concerns expressed in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that financial resources are still limited and, therefore, Ecuador would call upon the donor community to make voluntary contributions or to increase those contributions in order to strengthen this very important and laudable programme.

Likewise, my country notes with satisfaction the headway achieved in the discussions on remote sensing using satellites. This debate contributes to and the use of this technology contributes to sustainable development and the establishment of an integrated space system with practical benefits in various areas which are key to development, such as the management of water resources, monitoring coastal regions, fisheries, geological studies, cartographic, the use of the Earth and plant coverage, agricultural, forestry resources, urban planning, monitoring desertification and soils, monitoring world climate change, greenhouse effect gases and the prevention of natural disasters.

Undoubtedly for Ecuador, this subject is of transcendental importance because on a cyclical basis, my country is affected by the phenomenon known as

El Niño which causes considerable human and economic loss in the millions of dollars and which furthermore is exacerbated by the fact that my country is located in a seismic high-risk area. In this regard, my country strongly supports the implementation of a world system for disaster management and mitigation, the prevention of natural disasters and recommends that the Declaration of Vienna and the International Early Warning Programme be strengthened.

Consequently, it is necessary to facilitate access to data which results from remote sensing in order to be able to benefit from the information. It is vital that we create the capacity for adopting the use of technology _____ (*not clear*) to remote sensing, particular in order to meet the needs of developing countries, such as that which I represent.

In the area of tele-medicine, based on space systems, Ecuador has also indicated its great interest in this area because of the advantages for distant medicine which are truly beneficial in order to combat epidemics and pandemics. My country is affected on an annual basis by many diseases which cover many large areas such as dengue, malaria and cholera, just to mention a few.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, my delegation believes that it is vital that we make a correct use and benefit appropriately from outer space, thus providing the foundation for active and disinterested international cooperation which takes into account the particular needs of developing nations.

And if we look at the issue of geostationary orbit and its equitable use, this is a very important issue and we would like to reiterate our position that this natural resource is limited and must be accessible and a priority for all countries, particularly those that are developing and they are in a specific geographic location on the Earth. We would like to refer thus to the use of outer space as something which is of common interest.

Ecuador supports the continuing discussion of the use of the geostationary orbit and finding new ways to achieve consensus and meeting the needs of all countries with regard to this natural resource which, in keeping with that which was affirmed by the International Telecommunication Union, is limited and ultimately we must guarantee all nations equitable access to it.

Mr. Chairman, we see with deep concern that in keeping with the statistics published by the ITU, there are some 320 fixed satellite stations in orbit.

Ninety-five per cent of these stations belong to industrialized countries. This situation requires, therefore, necessarily that the interests and concerns of States which are of a social, political or legal nature be adequately grappled with in order to prevent discrimination or discriminatory practices and which would only serve the interests of technologically-advanced countries.

Ecuador believes that it is a country with space interests and yet it does not yet have appropriate technological capacity to take advantage of this natural resource and benefit from it and, therefore, we exhort all present in this forum and the international community to assume the commitment that industrialized nations must facilitate conditions, _____ (*not clear*) speaking, and technological means for all countries that are developing to have access, equitable access to the geostationary orbit. And we would hope that this would be a firm determination in order to put in practice this idea and not remain at the level of rhetoric in this regard. And this is why it is clear that legal regulations in the United Nations must guarantee the developing nations, especially those in a specific geographic location, have a presence, a voice and a vote with regard to the processes of conciliation for orbital positions, especially in those cases where their interests are impacted. We need a reserve of orbital positions so that our capacity of satellite launching is permitted to be fully developed.

Mr. Chairman, moreover, my delegation believes that it is appropriate at this time to reiterate its congratulations to Colombia for its efforts in serving as the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Conference of the Americas. The achievements of this Conference are undoubtedly very significant in terms of consolidating legal mechanisms, providing cooperation and coordination in space activities in the region.

And my country would like to also, in front of this very important forum, reiterate what was announced during the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, that Quito will be the host city for the Fifth Conference of the Americas in July of 2006. My country is very motivated by the firm proposal of contributing to the institutionalization of this very important regional event which ratifies its legal commitment and the defence of legitimate interests in the area of space law for developing nations.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I cannot let this opportunity pass without seizing it to thank the Government of Chile for offering to host the preparatory meeting for the Fifth Space Conference of

the Americas during the International Air and Space Fair, FIDAE, which will be held in the city of Santiago in Chile in March of 2006.

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you Your Excellency, Ambassador Morejón-Almeida of Ecuador for your statement.

I now invite His Excellency, Ambassador Mr. Chang-Beom Cho of the Republic of Korea to address this Committee.

Mr. C.-B CHO (Republic of Korea): Thank you Mr. Chairman. At the outset, I would like to join the other speakers in expressing our appreciation to Minister Ping, President of the United Nations General Assembly for his personal presence in the opening of this session.

My delegation welcomes, Mr. Chairman, you again as Chairman of this session of the Committee. I am confident that under your able leadership, we will again have a successful session this year.

My delegation would take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to Mr. Camacho-Lara, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and his staff for their valuable support and dedication to the work of the Committee.

We also welcome Libya and Thailand as new members of this Committee. We are confident that their participation in the work of the Committee as full members will significantly contribute to the further promotion of the cause of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, today, space science and technology have received more attention than ever before from the international community because they have the capability to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development for developing countries, contributing to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. A variety of programmes on space applications designed for the betterment of humankind, such as remote sensing, tele-medicine and space-system-based disaster management, are essential for a safe and secure society, as we witnessed, among others, in the tsunami disaster last year.

My delegation is pleased to note that the report on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III was approved at the fifty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Now every Member State is called upon to redouble its

efforts to properly implement the Plan of Action therein in a spirit of international cooperation and for the common interests of all mankind. In this regard, we welcome the organization of the Ad Hoc Expert Group to examine the possibility of an international coordination organization on disaster management. We hope that this meeting will produce a specific and realistic policy option that is agreeable to every Member State.

The Office for Outer Space Affairs is carrying out the project on the incorporation of space technology into disaster management through community-based risk mapping and vulnerability, which focuses on floods in South-East Asia. I am pleased to inform that my Government has already dispatched one expert for this project and has provided financial assistance necessary for its initial stage.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly outline my country's recent progress in outer space activities.

With respect to recent progress in remote sensing satellites, Korea Multi-Purpose Satellite 1, KOMPSAT-1, which was launched in 1999 for the purpose of collecting Earth imagery and ocean colour monitoring, has been operating successfully since its launch more than five years ago. A large amount of remotely-sensed data has already been collected and distributed to many countries to support their own remote sensing activities.

At the same time, the development of KOMPSAT-2 is under way. Its main mission is to collect the panchromatic and multi-spectral images of the Earth. Its satellite bus has been assembled and integrated and environmental tests have been successfully completed. The development of the multi-spectral camera has been completed and it is now assembled with the satellite bus for functional testing, thermo-vacuum testing and vibration testing. It will be moved to the launch site for launching near the end of this year.

The Republic of Korea continues to actively participate in a regional cooperation programme for the ASEAN + 3 Satellite Image Archive System for Environmental Study. The Korea Aerospace Research Institute, KARI, has joined the international effort towards standardization of the Meta data format for Earth images and towards making interface software that is required for the comprehensive search and use of image data.

This year, the Korean National Assembly approved a consolidated bill on the development of outer space that aims at full domestic implementation of the United Nations Outer Space Treaty to which the Republic of Korea has become a party. This bill contains provisions relating to the licensing requirement for launching space objects and their registration which will make it possible to carry out outer space activities in a more secure way.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to extend its appreciation for the excellent work achieved by the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as well as the forty-fourth session of the Legal Subcommittee this year. We hope that this session will produce useful guidelines for the future consideration of every aspect of outer space in both Subcommittees.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Working Group on Space Debris and its recommendations. We are of the view that all Member States, in particular space-faring countries, should pay more attention to the problem of the increasing possibility of the collision of space objects with space debris for the purpose of maintaining a safer space environment. Special emphasis should be placed on the promotion of international cooperation, including the transfer of relevant technology to non-space-faring countries, with a view to expanding appropriate and systematic strategies to minimize their impact on future space missions.

With regard to the draft Space Assets Protocol, my delegation believes that, considering its unbiased position and credibility, as well as the successful role of the Registry under the Registration Convention, the United Nations is the most suitable international organization to assume the role of the Supervisory Authority under such Protocol. We appreciate the initiative of the Dutch delegation in preparing the draft report on this issue. Following the significant progress in discussion of that draft report in the last Legal Subcommittee, my delegation hopes that a consensus will be reached on this issue soon.

While noting a recent decrease in the registration of space objects, my delegation welcomes that COPUOS has been successfully reviewing the practices of States and international organizations in registering space objects under a four-year Work Plan. We believe that this project will enhance the effectiveness of the Registration Convention through the establishment of a harmonized common practice in registering space objects among Member States and ensuring its uniform application to them. In this

regard, my delegation urges Member States to submit the information as required by the four-year Work Plan, including the practice on non-registration of space objects and transfer of ownership of space objects in orbit.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating my Government's full commitment to the collective efforts of the international community to continue to strengthen peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all humankind.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you Excellency, Ambassador Chang-Beom Cho of the Republic of Korea for your statement.

And that happens to be the last speaker for this morning before we adjourn for lunch.

Distinguished delegates, there is no time for me to ask any other speaker, so that concludes our presentation for this morning.

I intend to close the list of speakers under this particular agenda item tomorrow morning. Thus, I would like to encourage all delegations wishing to address this Committee under this particular item, General Exchange of Views, to register with the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Furthermore, I would like to inform you all that there will be a display of posters on Space and Archaeology in the corridor between this Conference Room, that is Conference Room III, and the Coffee Corner, up there on the left as you walk out of this Conference Room. This display is being set up within the context of the Symposium on the same topic, which is to be held next week. I would like to thank the Institute for Global Mapping and Research of Austria and the Office for Outer Space Affairs for organizing the display.

I have been asked to inform the delegates that are connected with the International Relations Committee of ESA that there will be a lunch recess this afternoon, from 1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. in C0713. The room is on the left as you leave this room as well.

Before adjourning this meeting this morning, I would like to inform delegates of our schedule of work for this afternoon. We will reconvene promptly at 3.00 p.m. At that time, we will continue with agenda item 4, General Exchange of Views.

We will also begin consideration of agenda item 5, Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.

Is this schedule of work agreeable to all of us?

OK.

It is so decided.

Now I have been asked by the Nigerian delegation to invite all of you to attend a reception being hosted by the Government of Nigeria, represented here by the delegation, and the reception will be held in the Mozart Room of the VIC Restaurant here, immediately we adjourn this afternoon at 6.00 p.m. or 6.30 p.m.

Now finally, in the rush of things this morning, I forgot to recognize two people who are members of the Bureaux and are here sitting on the podium with me. That is, the First Vice-Chairman, Ambassador Ciro Arevalo Yepes of Colombia, and Dr. Parviz Tarikhi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, our Second Vice-Chairman. Ambassador Lichem made the arrangement that we are implementing now in terms of the Bureaux and through that, we have constituted what we call the G15, that the last Bureaux, the current Bureaux and the Bureaux to come so that those of us who are here now are learning from the past and those who are coming in are going to learn from us when we leave here. And it has been a very educational process for me and I have benefited from it tremendously. And these two gentlemen and the others who are not in the Bureaux but are in the Committee, that belong to the other Bureaux, the past and the future, have been very supportive of our work.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, that is all I have for this morning and this meeting is adjourned until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

The meeting adjourned at 12.57 p.m.