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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Unedited transcript

566th Meeting
Wednesday, 6 June 2007, 10 a.m.
Vienna

Chairman: Mr. G. Brachet (France)

The meeting was called to order at 10.14 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Could I ask delegates to be so kind as to take their seats. I would like to call the session to order as soon as Mr. Costa, the Director-General of the United Nations, Vienna, has joined us.

Excellencies, delegates, representatives, it is an honour to welcome you all to the Vienna International Centre and I now call the fiftieth session and the 566th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to order.

Distinguished representatives, our Committee is holding an historic session, its fiftieth, this year, and I am therefore particularly honoured to be able to greet all of you who, throughout the years, have made the deliberations of this Committee very productive and, thanks to you, the Committee has become a key to international cooperation in outer space activities for the benefit of all humankind.

I am honoured and delighted to be able to extend my welcome to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, who will be with us in a few minutes time and who is joining us to address the Committee on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary. Having said that, distinguished delegates, before I invite the Director-General to deliver the opening address to the Committee, I would like to proceed with the adoption of the agenda for the current session and I should like to inform the Committee of the requests for attendance by States and organizations that are not members of the Committee.

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 2)

Delegates, you have before you for your approval and adoption, the provisional agenda of the session contained in document A/AC.105/L.267. This agenda has been prepared on the basis of agreements reached at the 2006 session of the Committee, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/111, dated 14 December 2006.

An indicative schedule of work, set out in the annex to the provisional agenda, please note that the annotations and the indicative schedule of work are not part of the agenda for adoption by the Committee but are included simply to assist delegations. We will now proceed with the adoption of the agenda itself.

Can we adopt the agenda?

I hear no objections, the agenda is therefore adopted.

It is so decided.

I should like to inform the Committee that I have received a number of requests, chiefly from the Governments of Bolivia, Namibia, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Switzerland, the Holy See and Tunisia, all of them are seeking permission to attend the current session of the Committee as observers.

I would further like to inform the Committee that, the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing, the Environmental Women's Assembly, the National Space Society and the Secure World Foundation, all of which are non-governmental organizations, as well as, the Commission of the

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European Communities, all of these organizations have requested the opportunity to attend the current session of the Committee as observers.

I therefore suggest that, in keeping with past practice, we invite representatives of these States, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate and I will take the opportunity of giving them the floor, if they request it, at the relevant points in the agenda. This is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and it does not involve any decisions of the Committee concerning the status of those speaking. It is a courtesy that we customarily extend to such delegations.

Do I see any comments on this proposal? I see no such comments.

It is so decided.

I recognize the Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Very briefly, this is a problem that comes up every year and at every meeting. The observers can only speak at the plenary, they cannot work in the working groups nor make interventions during the discussion on the report. I want to make this clear because we have had poor experience of this in the past.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank our distinguished colleague, the representative of Chile. It is indeed on that point, that I was saying just now, that I will make sure that requests for the floor from observers will be in keeping with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Having said that and having welcomed these States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, we may now proceed with the work of the Committee.

Distinguished delegates, I should now like to invite the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, who has just joined us. I would like to invite the Director-General to deliver an opening address to the Committee, I give you the floor, Sir.

Mr. A. COSTA (Director-General, UNOV): Thank you very much, Sir. The United Nations Office at Vienna and of course the Office for Outer Space, that is housed here on the Vienna premises, are proud to host this historic fiftieth session of the Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Fifty years ago this year, the first man-made satellite, you recall Sputnik I, was launched into the Earth's orbit by the Soviet Union. This historic event heralded a new age for humanity, the opening of a new frontier, without limit, without boundaries, it triggered the space race, exploring outer space with artificial satellites, sending humans into space, landing people on the Moon, sending probes by other planets and beyond. In the past 50 years, I am told that, nearly 6,000 satellites, probes, spacecraft and space stations have been launched into the Earth's orbit and beyond and, about 15 per cent of them, about 900, are still in operation. The heavens are very crowded these days.

All the while, since the beginning of these committees in 1958, your Committee has been keeping watch, making sure that space is used for peaceful purposes. You have developed the legal backbone for governing space activities, among the most important accomplishments are five international treaties and five legal principles, including the historical Outer Space Treaty of 1967, that came into force forty years ago. All these is a sort of *mea carta* of outer space legislation.

We are all very proud that, for these accomplishments and, for the fact that you also have been able to draw the scientific community into your work, this is highly scientific business. You have been able to build on the successful International Geophysical Year of 1957 and, hopefully, you will re-energize the process through the International Heliophysical Year 2008, to generate new types of cooperation. Which types?

With the end of the Cold War and therefore with the end of rivalling space for quasi-military purposes, now the way is open for channelling resources into using space to improve life on earth. Government resources, private sector resources, the dramatic commercial possibilities to be exploited, obviously for peaceful purposes, in our heavens. You have a full mandate, quite impressive, for example, the use of space technology in disaster management. Only three years ago, the time of the tsunami, we realized how much space-based communication technology could have done to alert populations away from the initial shock and therefore saving tens of thousands of lives. For telecommunications, for global positioning systems, there are a number of competing systems that are in place or soon to be in place, they have to be

made able to talk to one another, the commercial consequences of these extraordinary positioning systems, the mechanisms based in the heavens are extraordinary.

Something which was brought to my attention by a former astronaut, who we met together with Sergio, a few weeks ago, regarding preventing Earth from getting hit by objects, by asteroids crossing our planet's orbit, extraordinarily intriguing for its complexity and for its importance, an intriguing subject matter, which is on your agenda.

Also, I have been interested in the question of cleaning up the heavens, setting guidelines to reduce man-made space debris. There is a lot of debris out there, the result of successful or unsuccessful previous launches, they constitute a threat to communications, to existing satellites or, perhaps, to those to be launched including with human beings on board.

We need to track the weather conditions and, above all, monitor the climate changes, it is a very topical subject matter, we can monitor what goes on around this planet, from above this planet, that is one of your mandates. As much as it is among the issues you will discuss in the period ahead, ensuring the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space, safe and peaceful use.

Then there is the ultimate subject matter for the United Nations, promoting the Millennium Development Goals, the strategies set in place by participants of the Summit in the year 2000 and space technology can help a lot, it can indeed provide the momentum and the instruments and the means to help those countries in need to meet the goals, to do so more successfully. Therefore, you are very well positioned, all of you, collectively and individually, to push ahead for these priorities and the United Nations Office for Outer Space is here to help you. You can count on our support for this very ambitious agenda, one of the foremost agenda for humanity. Everything else is to be a bit more of a temporary or limited nature, but this agenda is truly ambitious, we _____ (*inaudible*) its success is intrinsic for the well-being of future generations as well as our own generation but certainly for the survival of our very fragile planet.

As was pointed out to me in the past few weeks as we discussed this meeting and its agenda, there is no alternative to a multilateral approach to these issues. The cosmos belongs to everybody, it cannot be appropriated, almost everything else we can think of can be appropriated if it is on this planet, underneath this planet or right above this planet but not the cosmos. The cosmos, the heavens, defy terrestrial boundaries, defy national sovereignty, they are truly a common space, much more than the oceans, in one way or another. They are a part of a common space that has yet to be explored, certainly more than we have done so far and, above all, it has to be understood better, that these are humanity's collective ownership or at least the stewardship. We therefore have to seek solutions together, the United Nations would be at its best if we can control what humanity can control only collectively. This includes not only governments it includes the private sector, which has the potential to make use of space, the potential to make use for the advantage of everybody in the process of making money, there is nothing wrong with making money but the purpose has to be noble. This is what I see, the United Nations stewarding this private sector in making space more accessible, more commercially useful, for the benefit of everybody. In the process, this common domain can be exploited on the basis of the rules of the game, the rules are to be established and this is the role of our Office and your Committee, to establish the rules of engagement so that they apply to everybody and the playing field is level.

I urge you to take advantage of this fiftieth anniversary, this golden jubilee, it is quite amazing, 50 years is a long stretch of time, to use this golden jubilee session, not only to ponder about the past, we all know about it, we recall, some of you are much younger, may not have even been around when the first Sputnik was put in place, I do remember. We should not only ponder on the past, we have to look ahead, the next fifty years if you wish, outer space exploration, exploitation in a healthy sense will take place and therefore, what is the role of this Committee and the relatively small Office of the United Nations in dealing with space matters, the role of this Committee in dealing with all these gigantic issues regarding the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity, not only to thank you and, in particular, the Chairman in his second year, for what you have done and for what you will be discussing and looking at the future. I would like to take this opportunity also to thank the young man on my right, I would like to pay tribute to this man, namely Sergio Camacho, who has led OOSA for the past five years, not 50, five, but still, it is quite something Sergio. Sergio worked his way up throughout all the ranks of OOSA to become the Director, I recall when I interviewed you in December 2002, prior to your appointment. Sergio, you have overseen a period of growth of this Office, you have stewarded it in such a way that now we can discuss the kind of issue we put

on the agenda or I referred to earlier, for those are gigantic issues, you need to have a gigantic mind to be able to see them shaping up and advising us on how to deal with them. You made your Office more operational, to respond to the needs of a changing world, you worked very hard in the true spirit of the United Nations, you tried to make the space more accessible to all, big and small, rich and poor countries, in different ways of course but, that is the reality of life. With all of your work and with your gentle cooperative manner, you have managed an office which is small but has made a difference, so we thank you Sergio and on behalf of all UNOV staff, I wish you a happy retirement as you will be leaving in a few weeks time. I thank you all, staff of the Office but in particular, the 67 members of COPUOS and all the international and non-governmental organizations represented here, I heard the Chairman mentioning a few earlier and was quite impressed for their presence and I welcome you all, I wish you a productive meeting and every success in your important work but, above all, I would like to invite you all to clap a good sign of appreciation to our good friend, Sergio Camacho.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Costa for those very kind words and also for the thanks which he addressed to the Director of the Office and we would also like to add our thanks during the course of the session to him also.

We have heard the encouraging words from the Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, acknowledging the role the Committee played in making sure space is used for peaceful purposes and in developing the legal backbone for governing space activities. Mr. Costa mentioned the many important challenges that are on the current and future agenda of our Committee, these were highlighted by the Director-General from broader goals, including further assistance to developing countries in the use of space technology and the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, use of space applications for sustainable development and disaster management support, such as specific issues such as space debris mitigation guidelines, the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space, near Earth objects and, even a possible future space transportation regulation.

I am also pleased to hear the reference made by the Director-General to the successful scientific programmes of the International Geophysical Year in 1957. The year of the International Heliophysical Year will generate new types of cooperation and this is meeting this year, 2007, but this work will extend beyond the year 2007.

Distinguished delegates, I am sure that these words of encouragement from Mr. Costa will inspire us for the future work of the Committee and our discussions in the coming days.

Ladies and gentlemen, delegates, I would like to move to the next item on the agenda and present my statement to the Committee.

Statement by the Chairman (agenda item 3)

Distinguished delegates and representatives, this year we witness a remarkable convergence of a number of anniversaries in space activities, we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik I, on 4 October 1957. We also celebrate this year and, the Director-General noted this in his statement, the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty on 10 October 1967. This year is also the year of the Heliophysical Year and this is commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the International Geophysical Year in 1957, as a milestone and beginning of space exploration and also, in particular, of the United Nations interest in international cooperation in outer space activities.

The United Nations began to be interested in international cooperation in outer space activities in that very year. Therefore, for me, it is a great honour and a privilege to Chair this session, the fiftieth session of the Committee, with its special focus on 50 years of space achievements. I believe this is an excellent opportunity for us to pay tribute to the accomplishments achieved during the first 50 years of the space age and to reflect on possible developments for the future.

Before sharing with you some of my views on the work of the Committee, I would first like to highlight some of the special events that will take place during this fiftieth session of the Committee. First of all, a high-level panel on space exploration activities will be held this afternoon at 4 p.m. in this room. I look forward to this opportunity because I am convinced that the high-level panel will provide an opportunity for members of the Committee to discuss the motivations for, and aspects of, ongoing and planned space exploration activities and the possible future role that the United Nations system could play in providing a forum for space-faring and space-using countries alike, to consider space exploration related issues.

Then there is a symposium on space and water, which will be held on Monday, 11 June, in Conference Room III at 4 p.m. This will provide an overview of the current state of use of space technologies in water monitoring and management, it will also demonstrate some of the applications that could be used by developing countries to manage this valuable natural resource, I look forward to the interesting presentations of the symposium. There will be many more special events in commemoration of the 50 years of space achievements, these will accompany the fiftieth session of COPUOS.

This evening at 6 p.m., we will officially open a multinational exhibition entitled "Fifty years of space achievements" when nearly 30 States and organizations will be exhibiting a small part of their achievements in space activities. I would cordially invite you to visit this very interesting exhibition which will be held in the Rotunda throughout the whole month of June.

In this framework, a bus, in French we say autocar, but it is a multimedia bus on space meteorology and its effects on Earth, will be parked in front of the Rotunda in the so-called Plaza. This bus is part of a SWEETS initiative, it is an English acronym which is the abbreviation for Space, Weather and Europe – an Educational Tool with the Sun. This is a public outreach activity by SWEETS that encompasses some of the activities of the International Heliophysical Year, it is on a tour through Europe and has stopped in Vienna for the duration of our Committee's session. This educational opportunity was kindly organized by the Austrian Research Centre at Seibersdorf and, in cooperation with the Office for Outer Space, they are organizing also a conference entitled "Radiation exposure to aircraft crew due to space weather effects". This is a conference which will be held here in the VIC Board Room on 12 June. There will also be presentations of various documentaries highlighting national space activities of member States which will be screened nearly each day during the lunch break in Conference Room III.

Distinguished delegates, these are the highlights of special events accompanying the fiftieth session of the Committee. Kindly refer to the programme of special events, you will find those in a little booklet that has been distributed and I am sure that these activities and events will contribute to the awareness-raising which we want to achieve about our work, among other United Nations bodies, national governments and the general public.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, allow me now to share with you some of my views on the work of the Committee. First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Bureau, Elöd Both of Hungary and Paul Tiendrébéogo, Second Vice-President of Burkina Faso, who is not unfortunately here but he will join us on Monday and I would like to thank them for their valuable support to the work of the Committee.

For almost half a century, the Committee as actively promoted efforts aimed at bringing the benefits of space technology to all on Earth. The Committee was instrumental in the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Legal Regime governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space which, as you know, is made up of five treaties and five principles on outer space, among them, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which represents a landmark legal instrument by which activities in outer space are governed and of which we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary this year.

Since its establishment, the Committee has successfully resolved various complex issues, it has maintained an outstanding record of achievements while maintaining the principle of consensus in its decision-making process. The Committee has been responsible for organizing three United Nations conferences on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Following the most recent of these conferences, which was UNISPACE III in 1999, here in Vienna, the Committee has addressed a wide range of issues and achieved concrete results in a number of areas related to its fundamental objective, which is to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. With the holding of UNISPACE III, the Committee has also aligned many of its activities with the Millennium Development Goals as set by the Millennium Summit in 2000, articulated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and then reaffirmed by the World Summit which was held on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, that was in the year 2005. I would like to recall the unique approach of the Committee to implementing recommendations from UNISPACE III, that was through the establishment of action teams on recommendations in priority areas. Several of the action teams have already achieved tangible results and I would like to give you two examples.

The first is, the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems under the acronym ICG, which will provide an excellent forum for coordination and cooperation among GNSS providers and users, that is, the Global

Navigation System, and will result in a coherent support for sustainable development activities.

The second example, is the establishment of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the acronym here is SPIDER, now in its implementation phase.

Furthermore, the Group on Earth Observations, known as GEO, which was created in 2003, its workplan has been launched which is part of the ten-year implementation plan towards the Global Earth Observation System of Systems and that is known under the English acronym of GEOSS. The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), has continued to coordinate the Earth observation programmes contributing to the implementation of the GEOSS workplan.

I am also happy to note that, the European Space Agency and the European Union recently agreed, in a special council on space, on a European space policy, which includes a clear priority to implementing the GMES programme, Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, which is one of Europe's main contributions to GEOSS.

Through our proposal to the General Assembly's five-year review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, we have also set in motion a very important mechanism of coordinating our work with that of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. We gave this action additional impetus by deciding to submit reports on the contribution of space application to various clusters of topics considered by the Committee.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, before addressing some aspects of the work before us, I would like to draw your attention to Conference Room Paper 3 that contains the report by the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services, on its inspection in November 2006, of the programme management and administrative practices in the Office for Outer Space Affairs. The overall conclusion being that, the Office is well-run, cohesive and productive and performing higher than the average programme in the United Nations Secretariat, so I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the outstanding work being undertaken by OOSA in supporting the Committee and its Subcommittee, not least in preparing for this fiftieth session of the Committee and, in particular, I would like to thank Mr. Sergio Camacho, Director of the Office, for his extraordinary guidance and leadership. As the Director has just reminded us, Sergio Camacho will quite soon give up his functions as Director of the Office at the end of June and I would like to add a few words in English now to thank Sergio for his work.

Dear Sergio, I think I may only want to add a few words of thanks on behalf of the Committee for the action that you have led over these last five years as Director of the Office of Outer Space. I must say that, as Chairman of this Committee, I always wonder how you can manage to produce all these preparatory papers and all this organization in time for the meetings of the Committee, not to speak of the need to get a few translations done in time too. Sergio, we all in the Committee have appreciated your work over the years, not only during your directorship of OOSA but before in the various positions that you held in the Office of Outer Space. We will have other opportunities later tonight, to thank you but, for the record of the Committee, I would like, on behalf of the Committee, to address our warmest congratulations for the work you have done over the last few years.

The Committee on Services and Research Section, which is headed up by Niklas Hedman, who is sitting on my left, are providing high quality services to our Committee. They carry out many important functions related to the responsibilities of the Secretary-General of the United Nations under the outer space treaties and, in particular, maintaining the United Nations Register on Objects Launched into Outer Space.

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications continues to play an important role in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III, particularly improving the capacity of developing countries to use space technology to support their efforts to attain sustainable development. On the basis of the proposals made by the Expert on Space Applications, the Scientific and Technology Subcommittee, this year, recommended the proposed activities of the programme for 2007 for approval by the Committee at this session, as contained in the report of the Subcommittee. During the forthcoming session, in her statement to the Committee, the Expert on Space Applications will also propose activities to be conducted in 2008 for approval by the Committee.

I am also pleased to note that, the Programme on Space Applications is enhancing its scope of operation, since including in its programme activities related to initiating pilot projects to demonstrate the efficiency of space technologies for various areas of social and economic development, it has made great progress and accomplished a lot and I would like to

congratulate Ms. Alice Lee, the Expert on Space Applications and her staff for the excellent work done under the Programme. We all know that this Programme plays a great role in assisting developing countries who wish to build their space-related capacities. However, I wish to emphasize to all member States that the success of the Programme in carrying out its mandate depends on your full support.

Before turning to the agenda items before this session of the Committee, I will highlight the achievements of the Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees, which have held their sessions earlier this year. I would like to congratulate Mr. B.N. Suresh, the representative of India, Mazlan Othman of Malaysia and Raimundo González of Chile on their election as Chairmen of the two Subcommittees and on their skilful guidance of the work of these bodies during the term 2006-2007. With their excellent leadership, the Subcommittees were able to reach many important decisions.

Distinguished delegates, I return to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee now. The last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee provided us with up-to-date information on the most recent achievements in space exploration and related applications. The Subcommittee also provided opportunities to discuss important scientific and technical issues related to international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space. The Working Group of the Whole was reconvened under the able chairmanship of our colleague, Mr. Nasim Shah, representative of Pakistan, 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-fifth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The Working Group also proposed a new agenda item to be discussed at the next session of the Subcommittee and the Subcommittee approved that new item which covers recent developments in the Global Navigation Satellite Systems. On behalf of the Committee, I warmly congratulate Mr. Shah, for skilfully guiding the Working Group to achieve significant progress on all these matters.

Space debris remains a major agenda item at the Subcommittee. This year, the Subcommittee, through its Working Group on Space Debris, has made major achievements under this agenda item by adopting its own space debris mitigation guidelines, also agreeing that the successful approval of voluntary guidelines for the mitigation of space debris would increase the mutual understanding of how to conduct activities in space, how to enhance stability in space, as well as, decrease the likelihood of friction and conflict. I extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Claudio Portelli of Italy for his able leadership in this highly successful achievement.

The year 2007 is also an important landmark in the Subcommittee's work on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group that, in order to prepare and publish the safety framework for nuclear power source applications in outer space, a partnership should be established between the Subcommittee and the International Atomic Energy Agency by means of a joint expert group consisting of representatives of the Subcommittee and of IAEA. In that connection, the Subcommittee endorsed a new workplan proposed by the Working Group for the period 2007-2010. We are all grateful and I congratulate Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom for his dedication and able leadership of the Working Group. I am also happy to note that the joint expert group will hold its next meeting after the Committee's session, that is, from 18-20 June.

I now turn my attention to the agenda item on near Earth objects and the Subcommittee for the first time established a working group on this item in 2007, which developed a new multi-year workplan for the period 2008-2010, the idea being to consider the range of, and suitable mechanisms for, further work on near Earth objects. The workplan considers that, by 2009, the Subcommittee will receive draft procedures related to the handling, at the international level, of threats of collisions of asteroids with the Earth, the draft procedures are to be presented to the Committee in 2009. I should like to pay tribute Richard Tremayne-Smith of the United Kingdom, for his able leadership in his guidance throughout the work of Action Team 14 and the Working Group.

The Subcommittee continued to consider space system-based disaster management support in accordance with a three-year workplan. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that, in its resolution 61/110 of 14 December 2006, the General Assembly decided to establish a programme within the United Nations, called the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the acronym here is SPIDER. The objective is to provide universal access to all countries and all relevant international regional organizations to all types of space-based information and services relevant to disaster management. The Subcommittee also commended the Office on the proposed platform programme 2007-2009 and the

proposed plan of work for 2007 for SPIDER and noted with satisfaction that, the commitments of support made by member States, would enable the new programme to begin its activities immediately. Commitments from member States included the provision of secondment of experts, cash and in-kind contributions, including satellite-based data and training and capacity-building facilities, as well as, fully furnished and equipped office space in Beijing and in Bonn, with the consideration of the opportunity that a new programme could have a liaison office in Geneva. The Subcommittee also agreed that, among the steps that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should take in implementing SPIDER, the Office would prepare a report presenting a summary of the background for the establishment of SPIDER for the fiftieth session. A draft report will be made available to the Committee for comments as a conference room paper.

Another highlight of the forty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee was the agenda item on the International Heliophysical Year 2007, which the Subcommittee considered in accordance with the three-year workplan. Several events devoted to the celebration of the International Heliophysical Year 2007 were conducted during the forty-fourth session, including the official opening of the International Heliophysical Year 2007 worldwide campaign. The Subcommittee also noted the specific objectives of the International Heliophysical Year and the progress made by member States in the connotative outreach, educational and research programmes and in the deployment of instrument arrays.

I should also like to highlight the work of the United Nations Interagency Meeting on outer space activities, which took place in Vienna in January. The meeting, under the able chairmanship of Yolande Berenguer of UNESCO, reported to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the results of its 2007 session and submitted, for the Subcommittee consideration, a report on the coordination of space-related activities amongst United Nations entities. As in previous years, the meeting held a half-day open informal session for members and observers of the Committee to present various space-related initiatives related to the work of an interagency meeting. This year's topic was, the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development in the United Nations system. The Interagency Meeting concentrated on this topic in view of the new agenda item on space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development, that we will be considering at this session of the Committee.

Before I move on to the work of the Legal Subcommittee, I should like to express my appreciation to the organizers of the symposium on the use of the equatorial orbit for space applications. This was jointly organized by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and this is the symposium that was held during the past session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Here, I would like to inform you that, the Subcommittee agreed on a new approach to scheduling the annual symposium of COSPAR, IAF and the industry symposium, accordingly, the industry symposium organized by the Office, would be held every other year. In the years when the industry symposium would not be held, COSPAR and IAF would alternate in organizing a symposium on a topic recommended by the Committee. The Subcommittee endorsed the agreement of its Working Group of the Whole, to the effect that, in 2008, the industry symposium would be organized and that the topic of the symposium would be space industry in emerging space nations.

I should now like to draw your attention to the work accomplished this year by the Legal Sub-committee at its forty-sixth session. Under the agenda item, status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space, I am pleased to be able to inform you that, the Subcommittee noted the positive impact of the letter from the Secretary-General, encouraging participation in the outer space treaties and the positive impact of the letter from the Office encouraging participation in the Liability Convention.

These initiatives stimulated a thorough consideration and participation in the United Nations treaties on outer space by some States and led to concrete results. The Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation of the working group, that the mandate of the working group should be extended for an additional year. The Subcommittee also endorsed the recommendation of the working groups that, during the 2008 session of the Subcommittee in addressing the low participation of States in the Moon Agreement, the working group could, inter alia, identify the benefits of accession to the Moon Agreement and identify the international and national rules governing activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece for his dedication to the work of the Subcommittee in this area.

The Working Group on matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space, made further progress in addressing the workplan that had been developed during the forty-fourth session of the

Subcommittee. Under the able chairmanship of Mr. José Monserrat Filho of Brazil, the Working Group agreed on a way to continue the consideration of the item, with a number of steps in its analysis of the replies from member States to the question on space objects. We are all grateful to Mr. Monserrat Filho for his dedication and his able leadership of that Group.

The Working Group on the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects, under the able guidance of Mr. Kai-Uwe Schrogl of Germany, continued its consideration of the item under the multi-year workplan. I am particularly pleased to report that the Working Group agreed on a set of elements and conclusions of the Working Group on the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects. I am delighted that the Committee has agreed that annex III of the report of the Subcommittee, that is the appendix to the report of the Working Group, together with the first six preambular paragraphs contained paragraph 18 of document A/AC.105/C.2/L.266, constitute the basis for a draft resolution for submission to the General Assembly, to be considered at the fiftieth session of the Committee and I look forward to the work on this agenda item.

As regards next year's session of the Legal Subcommittee, I am also pleased to note that progress has been made in agreeing on two new agenda items. The first of these, is entitled, general exchange of information on national legislation on the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, this will be considered by the Subcommittee within its workplan for the period 2008-2011. The second new item, entitled, capacity-building in space law, will be addressed by the Subcommittee as a single item for discussion and, last but not least, the Legal Subcommittee, this year, once again, benefited from a symposium organized by the International Institute for Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law. This year's symposium examined the aspects of capacity-building in space law and was held during the first two afternoons of the Subcommittee's session. Following this practice, the Subcommittee agreed to invite IISL and ECSL to organize a two-day symposium during its forty-seventh session in 2008 on the theme, the legal implications of space applications for global climate change. On behalf of this Committee, I commend the efforts of both IISL and ECSL in organizing this symposium.

Ladies and gentlemen, I should now like to address the other items before the Committee. This year, the Committee will be examining the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, spin-off benefits of space technology, space and society, space and water and, a new item, entitled, use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. Moreover, at this historic fiftieth session, the Committee will also devote a great deal of time to consideration of its future role and this is something I will come back to.

You will all recall that, under the agenda item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, the General Assembly requested, that the Committee continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experience stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas, the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and taking into account, the role that space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In this regard, I should like to congratulate the Government of Ecuador, with the technical support of the governments of Chile and Colombia, successfully organized the fifth Space Conference of the Americas, held in Quito, in July 2006 and it was my great pleasure to participate in that conference as an observer. This conference was a very successful one and it demonstrated the truly regional cooperation in Latin America and it led to the adoption of the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito, in which States in Latin America and the Caribbean are invited to set up national space entities to lay the foundations for a regional entity for cooperation.

The promotion of regional cooperation is a major cornerstone in developing capacities in space activities, in this regard, I should like to highlight the important role that regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, play in enhancing cooperative efforts at the regional level. I would like to commend their efforts, in particular, the work being carried out by the regional centres and supported by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

Under the agenda item, space and society, the Committee will continue its consideration of the special theme for the focus of discussions for the period 2004-2006, namely, space and education. According to the workplan and the agreement of the Committee at its forty-ninth session, the Committee at this fiftieth session, is invited to develop specific and tangible action plans for incorporating outer space into education, enhancing education in space and expanding space tools for education and ensuring that space-based services contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on access to

education. The Committee is also invited to prepare a brief document on the role of space in education, as well as, the link between space and education, for transmission to the general conference of UNESCO. I look forward to fruitful discussions on this agenda item and I urge all delegates actively to participate in the discussions of the Committee on space and education. Bearing in mind that education is one of those priority areas of the work of the United Nations and, it is indeed, absolutely critical, to ensuring that we meet the goals enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

At this session of the Committee, we will also pursue our consideration of the agenda item on space and water. Through our work on this item, we can meaningfully contribute to meeting the targets set in Millennium Goal 7, which calls for cutting by half, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and I hope to see many reports on regional and national water resource management initiatives that involve the use of space technology. Moreover, the Committee at its current session will also host a symposium on this topic, as I have already mentioned.

The Committee will also consider a new agenda item, entitled, international cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development, as part of the multi-year workplan for the period 2007-2009. This is a new agenda item which I mentioned when I addressed the work of the Interagency meeting. In the first year of the workplan, the Committee aims, by way of avoiding duplication, to identify and assess the interfaces among existing international fora, where countries undertake discussions regarding the implementation of space-derived geospatial data infrastructures. On the basis of this assessment, the Committee would then take a decision on the next step of the workplan, including a closer definition of the scope of the agenda item on space-derived geospatial data infrastructure, I look forward with great interest to the presentations made by delegations under this item.

Distinguished delegates, the future role and the activities of the Committee will be one of the main topics for discussion under the agenda item entitled, other matters. I should like to recall that, in paragraph 47 of resolution 61/111, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, the Committee had agreed to consider, at its fiftieth session, under agenda item other matters, the issue of the future role and activities of the Committee and noted that, the Chairman of the Committee, might conduct inter-sessional, open-ended, informal consultations with a view to presenting to the Committee a list of elements that could be taken into consideration at its upcoming session. Delegations will therefore have before them a working paper entitled, future role and activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, this is contained in document A/AC.105/L.268. A set of elements on the future role of the Committee, which is included in the working paper, is by no means complete and will need to be continuously updated and enriched, as required, by the evolution of technology and by the emergence of new space applications and I look forward to fruitful discussions on this item.

At its fiftieth session, the Committee will also take a decision on several requests for membership made to the Committee and seeking to obtain permanent observer status with the Committee. At its forty-fourth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee took note of the formal application by Switzerland for membership of the Committee. As regards permanent observer status of the Committee, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee took note, at its forty-fourth session, of the request by the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO). That request, as well as the request to the forty-sixth session of the Legal Subcommittee by the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing for permanent observer status with the Committee. We will also have before us at this session, application for permanent observer status from the Secure World Foundation.

Ladies and gentlemen, our Committee should now immerse itself in the issues I have just presented. Together and through the hard work from each and every one of us, I am certain that we will meet our common goals and challenges. For many years the Committee has played a major role in shaping the international standards for space activities and in promoting international cooperation for the benefit of all countries in many areas of space research, space applications, space operations and space exploration. It is now important, further to strengthen this successful role of this Committee for the benefit of all nations. I am convinced that the constructive session before us will put us in a position to have productive discussions over the next few days and I thank you for your attention.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to turn to some organizational matters. As in the past, the indicative schedule of work, annex to the agenda, which was adopted by the Committee earlier this morning, will be followed in as flexible a manner as possible and can be adjusted as we proceed with our work.

Resolution 32/71 of the General Assembly requires that members of each United Nations body be informed, at the beginning of the session, of resources available to it. I would like to inform you of the arrangements made for this session of the Committee, therefore. This session is scheduled from 6-15 June this year, a total of 16 meetings are expected. The Board Room is available for this morning and this afternoon's meeting, from tomorrow onwards, we will hold our plenary meeting on the seventh floor of this building, in Conference Room III. In addition, Conference Room VII and Rooms C0729, C0731, C0733 and C0735 are all available for use by this session. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Sound recordings will be made for the plenary sessions in the original language and in English and unedited verbatim transcripts will be available, following this session of the Committee, in all the official languages of the United Nations. Please note that, in the annex to its resolution 56/242, the General Assembly adopted guidelines on limiting the duration of meetings as follows: meetings should normally be held during regular meeting hours, that is, from 10 to 1 and from 3 to 6 on working days and that intergovernmental bodies should undertake a review of their meeting patterns and reporting cycles and, in coordination with Conference Service, adjust their meeting requests for subsequent sessions accordingly.

In addition to the above, for the last few years, the budget of the United Nations has placed a number of constraints and restrictions on the capacity of Conference Service to deliver services as they did in the past, in particular, unscheduled meetings, ad hoc informal consultations, meetings over and above regular hours and meetings on non-working days and extended meetings or sessions will, most likely, not be serviced by Conference Service. I would also like to remind delegates of the General Assembly's request to cut down on the length of reports issued by the Secretariat, including the reports of intergovernmental bodies. I should therefore like to inform you that, with regard to the current session of the Committee, the Secretariat will endeavour, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Secretary-General, further to shorten the length of the report without affecting its quality or its content. I would therefore ask you for your understanding and cooperation in this regard.

Finally, delegates are requested to turn mobile phones off when entering any conference room, mobile phones switched on and, on standby, seriously interfere with the sound systems in the conference rooms and hence affect the quality and provision of interpretation and sound recording. I strongly urge you to keep to this request and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

General exchange of views (agenda item 4)

Ladies and gentlemen, I should now like to turn to our examination of item 4, namely, our general exchange of views. The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of GRULAC, represented by Mr. Ciro Arévalo-Yepes on behalf of GRULAC and represented by Colombia.

Mr. C. ARÉVALO-YEPES (on behalf of GRULAC) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, namely, GRULAC, we would like to say how happy we are to see you leading our work in COPUOS and I am honoured to speak on behalf of GRULAC and, on behalf of the Ambassador of Peru, to present this commemorative statement on the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would also like to thank the Director-General, Antonio Maria Costa, for his introductory statement and words on the relevance of the work that is being done here in Vienna.

We would like to emphasize this significant coincidence of anniversaries which we are celebrating this year. The start of the modern space age with the launching of Sputnik I, the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and also the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We recognize that these anniversaries are symbols of the basis on which the Committee and its two Subcommittees have built the international framework for space activities. Stressing international cooperation as a way to make the exploration and use of outer space be of benefit to all peoples, whatever their level of development in the field of economy and science.

We would like to emphasize that the Latin American and Caribbean countries have contributed, from the very beginning, in a very important and consistent manner to progressive development of international law in space and could define this in the Subcommittee on Legal Affairs. The formulation of the most recent declaration of the General Assembly was on principles and this is contained in resolution 51/122, this is a declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of space for the benefit and interest of all States, bearing specially in mind, the needs of the developing countries. This is a wording that was formulated in a working group of the

Subcommittee on Legal Affairs, which was chaired by a Latin American country, with important contributions from various countries which are members of GRULAC.

We would like to repeat our conviction that, one of the principal responsibilities of the United Nations in the legal area, is the progressive development of space law because of the rapid evolution in scientific and technical progress. From the very concept of the main principles that govern outer space, as well as the codification of the treaty on space of 1967, since that time Latin America and the Caribbean have contributed to the fundamental elements that relate to the exploration and use of space and that all these should be for the benefit and interest of all States, whatever their level of economic or scientific development and that this belongs to the whole of humanity. We would like to stress the participation of the regional development are very important topics for the developing countries and I am thinking of those that relate to remote sensing and the equitable utilization and rational utilization of the geostationary orbit, as well as, those that relate to international responsibility for damage caused by space objects.

In these fifty years, GRULAC has had the responsibility and the honoured privilege of having chaired the Committee and also the Subcommittee on Legal Affairs in the form of Ambassador Raimundo González-Aninat of Chile and we occupied the vice-chairmanship and we will occupy the presidency of the Committee in the next period of 2008-2009, in the person of Ambassador Ciro Arévalo-Yepes of Colombia.

In the scientific and technical area, GRULAC has put itself in a place where it can make applications under sustainable development and it is also making specific contributions to the Subcommittee on scientific and technical aspects. We would like to underline the need to strengthen links with the World Summit on Sustainable Development and also the World Summit on Information Society in all those areas which relate to the application of satellite technology for social and economic development. In addition, we have managed to make progress in consolidating, creating national coordination units for space policies and we note a tendency, which is positive, to signing bilateral cooperation agreements in space, not only in the North-South framework but also, among developing countries themselves.

Mr. Chairman, support to education and training was a constant priority of GRULAC, which has benefited from the activities of the Regional Centre for Education in Space Science and Technology for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as, the many initiatives that the region has promoted within COPUOS and, particularly, the efforts made by UNESCO, the European Space Agency, NASA and JAXA with various programmes developed in the region.

Mr. Chairman, UNISPACE III signified the establishment of a new international scene for the promotion of closer cooperation among States in exploring and using, in a peaceful way, outer space and GRULAC considers that, we should explore new mechanisms which will promote an effective international cooperation and that this will offer States ways of acceding, in a just and equitable way, to the benefits of science and technology in space, in a process which will be real transfer, a solid transfer and an efficient transfer. For this reason and, thinking of the future, GRULAC would repeat firmly, that international cooperation should be the keystone of the work of COPUOS. Areas of a special interest for our region, such as the protection of natural resources and the environment, prevention of natural disasters and their mitigation and the training of human resources in the developing countries, all these should be tackled in a priority manner.

The central aim of the Space Conferences of the Americas has been to explore the possibilities for regional and world cooperation in space, to accelerate the social and economic development of our nations by establishing contacts among experts, get to know national/regional programmes, scientific interests and the level of progress made in those disciplines and then, very fundamentally, the proposal for projects for cooperation among the developing countries in the region. With those central aims in mind and, as a contribution to space cooperation, the region has worked for about 20 years now, so that since 1990, we held the first Space Conference of the Americas in Costa Rica, this was followed by Chile in 1993, Uruguay in 1997, Colombia in 2002 and Ecuador in 2006. The results of these conferences in our hemisphere then led on to plans of action and in declarations made at San José, Santiago, Punta del Este, Cartagena de Indias and San Francisco de Quito, respectively. As a follow-up and, in fulfilment of the commitments made, what were established were secretariats, on a temporary basis and also expert groups to support these conferences. We would like, as GRULAC, to express our thanks to the Office, OOSA, in Vienna, and in particular to Sergio Camacho, for the

very invaluable cooperation that has led to the success of these conferences.

As a concrete form of this evolution, GRULAC would like to underline the fundamental goal of the declaration made at San Francisco de Quito, which was to promote knowledge, application of science and technology in space for safety development and the well-being of the population of the countries on our continent and, particularly, of the developing countries on that continent, to turn space into the common patrimony of humanity for peace and cooperation. The key themes were, remote medicine, epidemiology, long-range education and knowledge, protection of the environment, the cultural patrimony, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters. That regional event was a considerable achievement in the process of making institutional these Space Conferences of the Americas, these are the elements, within a conceptual framework, which are axes of action for the temporary secretariat of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas.

Mr. Chairman, GRULAC would like to pay tribute and a very special tribute, to the outgoing Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Sergio Camacho who, as we see it, is leaving behind him a consolidated office which is efficient and a model of management within the United Nations system. GRULAC would like very much to express its appreciation, its thanks and its admiration, for the untiring work that has been done by Sergio in his very many functions which are all part of the mandate of COPUOS in its steadily growing space activities. His untiring dedication and his commitment make him most worthy of our warmest thanks and recognition and it is also a reason for great pride in the Latin American region. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative, the Ambassador of Colombia, speaking on behalf of GRULAC and I think that the entire Committee would go along with me in endorsing the congratulations made with regard to Mr. Sergio Camacho at the end of the statement by GRULAC. Without further ado, I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. S-H. KIM (Republic of Korea): It is a great pleasure for my delegation to be here at this fiftieth session of COPUOS and we are very glad to see you again chairing this year's meeting. I believe that, under your able leadership, this session will prove to be another valuable occasion for highly productive deliberations. My delegation would also like to thank Dr. Sergio Camacho for his dedication to the work of OOSA and COPUOS over the last 25 years.

Mr. Chairman, we celebrate this year the fiftieth anniversary of COPUOS. In that time, COPUOS has played an invaluable role in what has been a very eventful half century. Indeed, over the last 50 years, tremendous scientific and technological advances, both qualitative and quantitative, have been achieved in the field of outer space. During that time, COPUOS has contributed greatly to making the world a better and safer place by promoting the peaceful uses of space science and technology for the purpose of economic, social and cultural development. Space science and technology has a great role to play than ever before due to its expanded applications, in particular, in the areas of remote sensing, global aviation satellite systems, telemedicine and space system-based disaster management.

Mr. Chairman, I would now like to take this opportunity to share with you our national efforts to develop and share space technologies with the international community. The Korean Government has designated space technology as one of the six national strategic technologies in its national technology road map. The Korean Government enacted a Space Development Promotion Act in 2005. Based on this, Korea is now establishing a new base plan for promoting space development to succeed the current long-term plan for Korea's space development of 1996 and its three amended plans which have served as a valuable guideline for the last 20 years. The purpose of the new base plan is to develop our space policy in such a way as to respond to unforeseen domestic and foreign developments in space technology and environments. As part of efforts to promote the aims of the new plan, the Korean Government has recently established a Space Technology Bureau in the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Last year, Korea achieved significant technological advances in space activities. In July 2006, my Government successfully launched the Korea Multipurpose Satellite 2 on the Eurockot launch vehicle from a space centre in Russia. The new satellite is capable of producing high quality, one-meter resolution images. In a parallel effort, a private Korean company, Korea Telecom, launched a broadcasting and

communications satellite, Koreasat 5, last August, from a platform ship stationed south of Hawaii, near the Equator. The KOMPSAT-3 and the KOMPSAT-5 and the Communication Ocean and Meteorological Satellite Systems are currently under development and are expected to be launched in 2009 and 2011. They will provide high-resolution images required for geographical information systems development, as well as, environmental, agricultural and ocean monitoring applications.

Particularly noteworthy is the KOMPSAT-5, equipped with the Synthetic Aperture Radar, which will be used to enable us to efficiently monitor disasters, as well as, better understand the Earth's environmental processes. In addition, the Science and Technology Satellite 2 will be launched next year from the domestic space centre by the Korea space launch vehicle, which is currently being developed.

A further development that I would like to highlight is that the Republic of Korea has selected two potential candidates to be the first Korean astronauts to travel aboard a Soyuz spacecraft in March or April 2008 from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to the International Space Station.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring my remarks to a close by underlining the importance of international cooperation in the field of space activities. Constructive cooperation with advanced space-faring countries has been vital in making Korea's successful development of outer space activities possible. The Republic of Korea believes that, these achievements will create additional possibilities for international cooperation in the near future, especially in the field of remote sensing and communication. This, in turn, will contribute to the international efforts to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

I take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation to ensure that this session proves highly productive and fruitful. Thank you for your kind attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Ambassador Kim for that statement on behalf of the Republic of Korea and I am very impressed, I must say, by the speed with which the space programme of your country has developed with some remarkable achievements which, I am sure, will be made even more concrete by the launching that will take place next year.

We now move on to the statement to be made by Ambassador Guoqiang Tang, representative of China.

Mr. G. TANG (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Mr. Chairman, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of COPUOS. We are confident that, under your guidance and that of the other members of the Bureau and, with the concerted efforts of, and cooperation among, delegates of all member States, the Committee will successfully accomplish the tasks before it, in the further promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space and international cooperation in this area. My delegation will, as always, continue to support and participate in the work of the Committee under various items and make its contributions to the peaceful uses of outer space. I would also like, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to pay tribute to Director Camacho for his leadership of OOSA over the past several years in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. Chairman, this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the launch into orbit of the first man-made Earth satellite and the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. For the past half century, human activities in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space made spectacular progress, making indelible contributions to the creation of a better space for living and development, to the promotion of a friendly cooperation among, and social progress of, people around the world and to the safeguarding of mankind's safety, survival and development.

We note with satisfaction that, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the four other outer space treaties together constitute the existing international legal regime governing outer space. These treaties have played a positive and effective role in regulating international space activities, safeguarding national rights and interests in outer space, maintaining order in outer space and promoting international space cooperation. Hailed as the space Magna Carta, the Outer Space Treaty in particular, has laid the legal foundation for the peaceful exploration and use of

outer space, constructed the legal framework for space activities, established the basic principles which countries must abide by when conducting space activities, in particular, the principle for the benefit of humanity, the peaceful uses of outer space principle, the principle of free exploration and utilization of outer space on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, as well as, the international cooperation principle.

Improved utilization of outer space and increasing pursuit of space interests by all countries as a result of scientific and technological advances, requires all the more that all space-faring countries resolutely safeguard and constantly strengthen all the legal principles governing the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. At the same time, we must recognize objectively that there are apparent deficiencies in the existing outer space legal instruments in terms of preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space and a lot is missing in regulating the commercialization and privatization of space activities. My delegation is therefore in favour of making additions and improvements to the existing outer space framework through proper means, without jeopardizing the basic principles of the existing space law.

Mr. Chairman, the exploration and use of outer space should serve peaceful purposes and seek benefits for humankind. While we are encouraged by mankind's achievements, we also need to adopt further measures to prevent outer space weaponization and arms race, the Legal Subcommittee should play its due role in this respect.

Mr. Chairman, with the in-depth development of human space activities, available space resources are becoming in increasingly short supply and pollution of the space environment from nuclear power sources, space debris and ejector is worsening. Protection of the space environment, rational exploitation and utilization of space resources and the achievement of sustainable development in the peaceful uses of outer space have become a general consensus of the international community. Protecting the space environment is the basic guarantee for the sustainable development of human space activities and common responsibility of all space-faring nations. China stands ready to join with others in continued efforts in exploring and promoting ways and means of sustainable development in the peaceful uses of outer space.

We note that advancing sustainable social economic development through international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space has received increasing attention from countries around the world. I would like to take this opportunity to present briefly, the latest developments and progress in China in this area, since our last session.

Last July, the CNSA and the Secretariat of the Asia/Pacific Multilateral Cooperation on Space Technology and Applications, jointly organized in Beijing, the first master programme on space technology and applications, which contributed to improving the space technology and applications capabilities of Asian/Pacific countries and to promoting economic and social development in the region. Last March, CNSA and the Russian Federal Space Agency signed a cooperation agreement on jointly exploring Mars and Phobos, under which the two sides would jointly probe Mars and Phobos in 2009. Last April, China and Pakistan signed a framework agreement on deepening bilateral space science and technology cooperation. Under the agreement, the two countries will carry out cooperation in areas such as, communication satellites and cooperate on projects conducted by the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization in satellites applications and training, among others.

Last 14 May, China successfully launched a Nigerian communication satellite into space on an LM-3C launch vehicle. It was the first time China provided commercial launch services for a foreign customer in an integrated way with a rocket, satellite and launch support. It was also a useful practice of international space cooperation among developing countries. On 24 May, CNSA signed with ESA, the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, marking CNSA's formal membership in that international cooperative mechanism for disaster reduction.

Mr. Chairman, as host country to the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, China has been working to promote the Convention of that organization. In the past year, preparations for APSCO made a new progress, the Convention entered into force on 12 October 2006. As the host country, China will work closely with signatories to complete the relevant preparatory work as soon as possible and make sure that APSCO is up and running at an early date, so as to contribute to improving space cooperation among, and the well-being of, the people of Asian Pacific countries.

Mr. Chairman, since the launch of the first man-made satellite and holding of the first session of COPUOS, fifty years ago, humanity has achieved a lot in the exploration and utilization of outer space. In the next fifty years, human space activities are sure to make even greater and quicker strides. Where do space activities go from here? That is the question to ponder. Outer space is the province of humanity, all countries, large and small, strong and weak, have the same right to benefit from space activities. The developing countries facing the pressing task of economic and social development are more in need of support and assistance from international space cooperation. Let us all work together toward the lofty goal of bringing the benefits of outer space to the whole humanity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you very much indeed for your statement on behalf of China. Might I take this opportunity to congratulate you and our Nigerian colleagues on your recent launch of the Nigerian satellite using a launch vehicle from China and, taking into account, that the satellite was also produced in China. I would also like to voice my congratulations on the occasion of the signature of China's participation in the Space and Major Disaster Charter, that is also a very important step, meaning that, that Charter can now draw on China's space means and experience in this area. It is my conviction that the SPIDER programme will be able to draw upon the Charter in the best possible conditions, thanks to that signature. I now give the floor to Mr. Daniel Codorniu-Pujals for the presentation by Cuba.

Mr. D. CODORNIU-PUJALS (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, we are very happy to see you as Chair of this very important Committee and we are convinced that, under your leadership, we will be successful in our work. We would like to wish success in this work and we would also say, we are prepared to contribute to this meeting in order to achieve the expected results. May I also express our gratitude to the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the work done, as well as, the preparation of this meeting. We would also like to express our full support to the declaration made by the distinguished Ambassador Arévalo on behalf of GRULAC.

Mr. Chairman, this session of COPUOS is of particular importance because we are looking at two important anniversaries, the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of the first Sputnik and therefore the beginning of the space age and then the fortieth of the adoption of the treaty on space, which is the keystone in international legislation, which has led to the setting up of this intergovernmental organization which is now also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary.

The advances made by humanity have been tremendous in space and, even more impressive, is the possibilities that are opened every day in this new area of work. For some decades now, technology in space was the patrimony of the major powers, for most States the conquest of space was reserved to science fiction and it was, therefore, very remote from their priorities in the field of economic and social development. Today, space activities have direct effect on the daily life of many inhabitants of our planet and therefore more countries involved every day, without any particular distinction. The space activities are here to stay and they are defined in our lives. The television transmissions, weather forecasts, Internet, intercontinental telephoning, monitoring of the environment, prevention of disasters, remote education and remote medicine, geopositioning, are all some examples of what has been achieved. Unfortunately, this promising panorama is darkened by the growing tendency to militarizing space, particularly for the efforts made by some powers to bring the arms race into this scenery. New versions of the war of the stars and other anti-missile shields and other aberrant and costly plans are threatening, not only the peaceful use of space but also, in fact, threatening the survival of humanity. In this respect, my delegation would like to support, most fully, what was stated in the final declaration adopted by the Head of States of Government and of the Non-Aligned Movement, the meeting of which was held in Havana, Cuba, in September 2006 and I quote, "the Heads of State and of Government recognize the interest which is common to all humanity for the exploration and use of space and would underline the prevention of an arms race in space as a great danger for peace and security, internationally, and we would also like to stress the importance that, strict respect should be attached to existing agreements on arms limitations and disarmament in outer space, including bilateral agreements, such as, the legal regime in force in respect of the use of outer space. We would also like to underline the urgent need to begin work on the conference on disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space" end of quote.

Along those lines, Mr. Chairman, COPUOS should take upon itself a special role, both by its contribution to diffusing and promoting the peaceful

uses of space, as well as, by contributing to consolidating and improving ethical principles in legal instruments which would guarantee the absolutely peaceful, just and non-discriminatory use of all space applications. In that spirit, Cuba is participating in this Committee and we are moving very modestly along the lines of peaceful use of outer space in various ways. Some of the difficulties we face are due to our condition of being a poor country and an under-developed one, others, very adverse and denigrating, a result of the unfair economic blockade which is both commercial and financial, which has applied to us for five decades by the Government of the United States. It is a blockade which has cost my country 86 billion dollars and it is reflected in all aspects of our economic and social life.

In Cuba, the use of satellites in meteorology and monitoring the environment, have seen a great increase in that area since 2001 and our Institute of Meteorology has now achieved a high resolution station. This new station signifies a great technological advance which has made revolutionary reception and clarification of satellite images. These new images are being used very successfully in following up cyclones which affect us and they also mean that they bring decisive elements to diagnosis of the situation. It has been possible to identify forest fires for 24 hours a day and we have determined the extent of these and their movement, which has strengthened our detection of the very hotspots. Different institutions in the country are working also in using remote sensing for actualizing topographical maps at different scales, to study space and weather changes in water basins, also to analyse the wood coverage of our national territory.

Mr. Chairman, may I express once again certain criteria of my delegation in regard to certain aspects of the agenda of this session. My delegation has been stated, on other occasions, agrees with the criterion that the treaties and principles, approved by the United Nations, for outer space are an important legal basis for the development of peaceful uses of outer space. At the same time, we share the opinion that this legal framework is insufficient, in particular, it does not guarantee the prohibition of the arms race in space. Analysis in this Committee and its Subcommittees of alternatives to strengthen space legislation and, in particular, proposals clearly to prohibit the use of any kind of arms in space is not at all a theoretical exercise, as some people try to state, we are very concerned for the impact of these policies on the survival of humanity itself.

In addition, we would like to emphasize the special importance we attach to defining space. The lack of definition, at the present time, does not help security and confidence in the peaceful uses of space, so we have to resolve this situation as soon as possible. We hope, therefore, that proposals of a constructive nature will be achieved on this essential aspect in our discussions in the working group for this particular topic.

Another crucial element and which requires to be a priority matter for this Committee, is related to the geostationary orbit, a limited natural resource with *sui generis* characteristics, which every day is being more and more exposed to saturation and it must be used on a rational and an equitable basis for all States.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to stress the importance of the Space Conferences of the Americas because they promote science and technology in space in our region. My country is an active participant in these. In this context, we are pleased to see the holding, during 2006, of the sixth conference in Quito, Ecuador and we recognize the important efforts made by that country to achieve a successful conclusion to that conference. We welcome also, that the Government of Guatemala is offering itself for the next conference.

We would like to support all those who recognize the responsibility and professionalism of Dr. Sergio Camacho at the head of OOSA during recent years and we would like to associate ourselves with the congratulations expressed to him. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his statement. I should also like to thank him for the congratulations addressed to Mr. Camacho and of course the Committee would like to endorse those congratulations. Without further ado, I should like to give the floor to Mr. Suresh of the Indian delegation.

Mr. B. SURESH (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation is pleased to see you in the Chair, guiding the deliberations of the fiftieth session of COPUOS, which is quite a major milestone. We would like to place on record, our sincere appreciation for the

significant contributions the Committee has made over the last 50 sessions, especially towards capacity-building for sustainable development, strengthening international cooperation, benefiting both the space-faring and space-using nations and, more importantly, maintaining the utilization of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Chairman, we are happy that, under your able leadership during the forty-ninth session of COPUOS, the Committee has made very noteworthy achievements, especially under the agenda items on space debris and space-based disaster management. We are confident that, with your able guidance, the Committee will continue to make good progress on various agenda items during the current session as well. I take this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation in achieving concrete results.

Mr. Chairman, we are happy that, as a part of celebrations of the fiftieth year of the entry into space, a special exhibit on 50 years of space achievement has been organized. Such international _____ (*inaudible*) will provide a very useful forum for the majority of organizations and establishments, to showcase their achievements, capabilities and future plans in the space arena. The Indian delegation considers a high-level panel discussion on space exploration, during this session, as a very important initiative. Deliberations of this kind will help in bringing together many like-minded nations in effectively sharing their scientific excellence and technological leadership and will play a big role in fostering the international cooperation. Towards this, the specific role played by the United Nations in taking forward the space exploratory activity for the benefit of mankind, is extremely important. The Indian delegation will be making a technical presentation on the space exploratory activity during the high-level discussion.

Mr. Chairman, let me briefly present to this Committee the significant achievements made by India in the space field since the last session in June 2006. During the year, ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C7, successfully launched four satellites into the intended 635 kilometres polar sun-synchronous orbit. The launch of PSLV-C7 took place from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Shriharikota. During this mission, for the first time, two primary satellites were carried in a dual-launch mode. The two primary satellites that were carried on board, were India's CARTOSAT-2 and the other, a space capsule recovery experiment, SRE-1, for short.

CARTOSAT-2, a 680-kilogramme remote sensing satellite, was meant for obtaining high-resolution, scene-specific spot imageries from highly agile _____ (*inaudible*). The satellite is in good health and is providing useful high-resolution imageries for use in national development.

The other primary satellite SRE-1, a 550kg capsule, was meant for providing the platform for carrying out micro-gravity experiments in addition to demonstrating the technology elements required for re-entry and recovery of the orbiting space capsule. The capsule was in orbit for nearly ten days, during which time, it successfully conducted two micro-gravity experiments on board. The capsule was subsequently de-boosted from its orbit and was made to safely re-enter the dense atmosphere and touch down very precisely at its planned location in Indian waters, off the coast of Sriharikota. The capsule was later successfully recovered from the sea.

In addition to the two primary satellites the mission also carried two auxiliary satellites for international customers, one, LAPAN-Tubsat, a 55kg video surveillance satellite, belonging to the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN), Indonesia, and the other, Nano PehuenSat 1, of the University of Comahue and the Argentine Association for Space Technology (AATE), Argentina, meant for carrying out radio amateur experiments.

Subsequently, on 11 March 2007, India's communication satellite, INSAT 4B, meant for meeting the direct-to-home television for costing requirements, was successfully launched by a European Ariane-5 launch vehicle, from Kourou, French Guiana. It carried 12 high-power Ku band and 12 C-band transponders.

More recently, on 23 April 2007, India's workhorse, Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C8, successfully launched a 350kg AGILE satellite of the Italian Space Agency into the precise orbit. AGILE is a high-energy astrophysics mission of the Italian Space Agency (ISA) and this was the first time that a commercial primary satellite belonging to an international customer has been launched using PSLV.

With the successful launch of PSLV-C8, the tenth consecutive success of PSLV, it has reiterated its reliability and versatility to launch satellites in various states of orbit and also to carry out multiple satellite missions.

In the area of space application programmes for national development, many programmes got certified and have provided very valuable inputs to the nation. In our effort to provide the quality education across the country, the tele-education project, undertaken a couple of years back, has made considerable impact. Today, more than 14,000 EduSat classrooms have been established in the country. Tele-education networks have benefited the majority of students from schools, colleges, teachers, professionals and training institutes. It has made possible the creation of virtual interactive classrooms through the use of digital connectivity. During this session, the Indian delegation will make a special presentation on the impact of space technology in importing education.

Towards providing expert medical consultancy available in cities, to patients in remote and inaccessible areas, the telemedicine project, undertaken by ISRO, has proved to be very successful. Presently, ISRO's telemedicine network consists of 225 hospitals, of which, 180 hospitals in remote, rural and district levels have been connected to 40 super specialty hospitals located in major cities. Over the year, the number of tele-education, telemedicine and related _____ (*inaudible*) centre networks got commissioned and have provided for better outreach.

Mr. Chairman, in India, a single window delivery mechanism for a variety of space-based production services suggest tele-education, tele-medicine, information on natural resources for planning and development at local level, interactive advisories on agriculture, fisheries, land and water resources management, livestock management, is being catered by the mechanism called Village Resource Centre (VRCs) and is being undertaken by ISRO. Today, more than 260 Village Resource Centres have been established throughout the country providing valuable inputs to the local community and helping them in addressing a variety of social aspects. The number is likely to go up to 400 by the year end. We consider that this concept of Village Resource Centres is quite an appropriate application for other developing countries as well.

In addition to this, some of the major space application programmes were continued, they are crop acreage and production estimate, forecasting of potential fishery zones and creating a national inventory on wastelands.

Mr. Chairman, a very important advent of India's space-related activity has been the thrust towards international cooperation. We continue to cooperate with a number of space and other related agencies which has been made possible by ISRO entering into a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements with various countries. Recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation and the French Space Agency (CNES), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation related to a small satellite Earth observation mission, called SARAL. Important agreements were signed with the Russian Federation for cooperation in the field of satellite-based positioning and timing services and also for a small satellite space science mission called YOUTHSAT. The assured availability of space-based navigation services for civil, commercial and scientific users and inter-operability among existing and planned space-based navigation services are crucial for a truly international Global Navigation System (GNSS). The cooperative arrangements with the United States and also with the Russian Federation are important steps. India will host the meeting of the International Committee on Global Navigations Systems in the first week of September 2007, to further enhance cooperation in this important field of space navigation.

During the year 2006, two major workshops were held in India, one was during August in Cochin, a UN/India/USA pilot project "Telemedicine in the reconstruction of Afghanistan". The other, a UN/NASA workshop on International Heliophysical Year 2007 and Basic Space Sciences, in Bangalore, during November 2006. Very recently, a couple of days back, India signed a cooperative agreement with the Government of Brazil towards sharing of remote sensing data and imageries.

Mr. Chairman, towards the Sentinel Asia project initiative, which is concealed under the aegis of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF), is strongly participating in this initiative by way of contributing in all the three nodes, which includes the data provider, training, capacity-building and user nodes. The Indian delegation is happy to announce that, on the invitation of JAXA, ISRO has decided to be the co-sponsoring agency, in association

with JAXA, for the fourteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum. This event is scheduled to be held in Bangalore, during 21-23 November 2007.

Mr. Chairman, ISRO takes special interest in providing the expertise and services for helping developing countries in the applications of space technology. The Center for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and Pacific Region. affiliated to the United Nations and operating from India, is an initiative in this direction. The Center has so far carried out 26 post graduate programmes with a duration of nine months and three are currently ongoing. In addition, it has organized a number of short-term courses and workshops, so far, 708 scholars from 30 countries from the Asia Pacific region and, 26 scholars from 16 countries, outside the Asia Pacific region, have benefited from the educational activities of the Center.

Mr. Chairman, India will be hosting this year the 58th International Astronautical Congress in Hyderabad, from 24-27 September 2007, under the umbrella of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) and the International Institute of Space Law (IISL). Being the 50th year of the space age, special events befitting to the occasion, are also planned in this Congress. On behalf of India and the organizing committee of IAC 2007, my delegation takes this opportunity to extend a very warm invitation to all delegates of this august body to participate in the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes is very important, both for developed and developing nations. In this context, it should become the responsibility of every nation to maintain outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes without trying new ventures that may enable technologies leading to weaponization in space in future and violate the fundamental concept of outer space for peaceful purposes.

One other point, which the Indian delegation would like to bring to the notice of UNCOPUOS, is that in recent times, the free availability of high-resolution imageries of sensitive areas on the Internet is posing a major concern to many nations, due to strategic reasons. In this context, it is important that appropriate guidelines, consistent with national policies are evolved, to regulate the free availability of such sensitive data in the public domain.

In conclusion, the Indian delegation would like to stress that, UNCOPUOS should make all possible efforts to increase the awareness of the relevance and importance of space applications for the betterment of human conditions and encourage more and more developing countries in taking up the space application programmes for sustainable development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you very much Mr. Suresh for your statement. You were kind enough to recall, once again, the major successes of the Indian space programme and, in particular, I am thinking of the launch of the Italian AGILE satellite, thanks to an Indian launch vehicle into polar orbit. I should also, naturally, like to wish you every success for the Astronautical Congress to be held in Hyderabad in September this year and I know that you are playing an important role, Sir, in organizing that event and we look forward to seeing you there in Hyderabad in September.

I should now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Ecuador.

Mr. B. MOREJÓN-ALMEIDA (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to offer you my warmest congratulations on being Chairman of the Committee, we wish you all success and we repeat our certainty that, under your guidance, this session of COPUOS will continue to offer cooperation and understanding, which has characterized it always in the past. We are also very grateful and we are very admiring of Dr. Sergio Camacho, for the very skilful leadership he has given during his term of office at OOSA. My country feels backed up by the permanent openness and welcome from Dr. Camacho and OOSA, we would wish him a fine future and we would also like to congratulate the Secretariat for the work that it has made to prepare this present session. My delegation supports fully, the commemorative statement made by my distinguished colleague, the distinguished Ambassador of Colombia, on behalf of GRULAC.

Mr. Chairman, this is a very propitious opportunity to underline the golden anniversary of

COPUOS, 50 years of creative work, which has led to benefits for humanity, through space activities. We ought to also recall the fortieth anniversary of the treaty on space as an historic landmark in the evolution of space law, to which the region of Latin America and the Caribbean countries have contributed very significantly and without any question. This fact should constitute an occasion for some deep thinking and to assess the achievements of this very important legal body, which is the international legal framework for space, one of the elements of which is international cooperation, as the most ideal and beneficial way of achieving a way of taking advantage of space for common interests. All this on the basis that, when you talk about progress, you must then make sure that human activities in the space area should fit into a legal framework which promotes the development of both people and societies.

It is also very important to underline the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of Sputnik I, this marked the beginning of the modern space era and it also awoke the international community to the need, which was most urgent, to examine all general problems that the exploration of space would bring forward in the light of the great interests of humanity that are involved. For my country, international cooperation is the most important of all factors and it must move on from being just a declaration to becoming a guideline for international space law so it is essential that we have the effective application of UNISPACE recommendations. In that spirit, Ecuador fully agrees with what was stated by the Subcommittee on science and technology, which is, that the recommendations of UNISPACE III will help the developing countries to face certain challenges and therefore, it is very important, that the industrialized countries should unite their resources to make it possible for the developing countries to begin programmes for applying space for their own progress. We must, therefore, and we have no choice here, globalize solidarity in this area.

We are in the sort of fire belt of America, which means there is a potential danger of natural disasters because 80 per cent of its volcanoes are active and also, the El Niño phenomenon causes tremendous economic losses to my country, so we firmly support the implementation of the SPIDER system whose appropriate management will make it possible to undertake mitigation activities, to do rescue and prevention in case of natural disaster and can, therefore, be of enormous help.

Mr. Chairman, as regards access and equitable use of the geostationary orbit, I must repeat, that this is a priority for Ecuador. For that reason, my country once again, would state that, this limited natural resource must be accessible to all countries on a priority basis and particularly to those that are in development and which have a particular geographical position, who require the use of outer space for interests that they share with everyone. Here we have contributed significantly to the development of international law in space and this topic, in particular, has been reflected in our own domestic legislation and the national government attaches great priority to this subject. Therefore, it is essential that we should maintain space for thinking around standards which would ensure equity for the access and use of that limited natural resource, without setting aside adoption of an international regimen, *sui generis* in its nature, which would be applicable to that orbit and which would cover the needs and interests of the developing countries and the geographic situation of certain countries, this is in accordance with article 44 of the Constitutional Convention of ITU, which was reshaped in Minneapolis in 1998. We recognize the competence of COPUOS to look at the political and legal aspects of this topic. We have in Ecuador, noted with special interest, the conclusions put forward in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the project which OOSA, together with Colombia, has put into effect to determine historical measurements of the use of the orbit. These results have determined that, 97 per cent of use has been realized only by industrialized countries and this requires, therefore, an assessment of this tendency because it shows a clear prejudice for the economic rights of the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, my country, which is inspired by a commitment within the principle of international cooperation as guideline for this forum, most seriously and decisively has taken upon itself the responsibility of convening the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, in Quito, from 25-28 July 2006. We held that Conference then and much has been said about that meeting this morning, we have heard other distinguished colleagues refer to those conferences as well. Fulfilling the statement made at San Francisco de Quito, internal consultations have taken place to create an Ecuadorian space agency which would regulate the development of the scientific and technological applications in space in Ecuador and, in the near future, it will be the promoting agency for programmes related to the use of space for peaceful purposes with its multiple applications and benefits and which will serve as a mechanism for coordination among public and private organizations, national and international

organizations which are competent in that particular subject area.

In the same way, important progress has been made in a national mega-project under the slogan, improvement of the quality of life of the Ecuadorian community on the basis of effective utilization of new information technologies and telecommunications. This is something which covers projects in remote medicine, education, access to the knowledge of space legislation, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and protection of the environment and the cultural patrimony of our country.

As regards remote medicine, we are working in establishing a national remote medicine programme with all its components, connectivity, IT, tele-measurements, training, continuous education, research and development in the technological area, in order to contribute to improving the quality of health services and therefore to increase the quality of life of our citizens.

As for education, we have coordinated implementation of workshops and seminars, which cover the benefits of applying science and technology in space so as to create a collective awareness of the importance of using space technologies. We are also promoting, on the national level, research and development in space sciences, to contribute to developing international space legislation, particularly, to fulfil the recommendations of UNISPACE III, to distribute the necessary international instruments and promote analysis by competent institutions, academic centres and the population in general. The government of my country will sign a cooperation agreement in space with Argentina and, in the same way, we will make efforts to implement a process of adhesion to CREATEALC and, in the future, we will establish in Ecuador a similar campus as there is in Mexico and Brazil.

As for the work done by the temporary secretariat in Ecuador under the mandate for the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas. In a period of three years, we should follow-up and execute programmes and projects which were established in the San Francisco de Quito Declaration in its plan of action. The temporary secretariat has a regional mechanism and it has, at the present time, a structure which includes a permanent planning committee, two committees, one for science and technology and the other for legal affairs and then also one for administration. Internationally, we have the assessment from the international expert group and the secretariats of the earlier and later CEA's, as well as, the member States of international agencies linked up to space and also space agencies. The temporary secretariat of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas has the adequate infrastructure and is located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ecuador and it has developed a page on the Web, on the basis of which, it spreads its activities and creates a management platform and, in that context, we have realized contacts to establish agreements for cooperation with international bodies and space agencies, both regionally and outside the regions.

Along the same lines, we have begun to undertake actions to make more concrete implementation of various projects. Principally, with organizations such as UNESCO, the CREATEALC, El INPE, CONAE, the National Centre for Space Affairs in France, the Space Agency in Japan and the German Space Agency, amongst others. I would like to emphasize that, the secretariat of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, has successfully realized a project called Space Campaigns in Ecuador in 2006, with the cooperation of UNESCO, as part of its space programme in education. These cover education for secondary school students to strengthen vocation for science, technology and space exploration among students. Each of these campaigns are divided into three stages, the first is conferences by international experts or lectures, second is, field training and finally, observation of space, using telescopes which were donated by UNESCO. We have seen participating in these campaigns as lecturers, Señora Yolande Berenguer of UNESCO, Miss Takemi Chiku from the Japanese Space Agency, Dr. Pablo Cuartas from Bogota and the astronaut, Jean-Jacques Favier from the French Space Agency.

Those that have been developed, these campaigns as I have said, in Ecuador, have led to a series of activities of an educational nature, as is the case for the regional space campaigns, which had the participation of member States from the whole area of Latin America and the project that was developed there by the secretariat, will be presented to UNESCO. The same with the secretariat, through its science and technology committees, implementing studies of feasibility to implement a stratellite project, it is a regional project, designing a prototype of an extra-stratospheric satellite for research purposes.

In addition, we are also implementing the remote medicine project which was started at various stages in our country, it strengthens the work done in health by various national institutions, which will make it possible, among other benefits, to do remote diagnosis, of the transmission of images, voice and data and also continuous education, via satellite, among the various units in the same sector, from one sector to another and also, to national/international centres. Later, this project will be made more regional and as a first stage this will be with Colombia and Peru. In this context, the temporary secretariat of the Fifth CEA, will soon hold the first meeting of the secretariats, which have been provided for in the San Francisco de Quito Declaration. The first meeting will identify financial sources, then there will be seminars and workshops on space legislation and on methodology for the formulation and financial management of scientific and technological projects. Management for developing the project called _____ (*inaudible*), where six countries will be participating and also, efforts are to be made to establish a strategic alliance of terrestrial stations in Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina, which make it possible to provide the appropriate information from space and it will also set up an historic archive of satellite images amongst other activities.

As you can appreciate, Mr. Chairman, and I am concluding here, the work which is being developed by the temporary secretariat has been very intensive and has required great professional work. However, all these praiseworthy actions require most urgently, international cooperation, so that they can be carried out under the official documents of the fifth Latin American conference. So, we would invite, through you Mr. Chairman, that we include in the final report of this session of COPUOS, a paragraph referring to the temporary secretariat as being a regional forum charged with promotion and knowledge and the application of science and technology in space, in order to promote the security, development and well-being of the countries in the region and the need to count upon the support and cooperation, at the international level, in order to implement the mandate established in the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the Ambassador for his statement on behalf of Ecuador and I should like to congratulate Ecuador on the excellent organization of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas last July and of course, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best in the work of the pro tempora secretariat of the Conference in the next few years. I now give the floor to the French Ambassador.

Mr. F-X. DENIAU (France) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you very much, Sir. I should like to say how pleased the French delegation is to see you once again in the Chair of our Committee and I am particularly pleased that this is happening in 2007, when the number of events that have marked the history of space, are being celebrated. I am thinking of the first launch of the artificial satellite, Sputnik I, that was 50 years ago, the fortieth anniversary of the space treaty and, the fiftieth anniversary of our very Committee. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairs of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee for the way in which they have moved the work of those Committees forward in the last year. Might I also take this opportunity, particularly to commend the work that has been done, over a number of years now, by Mr. Sergio Camacho as Director of OOSA, during a time when the Office took on new responsibilities and where the role of the Office increased in a significant way and I would like to add my voice to that of many delegations who have sought to congratulate Dr. Camacho for his excellent work over the last few years. Might I also thank the Director-General of UNOV, Mr. Costa, for being so kind as to come to the opening meeting of our work, that is an important signal to us, it underlines the importance of this Committee.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space plays an important role in diffusing and promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and is a central tool of international cooperation. During the forty-ninth session, it was decided that the Chair of the Committee should undertake consultations leading to a document on the future role and activities of the Committee. My delegation welcomes the way in which you carried out these consultations, they have led to the collection of a number of experts and have meant that _____ (*inaudible*) versions of this document were available at recent meetings and my delegation supports the efforts that you have been making, by way of giving new stimulus to this Committee. Your document contains a number of directions which could well give new life to discussion in our Committee and could focus its work for future years.

For my delegation, the contribution of space systems to sustainable development are a priority area

and we welcome the fact that a great deal of room has been given to this theme in the relevant document because each and every tool developed in the space area over the last fifty years can, and must, contribute to the development of humanity, extending the benefits of space activities to all countries and in particular, developing countries, is in this context, an aim to which the French delegation is particularly attached and it is a priority mission for the Office of Outer Space Affairs. Here I should like to underline the importance, in particular, of the effective implementation of the provisions of the resolution on multilingualism, this resolution was adopted two weeks ago by the United Nations General Assembly, by consensus. That resolution, in particular, calls upon the Secretariat to provide technical assistance in the languages of beneficiaries and this is a point where the group of member States of the International Organization of _____ (*inaudible*) will be paying particular attention to this matter. Amongst themes to be dealt with, it is suggested that, active coordination of independent space systems should be pursued when they have the same application and that new attention should be paid to specific space activities, I am thinking of opening up the _____ (*inaudible*) to developing countries and other such items, including matters of near Earth objects.

Finally, the French delegation welcomes the fact that, attention is being paid to guidelines on the safety of space activities. This is something that could, in the longer term, lead to a set of guidelines. In the last few years, work on space debris has shown how important it is to pool best practices in this area and we feel that this same method will allow us to make progress, when it comes to a kind of space highway code. Here, my delegation would like, wholeheartedly, to support paragraph 2.9 of the relevant document, namely, setting up a working group within the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to study this important matter.

The background to the launch of the Soyuz in Guiana is something that was inaugurated on 26 February 2007. A commemorative plaque was unveiled and a stone was laid on the site that came from the site from which Yuri Gagarin had entered space in 1961. This is a symbol of continuity between the initial Russian launch, Russia after all, started the space era and, the first manned space flight. This also marked 40 years of cooperation between France and Russia and 10 years of industrial cooperation and also, a long cooperation between the United States and Russia's space agency, Roscosmos. The implementation of a Soyuz launch vehicle in Guiana will mean that, after the first launch at the end of 2008, Guiana's equatorial position will be able to be used and this will mean that, we will be able to significantly complete Soyuz's capacity to launch tele-communication satellites, place them in geostationary orbit, as well as, navigation satellites from the Galileo European system and, Earth observation satellites will be able to be placed in polar orbit, as well as, interplanetary devices. Alongside Ariane-5 and the Vega small launch vehicle, Soyuz in Guiana will be a harmonious complement to the whole range of the European launch vehicles, whose use has been entrusted to Arianespace.

France would also like to provide some news of the Corot satellite. This was launched on 27 December 2006, via a 1B-Soyuz launch vehicle from the Russian base in Kazakhstan. The Corot satellite is the result of close cooperation between CNES in France, the European Space Agency, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Brazil and Spain. There are two aims in this programme, firstly, to carry out the first systematic seismological observation of stars, other than the Sun and, to carry out a research of planets similar to our own with a degree of accuracy that has not yet been equalled. The two main points of this mission will be, to carry out continual observation of those same stars, this has been going on for over 60 days hitherto and also, to measure variations in luminology with great accuracy. The satellite has meant that, at the beginning of May, an exoplanet, that is a planet outside the solar system, was discovered, it was called Corot-exo-1B and also, the first oscillations of a Sun-type star were detected by Corot and, in two cases, these observations were carried out with a great degree of accuracy.

Mr. Chairman, France welcomes the excellent results achieved over the work of the forty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the forty-sixth session of the Legal Subcommittee. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in particular, endorsed recommendations on space debris and we would like to see these adopted by the Committee. These are recommendations which countries are encouraged to implement on a voluntary basis, they should mean that progress can be achieved when it comes to mitigating space debris. Recent news has demonstrated the importance of the implementation of these recommendations and what impact this could have for the peaceful use of outer space. My delegation in this regard, made clear its position at the most recent session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

and we are delighted today that these recommendations led to consensus within the Subcommittee and we would like to express the wish that they will become the object of a resolution to be submitted to the next session of the United Nations General Assembly. France continues to be vigilant when it comes to the increase in space debris and we will be delighted to host the next meetings of the Interagency Committee on the Coordination of Space Debris, the IADC that is, at the CNES in Toulouse from 3-6 July this year. I would also like to underline the fact that, the pluriennial programme 2003-2007, on nuclear energy sources in space, has been successfully concluded, which led to the adoption of partnership between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and IAEA to set up an international technical framework for the safety of nuclear activities in space.

As regards the SPIDER platform, the idea of which, is to pool space resources in order to undertake disaster management and carry out emergency intervention. France would like to thank all those countries that have already committed, in particular, China and Germany. We are following the implementation of this matter very closely as managed by OOSA and we would like to see SPIDER being coordinated, as best as possible, with existing organizations and existing tools, in particular with UNISAT in Geneva.

My delegation would like to congratulate the registration working group on the significant results it has achieved with regard to harmonizing the activities when it comes to the registration of space objects. France would like to see an agreed text on this matter becoming the object of a resolution, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session.

Mr. Chairman, by way of conclusion, I would like to note the fact that, the simultaneous completion of work on different dossiers, as part of a multi-annual work programme, demonstrates how important and how relevant the working method is that the Committee uses, which is based on a thorough dialogue, including experts, which puts our Committee in a position to adopt decisions which have been prepared in the best possible conditions. This is a method which I feel we should follow in order to devote ourselves to what really should be and this is something that was underlined very clearly by Mr. Costa at the beginning of our session, something very important, namely, in preparing for the future and, in pursuing this aim, which is so very important, you can be certain, Mr. Chairman, that my delegation will provide you with every support. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank the French ambassador for his statement and I would like to congratulate him on the initial results of the Corot satellite that was presented in the statement. I would also like to thank the Ambassador for the reference that he made at the end of his statement to our working methods in the Committee and I can indeed say that, we can see just how relevant and effective those methods are and I hope that we will feel the same when we reach the end of our session. Thank you very much for your statement, Sir, I now give the floor to Mr. Helmut Böck, representative of Austria.

Mr. H. BÖCK (Austria) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to express the satisfaction of the Austrian delegation to see you chairing this fiftieth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We are sure that your savoir faire and experience in space affairs will help us to make progress and strengthen international cooperation during this session. My delegation would like to offer unconditional support in these goals.

(*continued in English*) We would also like to add to the voices, not only of the Director-General of UNOV, Mr. Costa, but also preceding speakers, to express our deep gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Sergio Camacho, who will hand over the ship after this session of COPUOS. On a personal note, I have had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Camacho for a long time and I also appreciated, not only his cooperation but also his hard work, his sense of humour and his dedication to the United Nations. Also, on a personal note, the only reason I can see for him retiring at such a youthful age, is for him having worked so hard and long over the last couple of years and decades. Dear Sergio, thank you for your dedication and calm stewardship of the Office for Outer Space Affairs throughout those years.

As we look into the stewardship this Committee could provide during the next half century for peaceful cooperation in outer space, it appears useful to recall the early years of the life of this Committee, when it often served as a kind of model for other, less productive and more controversy-riddled bodies of the United Nations. As an active player in the United Nations and the country committed to dialogue

and cooperation, Austria was entrusted to Chair the new permanent Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1961. It was a matter of pride for my country that the Chair of this Committee was held, for many years, by Austrian statesmen and diplomats, one of them later to become Secretary-General of the United Nations and another one serving as Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs. If in today's world it may seem somewhat puzzling that representatives of a single and relatively small country had been called to perform these duties for such a long time, a look back to the days of the Cold War may explain quite a few things.

Amidst high international tensions between the major space powers of the time, Austria remained dedicated to carry the principles of peaceful coexistence to the new spheres of outer space. Austria supported COPUOS in its role to serve the growing community of nations in their efforts to maximize benefits from the peaceful uses of outer space. Throughout the Cold War, COPUOS stayed on its course of cooperation and registered progress, in particular, in the area of space law. What kept this Committee afloat in difficult times was certainly not only the talent and the dedication of our own delegates but the joint effort of many other delegations, space experts and space enthusiasts, that helped to create the inimitable spirit of cooperation that dominated much of the workings of the Committee and openly transcended ideological and cultural barriers. In the same spirit, Austria offered Vienna as host city for major space conferences beginning in 1968, until the last one in 1999, whose main objective was to generalize the benefits of space technology and space research to all nations of the world.

Austria, strengthening the link between space goals and international development goals remains a priority of Austria. In line with this objective, Austria actively supports the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, SPIDER, as a programme of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. As a programme of the United Nations, under the authority of the OOSA Director, SPIDER offers enormous potential to enhance global coordination efforts to reduce the impact of disasters. Space-based technologies have tremendous potential for prevention, early warning and effective relief and rehabilitation efforts in relation to disasters. While currently in a crucial start-up phase, Austria is convinced that SPIDER will make an important contribution to make such vital information more accessible, in particular, for developing countries. Austria is committed to supporting the Office for Outer Space Affairs in delivering on SPIDER's mission to ensure that all countries have access to and develop the capacity to use space-based information to support the full disaster management cycle. While Austria, together with China and Germany, is contributing the bulk of the resources needed in 2007 to develop the programme, we are very encouraged by the interest SPIDER already enjoys and the offers for support the programme is receiving by other member States. An important share of our contributions this year, the equivalent of approximately US$200,000, will be dedicated to reach out to the expert community in developing countries and to support capacity building. In addition, Austria is already financing an expert for the SPIDER programme in the Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna.

Austria's support to SPIDER is also in line with Austria's tradition of actively supporting forums for exchange between developed and developing countries in the area of space activities. For example, Austria contributes to the actions called for in the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), inter alia, by continuing to support a series of symposia to be held in Graz. This year's symposium is dedicated to the topic "Space tools and solutions for monitoring the atmosphere in support of sustainable development". The aim is to enable and support participants to develop and implement projects in this area and to provide reliable data and information for policy and decision-making, related to such issues as, air quality, climate change, changing weather patterns, ozone depletion and ultraviolet monitoring. The symposium is hosted and co-sponsored by the Government of Austria, in particular, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, the State of Styria and the city of Graz and by the European Space Agency. It will be the fourteenth in a series of symposia, organized through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in cooperation with these co-sponsors, as well as, Joanneum Research and has been going on since 1994.

Austria research institutions in Graz will also support a telemedicine demonstration by satellite during the 58th International Astronautical Congress in Hyderabad, India, in close cooperation with the Indian Space Research Organisation, demonstrating the benefits of space tools for society.

Mr. Chairman, throughout the United Nations system, civil society has become an indispensable partner in our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. When putting space technology at the service of human development, we therefore should ensure that civil society acquires a good knowledge of the many space applications that have a direct beneficial bearing on socio-economic development and related ecological, legal and security issues. My delegation would therefore also like to draw this Committee's attention to a forum, organized by the Vienna Office of the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO), during the International Space Week on 8 and 9 October of this year. We invite all delegations to bring this event to the attention of interested non-governmental organizations, space agencies, university and research organizations.

Mr. Chairman, the principles this Committee has developed are now part of a large international consensus that inspires new efforts to venture into space, make better use of its resources and extend international cooperation in many fields. Thus, Europe's visions of space, detailed in a wide-ranging resolution adopted by the latest Space Council of ESA and the European Union in Brussels, on 22 May, is based expressively on allegiance to the United Nations Outer Space Treaty framework. To preserve and develop these principles, in a creative and faithful manner, will be one of the most important future missions of this Committee. In achieving this mission, the United Nations and the Committee can count on Austria's continued dedication.

Mr. Chairman, when I look at the time I also realize that we are getting close to our lunch break, so let me just refer to my statement I made to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee when I outlined various developments of the Austrian space programme. I will just shortly mention two points with regard to the space programme.

Of particular interest for the Austrian space community are GALILEO and the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GNES). Two specific events, Galileo Application Day and GNES Information Day, organized by the Aeronautics and Space Agency of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency, together with the Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology, took place recently with the overall objective to introduce the possibilities of GALILEO and GNES applications and to raise awareness among potential users.

Also, with regard to space education, let me just name a few major activities, like the annual summer school, Alpbach, the regular cooperation with _____ (*inaudible*), as well as, regular cooperation with ESA on educational competitions, campaigns and efforts. The topic of this year's summer school, taking place from 17-26 July, is astrobiology, life detection in and from space.

Taking also into account the various anniversaries we are celebrating, sort of under the title, 50 years of space achievements, we appreciate also the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in putting up a couple of events and, in particular, an exhibition which will be opened later today, where Austria is also participating. In this regard, let me also draw the attention of participants to a planned conference on radiation exposure to aircraft crew due to space weather effects and space weather exhibition, at the Vienna International Centre, during the time of COPUOS, organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Austrian Research Centers in Seibersdorf.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I have the pleasure to announce that, the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Johannes Kyrle, invites heads of delegations to our traditional Viennese heurigen evening that is planned for Tuesday next week, 12 June. Please check the invitation that will be distributed for further details and confirm your attendance. We do look forward again to a fruitful exchange, in what we call a typical gemütlich Austrian atmosphere, that will chart the course to its ever closer cooperation of humankind in outer space. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank you for your statement, Sir, and might I thank you for recalling the important role played by Austria in the early years of this Committee. I should also like to wish you every success for the conference that you are organizing in conjunction with the Office, in Graz, in September and, as regards the conference organized by the CONGO organization, that you mentioned and which is going to take place here in Vienna, 8-9 October next, hereto I should like to confirm that I have accepted the invitation to present a statement in the first part of that conference and I would like to widen your invitation to

delegations to take part in that conference and thank you for the information that you provided upon it. I now give the floor to Ms. Carmen Ribeiro, who will be speaking on behalf of Brazil, that will be our last speaker for this morning. We will suspend item 4 at that point and then we will resume this afternoon.

Ms. C. RIBEIRO MOURA (Brazil): I would like to join previous delegations in congratulating you for chairing this important session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation. We also associate ourselves to the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Colombia, on behalf of GRULAC.

Mr. Chairman, 2007 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the space age. Oleg Ivanovsky, a scientist associated to Korolev in the project that culminated in the launching of the Sputnik _____ (*inaudible*), in October 1957, later commented that "nobody back then was thinking about the magnitude of what was going on, everyone did his own job leading through its disappointments and joy". Fifty years hence, no country can forgo space technology for applications in several areas of societal benefit such as, disaster management, mitigation and response, environmental monitoring, agriculture, public health, climate change, tele-education and medicine, water resources management and territorial control to name but a few.

In this context and in the spirit of UNISPACE III, Brazil has advocated the introduction of a new item in the Committee's agenda relating to international cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. By advocating this proposal, Brazil's main purpose was to foster international cooperation and capacity building so that developing countries will be enabled to better receive, process, analyse and model, products generated by space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development.

The new item 12 of our agenda is in line with the principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space, A/RES.41/65 which states that, countries should promote international cooperation, principle 5, and make efforts to provide for the establishment and operation of data-collecting and storage stations and processing interpretation facilities, principle 6. Under agenda item 12, Brazil shall elaborate on the initiatives being implemented in our country to enhance capability, both internally and at a regional and multilateral level, in applying geospatial data for societal benefit. We hope that our efforts will be echoed, especially by developing countries, so that the goals set by UNISPACE III and other relevant initiatives, will be fully attained. We hope for a fruitful debate on the matter.

Finally, my delegation would like to extend its sincere appreciation for the excellent work undertaken by Mr. Sergio Camacho in the last five years at the head of OOSA and for his invaluable contribution to this Committee. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you very much for your statement and thank you too, for the congratulations that you offered to the Director of the Office. I shall now draw this morning's meeting to a close and this afternoon, we will pursue our examination of the general exchange of views, item 4. Might I recall that we will meet here at 3 p.m. sharp. I would like to start on time, might I also recall that, at 4 p.m. we will have the high-level debate on space exploration and, that at 6 p.m., we will have the official inauguration of the "50 Years of Space" exhibition downstairs and that will be followed by the reception laid on by the Office. I will provide more details with regard to the programme for the rest of the week at this afternoon's session.

Do I see any questions? That is not the case, I therefore adjourn this meeting.

The meeting closed at 1.12 p.m.