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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Unedited transcript

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Vienna

Chairman: Mr. G. Brachet (France)

The meeting was called to order at 3.07 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Ladies and gentlemen, representatives, please take your seats. I would declare open the 569th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I hope you have, during the lunch break, been able to view those documentaries provided by the Russian Federation and I look forward tomorrow to seeing the documentaries of the United States mission to Mir and then a documentary on India tele-education using satellites.

In our Committee, this afternoon, we will continue and, I hope, conclude our consideration of agenda item 4. We will then come to item 5, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and, item 6, implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and, if we have time, we will also continue our consideration of agenda item 7, that is the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fortieth session.

I would remind you that at the end of this afternoon's session at 6 p.m. there will be a reception, hosted by the Russian Federation, in the Mozart Room of the VIC Restaurant.

Distinguished delegates, let us continue with item 4. We have a certain number of speakers already on the list, these are member States of the Committee and then we have three observer speakers. Let us begin with member States, of course, and I call on the distinguished delegate of Thailand. Mr. Ariyapruchya you have the floor.

Mr. S. ARIYAPRUCHYA (Thailand): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to extend sincere congratulations to you for the achievements made by the Committee in the past year. I also believe that this historical session of COPUOS, the fiftieth session, under your able leadership and wise guidance, will likewise be crowned with fruitful outcomes. I also wish to express heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Secretariat for the excellent arrangement and preparation of documents for this meeting. Thanks to the leadership of Mr. Camacho-Lara, the Director of OOSA, or Sergio to his friends, who as always provided us with dedicated service for the past five years, as Director of OOSA. We have learned that he will be leaving OOSA soon, we would therefore like to wish Mr. Camacho-Lara success in his endeavours, with of course some sadness in our heart.

Mr. Chairman, we have an interesting agenda befitting the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee's existence, before us. We have to examine the many and useful recommendations of the two subcommittees, as well as, to consider additional items. My delegation welcomes your opening statement outlining your vision and plan regarding the management of this session of the Committee and beyond. I would like to assure you of Thailand's full cooperation in ensuring the effective and fruitful outcome of our work.

This year is not only the fiftieth anniversary of COPUOS but it is also the fiftieth anniversary of man's first sending a man-made satellite into space. This is also the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption 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, a landmark in

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legal legislation. All these events are interlinked as they are the first milestones of man's achievement in space. We have come a long way since then, now satellites are crowded in space, we have so more international space legislation governing the very aspect of space activities. Man has been to the Moon and back, space probes have been sent to the far-flung corners of space and their reports were most exciting. With the _____ (*inaudible*) hand-held mobile phones and the health of communication satellites one can instantly communicate with almost anybody, anywhere in the world.

The COPUOS community should be proud in its achievements but challenging work lies ahead as we celebrate the fiftieth year of man's achievement in space, we must not forget, Mr. Chairman, that space technology and its spin-off benefits must be used for peaceful uses in order to improve the daily life of human beings on Earth, to meet the Millennium Development Goals, to manage well the limited natural resources that we have, to help solve the world environmental problems, such as, global warming and to prevent and mitigate natural resources. In short, space technology must be used to help at once the sustainable development of countries, developed and developing countries alike. Space technology should never, never, be used for the purpose of war.

My delegation is therefore pleased that, the General Assembly in its resolution dated 15 January 2007, has endorsed the setting up of SPIDER, the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, an initiative of COPUOS. COPUOS needs now to develop expeditiously, a detailed workplan for SPIDER for the period ahead. As a country that suffered at the hand of the tsunami tidal waves that ravaged the Andaman Sea and the Indian Ocean in December 2004, Thailand fully appreciates the importance of disaster prevention, mitigation and management.

My delegation is also pleased that your working paper on the future role and activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is now before us for further deliberation. My delegation is of the view that, after 50 years of important work, it is timely for COPUOS to review its role and achievement and to see how its role should be adapted to a changed environment and evolving space activities. We are happy the paper has proposed a number of concrete measures for the Committee to consider.

Thailand has a strong commitment to the development and promotion of space technology for peaceful uses, to enhance human development and human security. Over the years, our capacity in space technology has gradually strengthened and expanded in areas such as, Earth observation, communications, satellite design and construction. Such development is ignited by our firm determination that begins at home.

His Majesty, the King of Thailand, has initiated many projects and has been actively working to improve the standard of living of the Thai people by using space technology. His Majesty has applied remote sensing and GIS mapping mechanism in illicit crop monitoring and promoted crop substitution programmes to generate income for those who live in the area where opium used to be planted. Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, has followed His Majesty's guidance and thus has applied the same technology in her own initiative project for land use and disaster prevention purposes. A project for distance learning through satellites was launched at Wang Klaikangwol school, in 1995, to honour and celebrate the 50th anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne. Now Wang Klaikangwol school is providing distance learning courses to over 3,000 schools in Thailand through web-based information. E-learning is provided to people who have access to computers all over the world, this project is in line with His Majesty's remark that, life-long education will benefit both individuals and the country as a whole.

Over the past year, Thailand has actively participated in the meetings of COPUOS Subcommittee, as well as, other COPUOS-related activities, such as, World Space Week, launched the 58th anniversary with rockets and 2007, youth inspiration project. The exhibition of Thailand's space activities, during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee during 12-23 February 2007, at the Rotunda was very well received by audiences. This could not have been achieved without excellent coordination and cooperation of OOSA and the relevant organizations. On behalf of Thailand, I would like to once again, thank OOSA and member States of COPUOS for supporting and _____ (*inaudible*) Thailand's exhibition. Thailand is also participating in the ongoing, 50 years of space achievement, exhibition at the Rotunda during this session of COPUOS.

Mr. Chairman, in view of the growing benefit from space activities, Thailand has engaged actively in cooperation with the international community in space activities, for the promotion of our social and economic development strategies. These activities include, satellite technology development and Earth observation with emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation and management and space education. In the area of space

technology development, THEOS, the first Thai Earth Observation System, with the capability of exploring and monitoring natural resources, is scheduled to be launched in October this year. The development of ground infrastructure for satellite controlling, data receiving and data processing has entered the final preparatory stage. Promotional activities include pilot projects for various applications and outreach programmes. The satellite will provide imagery in the visible and infrared regions of the electro-magnetic spectrum with a panchromatic camera at a resolution of two metres and multispectral at a resolution of 15 metres. This imagery can be effectively used in various applications, such as, agriculture, urban planning, forestry, water resources and cartography. In the area of Earth observation, Thailand continues utilizing satellite data both from optical and radar systems in forest applications. Satellite images covering forest area of the whole country were provided to each and every provincial governor of Thailand to monitor and evaluate the changes of forest areas.

In the field of disaster mitigation, the National Disaster Warning Centre of Thailand, in collaboration with UNDP and UNESCO, is conducting a programme to reduce the tsunami disaster risk in the long-term by educating teachers who, in turn, would educate their students, providing them with tsunami handbooks. Moreover, the National Disaster Warning Centre has cooperated with NOAA and SEAFDAC, this stands for Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, to set up a system, the first of its kind in the Indian Ocean, for monitoring seismic activities and sea levels in order to evaluate potentially tsunami-genic waves. The images acquired from the recent ALOS satellite and the future THEOS satellite will add to our data acquisition capability for emergency use.

With the coming launch of THEOS in October 2007, Thailand will take on a new role as data provider for the needs of various applications, not only for Thailand but also for other interested countries. Hopefully, THEOS will be a complementary tool for monitoring and alleviating natural disasters worldwide.

With regard to satellite-derived data in the form of various thematic maps, such as, topography, land use, land cover, forest, infrastructure, population, etc., Thailand through GISTA, has compiled such data layers into a web-based GEO special database, entitled, Digital Thailand. The dataset which was built and run on the modified NASA World Wind software, was reproduced in the form of DVD and distributed to schools for educational purposes, it proved to be a hit.

Mr. Chairman, in the area of space education and awareness creation, the Institute of Space Knowledge Development was established in 2005, under the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency of GISTDA, to take care of the needs of human resource development especially in remote sensing and EIA application. Since then, more than 20 short training courses in Thai are conducted each year.

In addition, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in cooperation with the King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, has been organizing training the trainer training courses every year since 2005. The course content included space technology, space law and satellite system engineering for the general public including teachers and students in Thailand.

In the area of international cooperation, Thailand continues actively its cooperation with both international organizations and various countries. Besides being an active member of COPUOS, Thailand has participated actively in the Group for Earth Observation (GEO), ESCAP Regional Space Application Programme for Sustainable Development, the Asia-Pacific Remote Sensing Agency Forum (APRSAF), the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP), ASEAN Subcommittee on Space Technology and Applications (SCOSA) and the Sentinel Asia project, initiated by Japan.

As regards the Sentinel Asia project, the second Joint Project Team meeting for establishing the disaster management support system in the Asia-Pacific region, was held on 27-28 June 2006 in Thailand. We also participated actively as a member of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), an organization initiated by China.

As regards upcoming cooperation activities, Thailand will join UNESCAP and UNOOSA in organizing regional meetings on space information for highly pathogenic avian influenza monitoring and early warning in Asia. The meeting will be held in Bangkok during 1-3 August this year.

As regards bilateral cooperation, we continue cooperating actively with France, Japan, China, India, the United States, Russia, Canada, Malaysia and Viet Nam. Recently the Thai Ministry of Science and Technology, together with Wuhan University of China, set up the Sirindhorn International Centre for Geo-Informatics. GISTDA has also developed cooperation

with Swedish National Space Board and Korea Aerospace Research Institute.

Apart from the above activities, Thailand _____ (*inaudible*) the International Conference on Space Technology and Geo-Informatics 2006 in parallel with the National Conference on Mapping and Geo-Informatics 2006, during 5-8 November 2006, in Pattaya, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the throne. The conference was attended by over 300 participants from several national and international agencies and resulted in an active exchange of knowledge and experience.

As regards space education and capacity-building, Thailand cooperated with neighbouring countries, namely, the Kingdom of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, in the project and workshop related to GIS and remote sensing.

Thailand fully supports the Legal Subcommittee in its endeavour to develop an international legal framework for the _____ (*inaudible*) of space activity to ensure that this shall be used to manage and conserve space for the equitable benefit of mankind. Our delegation to the Legal Subcommittee was particularly happy with the progress of work of the Working Group on the Practice of States and International Organizations in Registering Space Objects. The Working Group came out with tangible recommendations.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Mr. Ariyapruchya for that statement. As we know, Thailand is a member of the Committee and has been so for two years and we are very happy to see how active your participation is. May I take this opportunity to wish you success in your launch and the first months of operation of THEOS in October. I am going to call now on the representative of the Russian Federation, Madam Olga Mozolina.

Ms. O. MOZOLINA (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Mr. Chairman, first of all, on behalf of the Russian delegation, let me wish you every success in steering the work of this session. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Secretariat and personally, Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, for their work in developing international cooperation in outer space.

Mr. Chairman, yesterday and today, many delegations have mentioned the fact that this year the COPUOS session coincides with a number of anniversaries, such as the fiftieth anniversary of the launch by the Soviet Union of the first man-made satellite and the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the first and most important, Outer Space Treaty. In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly noted in its resolution that, the launch in 1957 of the Sputnik, led the way to the exploration and use of outer space and a new era began and a history of humankind, the era of space exploration. As a result, humanity received new opportunities, satellite communications, use of satellites for studying the Earth's surface, the ocean, for prospecting for natural resources, for preventing and mitigating emergency situations. At the same time, a practical matter arose, what are the rules that should govern human activities in outer space?

The Russian Federation has traditionally come out for dialogue on all issues with regard to international cooperation in outer space. Experience supports the need for coordinating the actions of States and international organizations, joint solutions to existing problems, such as, for example, man-made space debris. Unfortunately, we have to note that, even today, the danger persists of turning outer space into an arms race arena, this has a negative effect on the atmosphere of cooperation and trust among States. Therefore, we believe that one of the most important tasks that the international community is faced with at present is maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and taking up the latest challenges to international security. We should also note that dialogue on matters of outer space exploration is pursued within various international fora. We believe it is important to keep the communication and consistency among those fora, such as, the Disarmament Conference in Geneva which is considering a draft international legal agreement on banning the deployment of weapons in outer space or the use of force or threat of force with regard to space objects. It is important for maintaining space for peaceful purposes to note that the sixty-first United Nations General Assembly session adopted the resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities.

The role of COPUOS in the multilateral regulatory work governing space activities in creating a new branch of international law, outer space law, is very important and cannot be questioned and the significance of this Committee's work will only increase in the future.

We would like to positively assess the creation of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER). The International Committee on Global Satellite Navigation Systems created, in pursuance of UNISPACE III recommendations, can provide a new impetus to the development of cooperation between providers and users of satellite navigation services.

The discussions held within this Committee demonstrate that outer space law still has a number of lacunae, also the development of new technologies, the commercialization and privatization of space activities call for the further development of the legal basis for outer space work. With the support of many member States of COPUOS, we re-assert our position that it is necessary to start talking about a single comprehensive United Nations convention on outer space law. Such a convention should be based on the existing principles and norms of international space law. It would make it possible to consider all aspects of space activities and their interrelationship, resulting in a well-balanced text which would take into account the interests of all participants in space activities.

In our view, the importance of the work pursued by this Committee manifests itself in the result achieved by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in implementing its plan on the use and safety of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Russian delegation also highly appreciates the work carried out by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the enthusiasm demonstrated by delegations with regard to the adoption of the guiding principles for space debris mitigation.

We would also like to dwell on the active and substantive discussion, held in the most recent session of the Legal Subcommittee, with regard to matters of the practice of the registration of space objects by States and international organizations.

The status of the implementation of the five United Nations treaties on outer space and the questionnaire proposed by Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, on the future development of outer space law. All of this, in our view, demonstrates that the interest of the international community in the development of international space law is constantly increasing.

Now we would like to present to you a video message of the head of the Russian Space Agency, Anatoly Perminov. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*video commentary*] Ladies and gentlemen, 2007 is truly a space jubilee here. This year, in January, we celebrated the centenary of the birth of the great designer of spacecraft, Sergei Korolev. In September, we are going to mark the 150th anniversary of the founder of cosmonautics, the outstanding Russian scientist, Tsiolkovsky. On 4 October, we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the launch of the first man-made satellite, Sputnik. We are proud that Russia opened the road into space for the world and has since occupied a leading position in the exploration and use of outer space.

Starting in the 60s, Russian technology has been broadly used in various international projects, such as, VEGA, INTERCOSMOS, PHOBOS. These projects were pursued internationally and involved up to 20 countries. The pinnacle of our cooperation was the creation and operation of the International Space Station. This work involves the United States, Russia, Japan, Canada and the European Space Agency. Since the very first days of the space era the United Nations has attached great importance, through developing international cooperation, in the domain of outer space activities.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of this jubilee session of the United Nations Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I wish you every success in your noble work.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Madam Mozolina for her statement and I would like to ask you to convey to the Director of the Russian Space Agency, the gratitude of this Committee for the video message which you have presented to us. Obviously, this has special significance at this fiftieth anniversary session and on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the launch of Sputnik. The Director of the Russian Space Agency has recalled various programmes involving international cooperation that were initiated by your country and I have to say that, I personally, bear witness to some of these programmes. I did take part personally on many occasions and appreciated the quality of the climate of cooperation that existed in the joint projects between French and Russian experts over the years. Now, with your permission, I am going to call upon Ambassador Shigeki Sumi of Japan.

Mr. S. SUMI (Japan): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegations, on behalf of the Japanese delegation I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the fiftieth session of COPUOS. I would also like to express our

sincere gratitude in respect of the efforts of the Chairman, Mr. Brachet, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Both and second Vice-Chairman, Mr. Tiendrébéogo, as well as, Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and his excellent staff.

The most significant objective of Japan's space development activities has been in the creation of a safe and prosperous society. Actually, Japan has made several efforts to expand its scientific knowledge of outer space and the planet Earth by embarking on many space activities. During the past year, a lot of notable events have taken place in Japanese space development. I would like to take this opportunity to share some examples of the fruits of our endeavours.

To begin with, 2006 proved to be a remarkable year for Japan, with the successful launch of six H-IIA and M5 rockets. We are particularly proud of the positive outcome of four H-IIA launches, which reinforced our progress in space technology. Japan will continue to strive for successful launches and attempt to improve the reliability of national launch vehicle technology. In terms of space science, X-ray astronomy satellite, Suzaka, infrared astronomy satellite, Akari, and solar observation satellite, Hinode, have received great recognition around the world for their effective results. We expect the data obtained by these satellites to be a great asset in developing the field of astronomy in the twenty-first century. Within a year, Japan is planning to launch two satellites. The year 2007 will be defined as a starting year for lunar exploration. This summer, Japan will launch a lunar orbiting satellite, SELENE, one of the largest lunar exploration missions since the Apollo programme. With the SELENE mission, Japan experts can gather variable data to aid in understanding the origin and history of the Moon, we would like to share this knowledge with the academic community. Another development we are working on, is the launch of the Wide-band InterNetworking engineering test and Demonstration Satellite, WINDS, at the beginning of 2008. The satellite will especially benefit Internet users in the Asia-Pacific region with its high-speed communications capability, considered to be an important technical demonstration on the road to achieving a ubiquitous society. Japan has also been promoting an international space station programme, in cooperation with the United States of America, the European Space Agency, Canada and Russia. The biggest event will focus on the Japanese Experiment Module, Kibo, to be launched by March of 2009, by the United States Space Shuttle. We expect Kibo to be widely used by the international community and enjoyed for its great scientific assets, as well as, three Japanese astronauts will board the Space Shuttle, one of whom will work on the ISS long-duration mission. Japan will contribute to the further utilization of outer space and improve the quality of our lives in the role as ISS crew members.

Japan has also been active in a number of activities highlighting international cooperation. For example, we are promoting the Sentinel Asia project, it is a system that utilizes satellite data to support disaster management in the Asia-Pacific region, initiated through Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum. The network enables online sharing of disaster information, such as, images taken by Earth observation satellites, particularly of the Asian region, where a number of natural disasters have occurred recently. The project is promoted by space agencies which are members of APRSAF and Asia's disaster prevention institutions. To date, three Joint Project Team meetings have been held in Viet Nam, Thailand and Singapore, the fourth Joint Project Team meeting will be held this autumn. We have been contributing to the development of space technology aimed at creating a safe and secure society through the Sentinel Asia project which started operating last October and which has provided observation data of disaster areas to members of Sentinel Asia. This activity contributed to the quick recognition of disaster in devastated areas. After the project began, JAXA carried out emergency observations, using Advanced Land Observing Satellite, Daichi, of the Mayon volcano mudslide on the Philippines, Jakarta flood, the west Sumatran island earthquake and the earthquake and flood which struck the Solomon Islands, then released satellite data and the relevant information on the Sentinel Asia website and cooperated with related space and disaster management agencies in each case. We appreciate the opportunity to present to you activities being pursued by JAXA at this session, as well as, the disaster monitoring contributions it has made through the Sentinel Asia project, which again, aimed to share disaster information in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan has long participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum. Last December, the thirteenth session of APRSAF, APRSAF-13, jointly organized a Ministry of Research and Technology of Indonesia, the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space, Indonesia and Japan, was convened in Indonesia and gathered together more than 150 participants, 55 entities from 18 countries and 8 international organizations. Thanks to those who made the many presentations and participated in active discussions during the plenary session, including the release of the Sentinel Asia projects status report and discussions carried out by four working group sessions on Earth observation, communication satellite applications, space education and awareness and the international space station. All

Forum participants adopted seven APRSAF-13 recommendations, including reinforcement of Sentinel Asia project activities. In November, the fourteenth APRSAF session will be held in Bangalore, India, under the auspices of the Indian Space Research Organization.

Japan contributed to make significant contributions with regard to the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations. In cooperation with other countries, we will certainly contribute to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration recommendations and the action team's proposals. Additionally, Japan would like to express its deepest respect for the United Nations space debris mitigation guidelines, which were adopted at the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in February. Japan has contributed to the development of the guidelines and JAXA played an important role at the twenty-fourth session of the Interagency Space Debris Coordination Committee hosted last April.

JAXA is developing its own space debris mitigation standard and is actively working on this matter. We intend to continue with such efforts for the mitigation of space debris in the future and we strongly request that all parties using space technologies abide by the guidelines. In this context, Japan expresses concern over the satellite destruction experiment conducted in January. Japan is against any international destruction of a satellite which causes a risk to human space flight and space infrastructure.

The year 2007 marks the beginning of the International Heliophysical Year, Japan would like to actively partake in the IHY programme to further facilitate a study of the solar system and the Earth. For our part, the third UN/ESA/NASA workshop on basic space science and the International Heliophysical Year 2007 will be held in Tokyo from 18 to 22 of this month. We expect the workshop to inspire active discussions, not only on the basic study activities of the heliosphere, interplanetary space and the Earth's atmosphere and magnetosphere but also, on awareness campaigns for space science in developing countries. To support the development of space science, Japan has contributed to the provision of modern astronomical facilities, such as, astronomical optical telescopes and educational planetaria for developing countries through ODA grant for cultural aid over the past 20 years. Japan will continue making efforts to support self-sustaining space education with the help of educational agencies and space agencies for developing countries. Japan believes it can make important contributions to global prosperity by participating in international cooperative activities based upon a broad and long-term vision. With this in mind, Japan would like to express its respect for the United Nation's efforts that realize sustainable development and the positive future utilization of outer space and intends to promote, in conjunction with UNCOPUOS members and observers, international cooperation, so that the benefits derived from space activities can be enjoyed by all of humankind.

Last, but not least, we would like to express our deepest respect to Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara for the great contributions he has made to COPUOS, OOSA and international society, especially in the field of peaceful uses of outer space. Japan has very much appreciated working with Dr. Camacho-Lara and would like to recognize the great contribution he has made to COPUOS not only in regard to the review of the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement on behalf of Japan. I think we can add our voices to your thanks to the Director of OOSA. As an important mission to the Moon will take place and I know Japan is working on that, I wish you and your country every success in that. I am now going to call upon the distinguished delegate of Canada, Mr. Andrew Shore.

Mr. A. SHORE (Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Canada is very pleased to participate in this important celebration of the many achievements of the past 50 years of the space age and as we look forward towards an ever more rewarding future. We would like to warmly thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your own active and visionary leadership and we also look forward to discussion of an appropriate follow-up of your recommendations. Canada will do its part to implement the agreed next steps for COPUOS reform. We would also like to join with other delegations in expressing our warm thanks and best wishes for the future to Sergio Camacho.

Mr. Chairman, Canada welcomes the important work done by the Legal and Scientific and Technical Subcommittees and fully supports the appropriate follow-up and implementation of their recommendations. In this regard and, in the light of the unacceptable and often entirely avoidable creation of significant space debris, particularly in recent months, we believe that the space debris mitigation guidelines are now more important than ever. We therefore look forward to their adoption, including through a standalone United Nations resolution this Fall and, of course, to their full implementation by all. Canada

welcomes the intent of Bolivia and Switzerland to join us in COPUOS and we look forward to working closely with them.

I will now continue in French.

(*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, this year we are happy to present to member States of the Committee, a review of its space work. One of the most stimulating elements was, without doubt, the participation of Steve MacLean, a Canadian astronaut, in the ambitious mission called Atlantis. This took place in September 2006 to continue the assembly of the International Space Station. Important work was accomplished when he stepped outside the satellite and also during the handling of the Canadarm II Robotic Arm and also from the mobile base, this is a first in space. The launch of Dextra, a robot, which is a multifunctional manipulator, is planned for the end of the year, it will then be integrated into Canadarm II.

In space sciences, we would like to mention some of the achievements and I will continue as follows. In physics and in astronomy, the launch of the NASA satellite, in the framework of the GMES project, will make it possible for Canada to look at Aurora Borealis. With 16 land observatories on its territory, Canada will play a determining role in that mission. The Canadian work there will be supported by the Space Agency and will be guided by the University of Calgary, it will also include the work of five universities and two Canadian government agencies. Still going on about astronomy, we are happy to make a contribution to the James Webb Space Telescope, we will contribute, in a significant way, to the development of the essential elements of that telescope, the fine guide sensors (FGS) and also the synchronizing filter.

In space exploration, the Canadian Space Agency has given to NASA, last April, its contribution to Phoenix, that is a Mars mission. This is a meteorological station, called MET, which will be integrated into the Phoenix lander, the launching of which is planned for 3 August 2007. The programme Polar View, based on the European initiative, Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, has made it possible for the organization called C-CORE to be manager of a programme where you have a network of 82 partners from 14 countries, this programme will fit into the cooperation agreement Canada/ESA. During the year 2006-2007, Canada has followed-up the development of the initial phases of the mission called RADARSAT conservation. This will be of benefit both to Canada and other countries because it will make it possible to supply, when required, more complete data than what is available right now. Canada will also be able to improve its capacities for picking out ice in navigable waters and thus strengthen the security and safety of navigation in the Great Lakes, on the maritime waterway and along the Canadian coasts. This conservation will also support the contribution of Canada to managing catastrophes and rescue operations over the whole of the planet, by picking up hydrocarbon spills, by following-up flooding, landslips and volcanic eruptions and it will contribute, therefore, to dealing with forest fires and it will also give you information on regions affected by catastrophes the world over.

Talking about disasters and catastrophes, we are part of the very first space agencies who have joined ourselves to the so-called, International Charter on Space and Major Disasters. We will continue, in fact, to make available images from RADARSAT-1 for communities who need them. For example, when there are floods or landslips, such as happened in Argentina last March, cyclones in Madagascar, which also happened in March and then ice along the coasts of Canada which locked in more than a hundred ships in April. Canada would like to welcome the national administration of China on its adhesion, recently, to the Charter, we also welcome the efforts made by American commercial enterprises, who joined up with the US Geological Survey, to support this International Charter.

Mr. Chairman, this year, has also been a very stimulating one for Canada, particularly during the months of August and September. The assembly of the International Space Station will continue with the mission STS-118, the launch of which will be planned for at the beginning of August. Once again, robots and Canadian sensors will be of major importance there because they will ensure that the mission is successful, they will also ensure that the Space Station and its team are safe and then the astronaut, Canadian, Dave Williams, will join the team that I have already spoken about. The final preparations for this satellite will be planned for the beginning of September 2007, that is satellite RADARSAT-2. We are very happy to have taken part in the work that has made it possible to propose this World Exploration Strategy. On the basis of sustainable space exploration, is a challenge which no nation can undertake alone, on the basis of all that, the Canadian Space Agency is very happy that it has developed this strategy because it is important to ensure that we have international coordination mechanisms in place, where participation, of course, is voluntary and certainly not, in any way, constraining. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Mr. Shore for that very complete presentation. We, too, would like to offer the best wishes of the Committee for the success of those missions that are going to happen this year and also the participation of Canada in the STS mission and then the MET instrumentation which will be put on Phoenix and, of course, the launching of RADARSAT-2 in September. We will now call on the delegation of Malaysia and I call on Madam Othman.

Ms. M. OTHMAN (Malaysia): Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, at the outset my delegation would like to express our greatest pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. We are extremely confident that your able leadership will bring about an exemplary and successful completion of an historic session of the Committee. We also congratulate Mr. Elöd Both and Mr. Tiendrébéogo on their election. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the Director of OOSA, Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara. Dr. Camacho has been a pillar of knowledge and wisdom in the Office, where he grew from strength to strength until eventually becoming its Director. Dr. Camacho's dedication and commitment are well-known but having had the privilege of working with him for almost three years, I also know of his self-sacrifice on many occasions. COPUOS truly has benefited from his leadership and immeasurable contributions. We wish Dr. Camacho every success in his life after retirement from the United Nations. We know we will see him again in other capacities at the United Nations or elsewhere.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, since our last report to this Committee, in 2006, several important events have taken place. On 6 October 2006 the Malaysian Prime Minister officiated the Malaysia Space Centre in Banting, Selangor. The Centre is equipped with two _____ (*inaudible*) ground tracking systems. This Centre will be utilized for national space programmes and has been designed for maximum communication compatibility with other existing and planned satellites, in order to facilitate international collaboration efforts. This Centre will be linked with the ground receiving station of the Malaysia Centre for Remote Sensing (MACRES) in Temerloh, Pahang. The MACRES ground receiving station will be the primary station for receiving data from RazakSAT and will be the principal dissemination centre for the images. The National Space Agency also continues to develop facilities for satellite assembly integration and test at the Malaysia Space Centre, this will allow comprehensive development of space technology in Malaysia. With the successful test of the Falcon 1 rocket by Space Exploration Technologies of the United States, our second remote sensing satellite, RazakSAT, with a ground resolution of 2½ metres is expected to be launched at the end of 2007. Our development of the Falcon 1 Secondary Payload Adapter and Separation System is on schedule. We are committed to developing the piggy-back concept to encourage the proliferation of small satellites which, we believe, is the vehicle for creativity and innovation. It is very unfortunate that such piggy-back opportunities are scarce and, are sadly, getting rarer. The country's third communication satellite, MEASAT-3 was successfully launched in December 2006. The satellite has undergone final tests and is expected to be providing full service soon.

In the education field, Malaysia successfully hosted the International School for Young Astronomers together with the International Astronomical Union from 6-24 March 2007. Forty young astronomers attended the three-week course which was led by ten faculty members from nine countries. The school focused on solar physics and solar terrestrial relationship in keeping with the thrust of 2007 as the International Heliophysical Year.

Ladies and gentlemen, in terms of international cooperation, Malaysia participates in the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, in this context, we plan to take active part in the Sentinel Asia programme, which is a valuable disaster management support system. We also support the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation (APSCO) initiative. Malaysia will formerly become a member when certain issues regarding membership, are fully established. Malaysia will be hosting the UNESCAP Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific on 18-23 October 2007. At the conference, a ministerial-level dialogue on disaster management will be held. We will also be hosting the Space Symposium, the Next 50 Years, at this ministerial conference. As part of the Space Symposium, we will conduct an activity for the young generation, the outcome of the workshop called, Youth for Space, will be used as input to the Space Symposium deliberations.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation reiterates our commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space and will work with this august body to ensure that the philosophy of space, being the common province of mankind, is maintained and defended. We will make further interventions under the appropriate agenda items in the coming days. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Ms. Othman for her presentation on

behalf of Malaysia. I would like to congratulate her on behalf of the Committee for this constant success in space activities under her leadership in Malaysia and we would wish her all the best for the launch and the first weeks of activity of the RazakSAT satellite, at the end of 2007. I would now call on the delegation of Venezuela, Roberto Carlos Becerra.

Mr. R. BECERRA (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman to guide us, you can count on our support. We would like to offer thanks for all the help given by Sergio Camacho, directing the work of OOSA and you can rely on the participation of two experts for the first space workshop which will be held in November in Caracas, in 2004. Mr. Camacho will guarantee the participation of Latin America in the whole area of COPUOS work. We would like to thank Sergio for all his support and we wish him success in his future career.

Let me give you my declaration. Mr. Chairman, we have been working hard in space and the peaceful uses of space in order to benefit the Venezuelan public. As a result of this, we note the first anniversary of the Venezuelan Centre for Space, here we are going to design, coordinate and implement the space policy of the Republic, hoping to set up soon two main lines of action, to install a satellite platform to interconnect telecommunication networks in our State within our social economic model, consolidate the physical and social infrastructure of the country, helping to execute projects which will support the taking of decisions in the public area, in health, agriculture, the environment planning for towns, territorial control and risk management. We are doing immediate execution of two regional projects, VENESAT-1, the Simon Bolivar Satellite System and the Venezuelan Centre for Remote Observation. With VENESAT-1, we are looking to have a technological platform for government use which will deal with telecommunications within the State, transmitting and increasing radio and TV signals so as to reach those parts of the country which have not been reached so far and also to expand access to the Internet, control of operational processes and all projects to consolidate social programming of the national government. All this has made it possible to set up national structures, to have coordination meetings, to implement the necessary adaptations, all this linked up to the entry into operation of the Simon Bolivar Satellite and we will implement tele-education and telemedicine projects. I would like to mention the progress made in the satellite called Simon Bolivar, we have met the timetable there for implementing the fabrication phase, we have also construction going on and we are dealing with training. In addition, the Venezuelan Centre for Remote Sensing and Observation means we have optimum use of technologies, satellite images and we articulate with the different people involved, we have operations in the Centre which capture satellite images, these will be distributed free among the various people in public administration ministries, State enterprise universities, higher education institutes, governors and mayors.

Under these initiatives, the Venezuelan Space Centre, in coordination with the Ministry for Education, will develop a whole plan aimed at teachers in the primary and medium levels of education, it will also deal with science and geography. We will use satellite images as teaching tools in the social area. In this area we have a programme of tele-education based on VENESAT-1 which is aimed at training human talent, aimed at extending technical knowledge, spatial technology, to use this as a tool to take decisions and to do research and development work in the country. Following these ideas and, in addition to all this, we are strengthening things and we are also going to have an international meeting exchange of experience in space, which was in Caracas, in November 2006. We had the participation of Argentina, China, Cuba, Brazil and Iran, at that meeting. I would like to stress the National Assembly of the country approved a law for creating the Venezuelan Space Agency which will replace the present Centre, which is called the Venezuelan Space Centre.

Mr. Chairman, we have to say that all these activities have been possible thanks to international cooperation and a policy of integration, South-South promoted by my Government, helping to set up cooperation networks to strengthen a multipolar structure, where we hope to achieve a balance aimed at social justice. We have made concrete so far, agreements with the People's Republic of China, India, Uruguay, the Russian Federation, Argentina and the Federal Republic of Brazil, to develop technological projects in communications and in physical observation of the world. In addition, we recognize the work done by the Republic of Ecuador, holding the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, from 25-28 July of last year and we would like to thank Guatemala for being the venue for the next conference.

Finally, let me take this time to express the will of my Government to expand democracy, solidarity and international peace in all our relationships and repeat our interest in having links with this Organization and to support the initiatives which will promote the peaceful uses of space for the

benefit of all nations of the world. Thank you very much for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Becerra for his statement on behalf of Venezuela and I am happy to note that the Space Agency in Venezuela has been approved and will be established quite soon, replacing the present Centre. I suggest now that we hear the statement to be made by the delegate of South Africa. I call on Madam Nomfuneko Majaja.

Ms. N. MAJAJA (South Africa): Thank you Mr. Chairperson. The South African delegation is pleased to see you presiding over this fiftieth session of UNCOPUOS, held in the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the space age and the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty. We are confident that substantial progress will be made during this session of the Committee under your able leadership. We thank the Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara and his staff for their usual excellent preparations for this session. _____ (*inaudible*) show how space-based systems have become a crucial element for human development and well-being. We would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Camacho-Lara for his inspired leadership of OOSA.

Chairperson, since the last session of this Committee, there have been a number of space-related developments in South Africa that I would like to mention before remarking on specific agenda items for this session. On 26 July 2006, the South African cabinet took the decision to establish a South African Space Agency to act as an institutional vehicle for the coordination and implementation of national space science and technology programmes. This new agency is being established under the Minister of Science and Technology and will conduct long-term planning and implementation of space-related activities in South Africa. These activities will be coordinated closely with the South African Council for Space Affairs and other stakeholders. In December 2006, construction work on South Africa's first national satellite Sumbandila was completed. The 81 kilogramme Sumbandila will generate satellite imagery with 6.25-metre ground sampling distance in six spectral bands. Sumbandila will have a variety of secondary experimental payloads to conduct experiments in space physics, mechanics and radio communications. The satellite will also offer a single store and forward message service. Sumbandila is expected to be launched later this year.

In early 2007, a prototype 15-metre diameter dish for the KAROO Array Telescope was erected at Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory and is currently being tested. The KAROO Array Telescope is a technology pathfinder project developed a cost-effective solution for the Square Kilometre Array, a much lesser project for which South Africa has been shortlisted as one of the two possible host locations. The prototype dish forms the basis for a 20 antenna array in the northern Cape Province of South Africa. In 2006, the KAROO Array Telescope project was expanded to include more antennae and a greater frequency range. The expected project called, meerKAT, has attracted a growing number of international partners.

Turning now to the work of the Committee for this session, I would like to underscore the importance South Africa places on international cooperation in outer space, in supporting of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We are fully committed towards implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III for more effective utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes.

With regard to agenda items 5 and 6, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and, implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, our delegation believes that the promotion of regional and interregional cooperation provides a basis for preserving space for peaceful uses. In this regard, South Africa is looking forward to hosting the Second African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in Pretoria, on 26-29 August 2007. This conference will, inter alia, examine the role of space technology in Africa's development programmes. The role of the African Union in bringing Africa into global space enterprise, the current status and future players of the African Resource Management Constellation, the status of national and regional capacity building activities, space system-based disaster management and the regional participation in the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER).

South Africa has been used to bilateral cooperation in the space arena and signed a bilateral cooperation agreement for the peaceful uses of outer space with the Russian Federation in December 2006. We believe that cooperation between space-faring nations and emerging space nations is essential if the benefits of space technology are to be realized in support of developmental goals. In the African context, this was recently demonstrated by the successful launch of NigComSat-1, as a joint project with China,

we offer our heartfelt congratulations to Nigeria on this accomplishment.

With regard to agenda item 10, space and society, our delegation believes that enhancing education space sciences is of vital importance in view of the critical role that space technology plays in our daily lives. The occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the space age, this year, provides a special opportunity to promote greater awareness of the role of space in modern society.

The year 2009 will mark the 400th-year anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei, this year has been proposed to be declared the International Year of Astronomy. The aim of the Year is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science. The IYA events and activities will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy that embody an invaluable shared resource to all nations. To date, the United Nations General Assembly has not proclaimed 2009 as the IYA but our delegation would like to reiterate that South Africa joins with other nations who have expressed support for this initiative.

With reference to agenda item 12, international cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data, my delegation is pleased to report in 2006, South Africa continued to contribute to the work of the Group on Earth Observations. We are looking forward to hosting the GEO plenary and ministerial meetings in Capetown, from 28-30 November 2007.

Chairperson, the first 50 years of the space age have seen momentous changes in the global space arena. Space is now a part of everyday life and a growing number of States are actively involved in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. No doubt the next 50 years we will see equally momentous developments in the space field and we will undoubtedly see many more uses and users of space. We therefore believe that the fiftieth anniversary of the space age provides an opportune moment for the Committee to reflect on the future role and activities of COPUOS and my delegation is pleased that agenda item 13 will focus on this. In this regard, we would like to thank the chairperson for his excellent discussion document on the future role and activities of COPUOS and we look forward to a fruitful exchange of views on this important issue.

Chairperson, permit me now to offer some ideas with regard to the discussion on the future role and activities of COPUOS. There can be no dispute that there is at present what might be termed a space divide between the advanced space-faring nations that are fully equipped to take advantage of the benefits of space technology for peaceful uses and those nations that are not. In considering the future role and activities of COPUOS, we would like to suggest that the Committee considers means of helping to breach the space divide. This could include, for example, consideration of ways to build capacity for more effective participation of COPUOS and its Sub-committees by all member States. One such way might be to create more opportunities for inclusive intersessional interactions between all member States and OOSA. Consideration could also be given, within the two Subcommittees, to identifying areas where additional capacity building initiatives might be helpful. The Committee might also consider ways to facilitate participation by all interested States in global space exploration initiatives, even at a very modest level. To date, much of the discussion on the global space exploration initiative has necessarily been among the space-faring nations who are charting the course of this exploration initiative. COPUOS is a forum where space-faring and non-space-faring nations meet on a regular basis and could be an appropriate forum to consider ways to involve all interested countries in a truly global space exploration initiative. This might, perhaps, be accomplished through establishment of an action team to consider the issue and to make specific recommendations on ways to facilitate participation of developing countries in space exploration initiatives. In making this suggestion, our delegation has in mind the steady progress being made by Action Team 14 on near Earth objects, which is also considering an issue of interest to all nations but where only a few space-faring nations have the technological means to deal with the potential impact hazard. In this way, COPUOS could play an important role to help interested countries to become part of this grandest of human adventures, at a level that is affordable and feasible, for interested countries with very limited means. Such participation, even at a very modest level, would have tremendous benefits in breaking the perception in developing nations, that space exploration is the exclusive preserve of advanced space-faring nations and it will stimulate public interest in space and the development of educational activities to build capacity for utilizing space technology for practical applications.

Chairperson, in closing, my delegation is looking forward to a fruitful consideration of the various agenda items before us and we would like to assure you of our full cooperation to ensure the success

of this session. Thank you Chairperson and distinguished delegates for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Madam Majaja for her statement which shows us that her country South Africa, has a very amazing level of activities. This year South Africa will launch its satellite and we certainly wish it all the best, this satellite. I think, too, you are going to host the Second African Leadership Conference on Space Science at Pretoria, at the end of August, and there is a programme which includes space applications so we wish you great success with that conference. Finally, South Africa, at the end of November will host the plenary meeting of GEO and the ministerial meeting of GEO. It is the first time that this will be held in a country, slightly less advanced than others, I rather hesitate to use the word developing country for South Africa because, after all, it is not that kind of country but anyway, we offer you all our best wishes for that meeting of GEO and then the ministerial meeting that is going to follow on its heels. With your permission now, I will call the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. R. TREMAYNE-SMITH (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, it is a genuine pleasure to see you presiding over this fiftieth meeting of COPUOS. May I take this opportunity to also thank OOSA and in particular, its Director, for the hard work necessary in preparing this meeting and the associated exhibition. Particularly good wishes go to Sergio as he approaches a new phase in his distinguished career.

Mr. Chairman, the United Kingdom recognizes that there is some commonality in the topics currently considered and those planned at UNCOPUOS and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that are related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Close cooperation between these bodies would maximize the benefit that can be gained by all nations. Let me perhaps give one example, that of space debris, which is to this Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, primarily a technical issue, for the Committee on Disarmament it is a confidence-building measure.

Mr. Chairman, while we will discuss the detail of the working paper you have prepared under agenda item 13, I would like to make some initial comments at this stage. My delegation believes that all the issues raised can be addressed by the Committee and its Subcommittees in due time and without additional resources or funding from the United Nations system. Of the eight elements listed, an initial activity, based on the suggested decisions is acceptable for (a), (b), (c), (e), (f) and (h), although decisions related to the various courses of actions could occur over a period of up to three years or so. However, I believe it would be essential to have an initial considered response from all those potentially involved in assisting the development of the items to be available in 2008 in order to review the overall expectation of progress on all items. In this context, I note with pleasure that the IAF has already offered to play its part. On item (d) long-term sustainability of space activities, my delegation believes this to be an important area for consideration and that it is a very complex area that, as defined, will include activities for very many years to come. That is why we would propose that, in 2008, we consider the suggested decision as only part of the subject of long-term sustainability. Prior to the consideration of the issue of long-term sustainability of space activities in 2008, we should request papers from interested delegations to inform the activity of the working group in this area. I believe one delegation is already working on the area of rules of the road for space management and we have the IA report on space traffic management already available. In cooperation with others, my delegation can offer a paper on the need to extend the consideration of the space environment beyond Earth orbit. If we are to seriously consider the long-term sustainability of space activities, which are already threatened by debris in Earth orbit, we must extend our best practice understanding beyond Earth orbit as soon as possible, aiming to cover new particular orbital effects and radiation processes, their prediction, modelling and potential mitigation. We know a lot already but need to reflect this understanding to the new region beyond Earth orbit.

Mr. Chairman, on the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee report, may I add that my delegation supports the decision reached on high-level space debris mitigation guidelines and, if it is the general view of this Committee, would add its support to identify the results of the debris work in a unique General Assembly resolution. We are also pleased with the progress of the NPS working group and look forward to the continuing collaboration between the COPUOS Scientific and Technical working group and IAEA in this area. For the Legal Subcommittee, we are happy with the overall progress and particularly welcome the progress on the topic of registration practices and look forward to concluding the draft resolution for submission to the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, the United Kingdom is concerned about the impact of the debris resulting from the Chinese ASAT test in January and the likely effect this will have on the users of space. In particular, we are concerned by the lack of international consultation

before the test was carried out. The United Kingdom and many other nations are increasingly dependent on the use of space to support a wide range of activities. We wish to work with all countries, to help ensure such access to space can continue for all countries. The United Kingdom approached the Chinese following the event and have also expressed our concern within the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation is pleased with the progress on the SPIDER initiative to date and looks forward to action that will further the activity and increase the coordination with existing and planned work in related areas and with related initiatives.

The United Kingdom delegation offers its support to Switzerland's application for membership of COPUOS.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to see the report produced by OOSA on the activities related to World Space Week and enjoyed the presentation by the representative of World Space Week in Bangladesh, this morning. May I also encourage all delegations to make the most of the opportunity this year to take part in the activities planned for this fiftieth year of space and in particular those planned for International Space Week in October. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Mr. Tremayne-Smith for his statement on behalf of the United Kingdom. I thank you in particular for the comments you submitted on agenda item 13, which we will take up next year about the future activities of this Committee. Now, I would like to call upon the distinguished representative of Poland, Mr. Piotr Wolanski.

Mr. P. WOLANSKI (Poland): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to congratulate you and both vice-chairmen with the election to the Chair position of this session of COPUOS. I deeply believe that the experience, knowledge and leadership of Gérard Brachet, will contribute to the success of this session. I would like to congratulate also, Sergio Camacho-Lara and the whole OOSA team for outstanding work which is gladly appreciated by all participants.

This year everybody is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the space era, also in Poland, we are actively celebrating this anniversary. Many events, including seminars, conferences, popularization of space technology achievements with special focus on the contribution of Poland in this field, were already held and will be organized during the whole year. On 21-24 June, so-called Space Days, will be organized in Warsaw by the Polish Space Office. During this event, seminars, open discussion with the participation of scientists, politicians and government representatives, exhibition and demonstration of application of different aspects of space technology to normal activity will be held. One demonstration will be devoted to so-called, Day without Space. This demonstration will present how our daily life or activity could be significantly changed if we did not use direct or indirect benefits of application of space technology. The major event will be a special conference organized in the Warsaw University of Technology on 2 and 3 October this year. During this conference, representatives from NASA, ESA, the Russian Academy of Sciences in Poland, will discuss achievements of the last 50 years of space exploration and will present future plans. All of the conference will be open to young students from schools and universities, students will present their vision of the next 50 years of space exploration and students from all around the world are invited to submit their presentation to this conference. Polish scientists are continuously active on many space missions, such as, Venus Express, Rosetta, INTEGRAL, Herschel with ESA and Obstanovka and COMPASS with the Russian Academy of Sciences.

We are also involved in development of the radio spectrometer to study natural and artificial electro-magnetic emission in the ionosphere and corona spot on solar observatory, the Phoenix, X-ray spectrometer to measure solar soft X-ray spectra. Phoenix is the fast, high sensitive, X-ray spectrometer under development of Wroclaw Solar Physics Division of Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Both the sensitivity and accuracy of the Sphinx measurements will be superior to present solar instruments in this energy range by at least one order of magnitude. The instrument developed by Polish, Russian, Czech and Italian teams will be launched next year. Poland is also actively involved in the Galileo project. In the Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences the _____ (*inaudible*) project was initiated. The project activity focuses on supporting research and commercial _____ (*inaudible*) sector in the developing of Galileo basic applications, provided background and support for development of the national policy related to utilization of Galileo services. The Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences is hosting the EGNOS RIMS station and is involved in the Galileo Time Service provider prototypes which work together with a number of leading European time laboratories. We are also actively involved in the use of space images for agriculture, geodesy and cartography and other purposes. Also the Institute of Meteorology and Water

Resources use space technology data on a daily basis. During this year in Poland, workshops, seminars and conferences on space-related subjects were organized by the Institute involved in space activity with the significant contribution of the Space Research Centre.

The education on space is continuously widening in Poland, this includes, space education programmes from the basic and high school, special programmes on space education are at Warsaw University of Technology and other universities. Students from Warsaw University of Technology actively participate in future satellite projects. Students satellite projects programme include a lunar SAR imaging mission and PW-Sat test satellite. On 27 April, this year, Poland finally signed with ESA, the agreement of European Cooperating States and joined the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania in this programme. Our Government also recognized the importance of space research by making it one of the priority research subjects in Poland. PECS is a space-related activity of our cooperation with the European Space Agency and the institutions connected to space activity.

Finally, I would like to mention the following. The Polish delegation strongly supports the application of Switzerland to become a member of COPUOS. We also think that, during this session, the document concerning space debris should be prepared and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Piotr Wolanski for his statement on behalf of Poland. For those delegations that were not present at the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee session, I would like to remind them that our distinguished colleague, Mr. Wolanski, brought with him a group of students from Poland, who were interested in following the work of the Committee and I would like to congratulate on this initiative especially. I think it is good news that you convey to us that Poland has signed the agreement on cooperation with ESA which will enable it to participate in various programmes among European Cooperating States. This is a very positive development which will bring about Poland's participation in European space activities. I would now like to recognize the distinguished colleague from Germany, Ms. Kirsten Schick.

Ms. K. SCHICK (Germany): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 2007 marks the anniversaries of three ground-breaking events, namely, 50 years ago, Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite was launched. Shortly afterwards, the United Nations established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to insiders known as COPUOS, which hosts its fiftieth session this year. Forty years ago, the Outer Space Treaty entered into force. Germany celebrates these events in two United Nations locations, here in Vienna, we are participating in the United Nations anniversary exhibition, 50 years of Space Achievement, which was opened yesterday and the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Germany showed its Mars exhibition, which was already presented one year ago on the occasion of the fifty-ninth COPUOS, in the Rotunda of this building.

The exploration of outer space is not only a value itself it has also considerably contributed to better insights into our own planet. Here, the issue of sustainable development is becoming more and more important. Global strategies in climate research as well as disaster prevention and management are needed. The use of space technology, particularly of satellite-derived observation data, is becoming more and more relevant. In this field, Germany has wide scientific experience and enjoys broad recognition not only amongst experts. We hope that this will be confirmed by the successful launch of Terra-SAR-X, actually foreseen on 15 June. We share the view that it is important to engage the youth in space and space technology. Starting end of July, we will therefore organize a so-called "space camp" for interested young people. It is supported by experts of various European space agencies and companies, among these, ESA and DLR.

Mr. Chairman, Germany is a strong supporter of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. During the German new presidency, all major stakeholders, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Union and their member States, have agreed on common goals and priorities and the plan for the implementation of the activities. This European Space Policy gives, for the first time, a common political framework for space activities in Europe, it sets the ground for increased coordination of its activities and programmes. In this framework, Europe will also develop a common strategy for its international space relations, for example, related to its GMES programme. We are also happy that Switzerland and ESA member States, from the very beginning, has applied to be a full member of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, we are very satisfied that the General Assembly, in December 2006, decided by consensus, to establish the United Nations SPIDER programme and that we achieved major progress during the forty-fourth Scientific and Space Council in

February this year. We will comment in more detail on SPIDER in our statement under agenda item 7.

On this year's agenda of COPUOS there are other topics of special interest for our delegation, we will comment on them under their agenda items. We will look forward to the adoption of the space debris mitigation guidelines, as agreed by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We support also the procedure agreed by the Legal Subcommittee to prepare a resolution by COPUOS on the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects, moreover, we look forward to the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Chairman, we are convinced that this fiftieth session of COPUOS will be successful under your chairmanship, as was the session last year.

I would like to address myself now directly to Sergio Camacho-Lara and express our deep appreciation and our respect for smooth, successful work over the past five years as Director of OOSA. Your leadership contributed in a decisive way to the efficiency of this Committee's work. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Ms. Schick, for your statement on behalf of Germany. I would like to note, first of all, that we should express our best wishes to you for the launch of the satellite and maybe at the time of the meeting of the Committee it will be in orbit and I know it has been a long wait for the launch vehicle and now everything seems to be ready. I would like to also pay tribute to the actions of the German presidency of the European Union which made it possible to adopt the European Space Policy at the time of the Space Council, held on 20 May, very recently. I would also like to convey our thanks, on behalf of the Committee, to our friend Kai-Uwe Schrogl, who presided over the working group on matters pertaining to the practice of registration of space objects, which we are going to take up at the time of the consideration of the report of the Legal Subcommittee. Thank you, Mr. Schrogl, for your work. I now recognize the distinguished representative of Hungary and also my first vice-chairman, Mr. Elöd Both.

Mr. E. BOTH (Hungary): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me express my warmest congratulations on the occasion that we see you again chairing this Committee. I am convinced that, under your chairmanship, this Committee will reach a significant progress in its work during this important session.

I would like to join other delegations and take the opportunity to extend my delegation's and my own sincere appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Sergio Camacho, who devoted a major part of his career to serve OOSA, including the last five years when he did an excellent job as the Director of the Office.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates. This year is a very important one since we have several important anniversaries, including those two which define the beginning and the end of the World Space Week. We warmly welcome that this Committee also commemorates these milestones. My delegation takes the opportunity to thank for, and congratulate to, the OOSA staff, for organizing the highly spectacular exhibition in the Rotunda on the occasion of these anniversaries.

I warmly welcome the official kick-off of the International Heliophysical Year that took place during the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We express our appreciation, acknowledgement and thanks to all contributors of these internationally coordinated scientific efforts. My delegation has the view that the proper celebrations can significantly contribute to the acceptance of the space activity by society. This Committee should review these activities and should encourage these to be organized in an internationally coordinated manner. In this respect, we highly appreciate the activity of the World Space Week Association, coordinating the worldwide celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the space age. We sincerely hope that these events will significantly increase the awareness of space and the importance of space activity.

Hungary also joins this series of celebrations. We are preparing some dedicated public events and the Hungarian Astronautical Society launched a nationwide contest on space matters for secondary school pupils, all these events will be reported through the World Space Week Association.

My delegation took note with great satisfaction, during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, that Switzerland applied for membership of COPUOS. My delegation fully supports the candidacy of Switzerland to be a member of this Committee.

Hungary welcomes the significant progress reached in the field of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Hungary delegated an expert to the joint IAEA expert group, in order to prepare the safety framework of nuclear power sources application in outer space.

Hungary highly appreciates that, as a follow-up of the UNISPACE III conference, the European and French space agencies initiated the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters". My delegation takes note with satisfaction and congratulates that last month, the China National Space Administration, joined the Charter as the tenth member agency. Hungary also welcomes that, after a series of preliminary consultations, including those during the recent session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, this Committee will exchange views on its own long-term future. The outcome of these discussions should point out the main features of our future work for the following years or maybe decades. My delegation has the view that COPUOS should play a rather proactive role and its sessions should be a forum where several strategic and prospective aspects of space activity should be discussed.

Let me now briefly inform the Committee of some important features of our country's space programme. Before doing so, I call your attention to the latest edition of our biennial report, introducing in detail our activity. This booklet is being distributed during the present session in this room. Our country's space activity is being coordinated by the Hungarian Space Office, now functioning as a unit of the Ministry of Environment and Water after several restructuring. Hungary takes part in the activities of the European Space Council. We welcome that, very recently, this body approved a European Space Policy in order to harmonize Europe's space activities and providing a firm basis for establishing the European space programme. Our highest priority in international cooperation is that with the European Space Agency. Hungary is a European Cooperating State of the Agency. The implementation of the PECS agreement goes smoothly, yielding several successes in different fields of space activity. In the framework of PECS, the Hungarian scientists and engineers have nearly 40 contracts in different fields of ESA activity. My delegation expresses our congratulations to the delegations of Romania and Poland on the occasion that their countries also joined the ESA PECS programme. We welcome that, in order to strengthen the cooperation among the four European Cooperating States, ESA recently established a PECS committee. However, for us the most important step forward is the fact that Hungary officially notified ESA that the country would like to accede to the ESA Convention. All negotiations and accession to the ESA Convention began last month and, hopefully, will conclude within a reasonable time frame.

Earlier this year, an Hungarian-born United States citizen completed the longest of a duration private space flight. Since he was born in Hungary and declared himself Hungarian, he became our country's second space traveller. In cooperation with the Hungarian Space Office and the Russian Space Agency he operated, during his space flight, a Pille dosimeter system which measured the amount of radiation that he was exposed to while on board the ISS. It also helped to generate a highly accurate map of the radiation environment aboard the Space Station.

Our scientists and engineers successfully participated in a few other international space missions. The most important of these, our participation in the Russian COMPASS-2 scientific mission. Hungarian students are also participating in preparing a European student satellite under the auspices of the European Space Agency. In the meantime, our scientists continue their participation in ESA's Rosetta mission. In the future they will also participate in the BepiColombo mission to the planet Mercury, both in ESA and Japan Corporation. Thank you for your attention, thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Both for his statement on behalf of Hungary. I note you have become a very active member of the European club, taking part in the ESA programme, for the moment, through the PECS programme and soon, perhaps, as a proper member of ESA. Now, I would like to call on our colleague, Mr. Akinyede, the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. J. AKINYEDE (Nigeria): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Nigerian delegation is delighted to see you preside over the affairs of this Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) particularly at this very important session, the gathering of member States to celebrate the fiftieth year of space exploration. We congratulate you and the entire members of the Bureau for your diligence in the Committee's preparations for the celebration of the achievements of the past 50 years. We salute the past chairmen and chairpersons of COPUOS and its Subcommittees for their courage, efforts and successes in piloting the affairs of the Committee. We congratulate the entire staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) under the able leadership of Mr. Camacho-Lara and their predecessors for brilliant performances during their respective tenures in office. We use this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Camacho for his meritorious services to this Committee and to humanity. We bid him farewell and also wish him success in his future endeavour.

My delegation is also pleased to note the remarkable progress made by COPUOS and its Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees by establishing the international legal regimes governing outer space activities and increasing the opportunities for developing countries to receive appropriate training particularly through the United Nations Programme of Space Applications. This also provided opportunities for developing countries to participate actively in the activities of the Committee and maximize the benefits of space science and technology development. The Committee successfully organized the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, UNISPACE III, which unanimously adopted the Vienna Declaration in order to advance the frontier of knowledge through space exploration for human development and security. Through its unique implementation strategies the Committee has to brought to bear on the global community, especially the developing countries, the benefits of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

My delegation is aware of the future activities of this Committee as submitted by the Chairman. Nigeria wishes to emphasize its relevance and also recall that this subject was introduced by the immediate past Chairman, Dr. Adigun Ade Abiodun of Nigeria, after the remarkable presentation by _____ (*inaudible*) of Canada. Nigeria will make further contributions to this subject at the appropriate time. As we further reflect on our individual and collective achievements in the past 50 years, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you of my delegation's cooperation in all the activities of this session.

Since joining the Committee in 1973, Nigeria has recorded some modest achievements in the implementation of the space agenda particularly within the past eight years. This includes the launch of an Earth observation micro-satellite, Nigeria SAT-1 into lower Earth orbit in September 2003. The satellite has shown excellent performance, with over 3,000 images delivered to date to the user community globally. Some of these projects in Nigeria are already yielding good results with impacts on the society, particularly in the areas of food security, resource and environmental management, disaster management, demography, urban and transportation planning and malaria epidemiology. On 13 May 2007, Nigeria consolidated on the success of Nigeria SAT-1 project by launching its first communication satellite, NigComSat-1, into geostationary orbit. The satellite which has been successfully deployed in orbit at 42° East, provided live signals on 29 May 2007 for the transmission of the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected President of Nigeria. It has been estimated that the satellite will provide jobs for over 150,000 Africans, including Nigerians, and save Nigeria over $95 million annually for trunk services and sales of bandwidth. The satellite, which contains both active and redundant transponders, in feed bands Ka, Ku and L-bands, was built in collaboration with China Great Wall Industrial Corporation. In its efforts to commercialize and maximize the utilization of NigComSat-1, the National Space Research and Development Agency, has established the Nigerian Communication Satellite Limited, to promote a public/private partnership _____ (*inaudible*) investments and business opportunities. Similarly, _____ (*inaudible*) on some communication satellite-based pilot projects in the areas of telemedicine and tele-education, in collaboration with the Federal Ministries of Health and Education in Nigeria. The telemedicine pilot project provides opportunities for patients' medical diagnosis and information exchange in real time through the appropriate health and ICT facilities at NigComSat ground station. Two university teaching hospitals in Nigeria with six medical centres and a mobile unit linked to each university are participating in the project. The ongoing project will provide a framework for needs assessment for the use of tele-health services, such as, specialist referral, patient consultations, remote patient monitoring and medical education in Nigeria. Similarly, Nigeria is embarking on the tele-education project, in collaboration with the National Open University of Nigeria, to link 12 study centres located across the nation, with a _____ (*inaudible*) administrative hob at the University's headquarters in Lagos.

Nigeria took further steps to start the designing, building and launching of a second Earth observation satellite, NigeriaSat-2, with a technical partner, the Surrey Satellite Technology Limited of the United Kingdom. The NigeriaSat-2 project, also includes training and knowledge acquisition of various subsystems and ground station management for a multiband and multi-resolution satellite. NigeriaSat-2 which is scheduled for launch in 2009 has been designed for a large span of several years and will carry 2.5-metre and 5-metre panchromatic and multispectral imager payloads, respectively. To ensure the continuity of data acquisition from NigeriaSat-1, especially for disaster management globally, after its five-year design life, NigeriaSat-2 systems will also carry a 32-metre multispectral resolution payload.

Mr. Chairman, the systematic implementation of the Nigeria space agenda by NASRDA demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to making its space programme a sustainable one. It also demonstrates that Nigeria recognizes the importance of satellite technology as a

veritable tool for addressing the range of environmental, economic, communication and political issues. The Nigerian people see the investment in the remote sensing and communication satellites as assets that will enhance the realization of the Government's national economic empowerment and development strategies' needs as well as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Nigeria will also continue to commit itself to the development, building and launching of the African Resource and Environmental Management Satellite Constellation. The ARM initiative is a collaborative effort of South Africa, Algeria, Kenya and Nigeria and will be built in joint participation and knowledge sharing using the available African indigenous capacity and capability. The participating countries will soon sign the draft declaration of intent to further the cause of the ARM initiative. The collaborating countries have met _____ (*inaudible*) to articulate the technical parameters of the ARM initiative that will be most suitable for addressing some of the perennial problems facing Africa.

In September 2006, the National Space Research and Development Agency organized a _____ (*inaudible*) workshop in collaboration with Infoterra-Global, an EADS Astrium Company, on the theme, future Earth observation satellite programme and geo-information management in Nigeria. Part of the objectives of the workshop considered the Synthetic Aperture Radar option to solve the problem of satellite data acquisition over the persistently cloud-covered southern part of Nigeria. Because clouds are natural impediment to optical remote sensing the use of SAR will assist in mapping and solving some of the socio-economic problems including _____ (*inaudible*) vandalization, the detection of illegal shipping and fishing activities in Nigeria's coastal areas and monitoring of the economic assets in the southern part of Nigeria. As the first major milestone in the SAR roadmap plan and to prepare the Nigerian user community for the use of SAR data, Infoterra will prepare a training package for NASRDA staff and its affiliated organizations. The SAR roadmap also includes the collaboration with Infoterra Germany in the proposed launch of a high resolution TerraSAR-X satellite, such that Nigeria will upgrade its Earth observation ground station to receive TerraSAR-X data for the West Africa subregion.

On 30 April 2007, the President of Nigeria commissioned a National Space Centre to provide a conducive environment for space research and development in Nigeria. The Centre contains facilities for Earth observation ground receiving station, communication network operating centre and planetarium, among other things. The development of the observatory site for the NASRDA Centre for Geodesy and Geodynamics has also commenced. When fully completed, the site will host laboratories for _____ (*inaudible*), satellite _____ (*inaudible*), global positioning systems and other related facilities for research and applications in space geodesy, including global observatories and international collaboration in Earth movement measurements. The Centre has also completed the preparation of _____ (*inaudible*) map of Nigeria for use in the establishment of more satellite stations in Nigeria. The programmes of the other centres will be _____ (*inaudible*) under the appropriate agenda item.

Mr. Chairman, you will recall that Nigeria hosted the First African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in November 2005. The summary report of the conference was made available to member States of COPUOS during the forty-ninth session and was also presented to the African Union through the African Regional Conference of Ministers of Science and Technology at its meeting held in Addis Ababa in January 2007. The report allies the key factors limiting the participation of Africa in the space enterprise. It also laid out the steps the continent would need to take to fully engage itself with the different aspects of the enterprise that can enhance Africa's development. The Second African Leadership Conference will be hosted by South Africa in August 2007.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Nigeria through its National Space Research and Development Agency and the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) will co-host an African regional conference on the theme, Space for Africa: path to knowledge and development, at Abuja, Nigeria, from 3-5 December 2007. The conference will provide a forum to discuss the role space science and technology can play in the enhancement of sustainable development in Africa, this includes, inter alia, knowledge generation, system development and applications of space science and technology for public good with emphasis on the role decision-makers can play in sustainable development efforts. My delegation is using this opportunity to invite member States, the United Nations observer bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies to participate in this conference. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Akinyede for that excellent presentation of space activities in his country. These are quite remarkable achievements, I think the

Committee should congratulate Nigeria on the recent launch of this satellite, NigComSat-1, which has apparently now come into operation and also the considerable work done by the space agency in Nigeria to develop space applications in your country. The Committee can also express to you best wishes for the regional conference that you are organizing, together with the International Academy of Astronautics, which will be held at Abuja in December of this year. I will now call on the distinguished representative of Libya, Mr. Abdulatif.

Mr. H. ABDULATIF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you, on behalf of my delegation, what a pleasure it is for us and also to thank you personally, seeing you chairing once again the meetings of this Committee. I would also like to congratulate you on the wisdom with which you are leading the work of this Committee, you are giving it new impetus and you are encouraging to meet its goals.

My delegation is very aware of the importance of this Committee and our interest is shown by the fact that we constantly follow-up its work. We also follow-up all the developments that are taking place in space because we want to see how to use them in order to face the many challenges that arise in our daily lives and also to participate and meet the commitments from UNISPACE III in order to achieve our common goal, namely, that space belongs to everyone without any distinction as to anybody at all.

Mr. Chairman, our Committee tries to achieve noble aims within an international partnership to ensure safe and dignified life for all mankind and we also want to share experience in an equitable manner. I do not think I need mention here the fact that nature with its natural catastrophes and ways of intervening when these happen or how to mitigate these effects, all this is a great challenge and we must also try to forecast the destructive effects using space technologies.

My country, like other countries, is working to try and manage space technology and we are hoping to use these techniques in the service of mankind and our daily life in order to improve our lives. The developing countries and, aboveall, the African countries, have many problems which stem from nature, the fact that water is scarce, the desertification that is taking place or the spread of sickness, so we need international cooperation in order to achieve the right solutions to all these problems. We are very conscious of the role that can be played by space technology in this area and so the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya puts at the top of its list of priorities, space activities and we ensure that sufficient finance is available so as to meet all our national social goals.

We have a remote detection centre to deal with water problems, particularly, the underground waters under the sands of the Sahara and we are doing this work in cooperation with UNESCO. We have also tried to deal with the problem of desertification which Libya is suffering from, as well as other North African countries. We have made efforts on a national scale in education, we have set up applied education programmes and we have done this in cooperation with our neighbouring countries and the bodies and specialized institutions take part in that also. We have been using satellite imaging which we receive, thanks to the station which deals with vegetation cover, which was, in fact, something inaugurated in Tripoli in the year 2001.

As for other space probes and particularly astronomy, where we are creating a 2-metre diameter astronomical centre which can be used by anyone interested in that, anybody from anywhere in the world. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has 300 clear nights compared to only 70 in Europe.

We have also cooperated in applying the UNISPACE III recommendations with African countries in order to build an African satellite, a communication satellite, to serve the African continent, it will be launched very soon. In cooperation with the European Space Agency we do hope, next year, that we can open a direct reception station from the _____ (*inaudible*) which is above the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. It will cover all the countries in the Sahara region so we will be able to use the radar data and we certainly have a great need for that data. As for the geodesic survey, my country has modernized its network using spatial techniques and in cooperation with North African countries and we are harmonizing this geodesic survey in order to harmonize it with the African continent as a whole. We have also produced surface maps thanks to space techniques and these have contributed to accelerating development in our country.

The present situation requires very close international cooperation, it requires that we can make available space techniques to all those who need them as well as the potential that resides in space. The African countries particularly need that kind of assistance and my country, because of the mapping and tele-detection that is done in North Africa, would support the requirement put forward by that particular

association to become members here in order to carry out its work.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to this Committee for all the efforts that have been made. We would also like to thank the Secretariat, represented by OOSA and by the Director of OOSA, we would like to thank you for your efforts and we would also like to thank all delegations for their attention to this statement. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Abdulatif for that statement on behalf of Libya. This detection centre in Libya, in fact, is very active, it is developing its work. They are going to set up an astronomic telescope, 2-metres in diameter and I think that the climatic conditions, which are so favourable in your country, will mean that an optimum use can be made of that scientific station. I see it is now 17:25 and on our list we have three observers who have asked to speak. I will begin by giving the floor to our distinguished delegate from Switzerland, Natália Archinard.

Ms. N. ARCHINARD (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is with great satisfaction and joy that our delegation sees you in the Chair of this fiftieth anniversary session of the Committee. We, of course, as an observer delegation, under your vigorous and informed chairmanship, this discussion has been conducted with wisdom and vision. We welcome the progress accomplished by this Committee at this session and we wish you, Mr. Chairman, the greatest success.

Distinguished Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, it is with nostalgia that we will see you leave your post at the end of this month but the work and the progress accomplished by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, under your leadership, will remain in our memories. Let us, Mr. Director, convey to you our most sincere wishes for your career as a retiree. Our delegation would also like to thank the entire Office for Outer Space Affairs for the preparation of documents and for its very significant work in support of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This anniversary counts 50 years of endeavour and accomplishments in order that space remain the good of all nations, that space remain a source of fascination and inspiration which promotes development of technologies that benefit the population of our planet, that these benefits be shared with the nations that need them the most.

The challenges that the Committee is facing today are still numerous. We have listed them in a document that you are going to submit to this Subcommittee at the current session, not without long discussions and consultations with the various parties involved held beforehand. Some of themes that you have highlighted are those that are particularly important to Switzerland. That is, for example, the case of a sustainable guarantee of free access to space to all nations, the development of international cooperation taking into account the specific needs of certain countries and the need to guarantee the continuity of space activities and the fact that they should benefit ground-based activities.

My country is involved in European space activities and has been so involved since the creation of the European Space Agency. Within European space activities, Switzerland has always sought consensus, cooperation and the strengthening and merging of the varied interests of European nations. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption of a common European Space Policy by the Space Council at its session held on 22 May of this year. Furthermore, work is underway, within the framework of our Government, to develop a Swiss space policy, as well as, a national space legislation that would be compatible with the conventions adopted by the Legal Subcommittee of this Committee.

Since UNISPACE III our country has been a regular observer at COPUOS and at Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We have participated in all its activities and tried to make an active contribution to its various working groups and offered financial support to various conferences organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs. This year, my country is going to contribute to the SPIDER programme for the use of space data for the management of natural disasters and emergency response by supporting the setting up of a SPIDER liaison office in Geneva. In order that the SPIDER platform should effectively fulfil its mission, it would not be unreasonable to take into account the existing competencies within the United Nations system. For that reason, Switzerland has decided to support the United Nations programme, UNITAR, for the application of operational satellites. Specifically the UNOSAT programme will make a significant contribution to the work of the SPIDER liaison office in Geneva. In partnership with the Office of the International Strategy for Disaster Prevention, known

as ISDR in English and in cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs. It seems paramount for our Government to use the operational expertise of UNOSAT, the experience it accumulated on the ground, in the field and the contacts it has developed over the years, to contribute to the objectives of the SPIDER programme. Objectives such as, setting up a space database and putting it at the disposal of all countries and regional organizations such as, bridging the divide that still exists between the space community and the humanitarian community and, no less important, strengthening the existing capacities in the various countries concerned. In this context, it is important to recall that the International Charter for Space and Major Disasters should be strengthened and made more stable so that countries and regional institutions could continue to have access, in cases of major disasters, to space-based data and information to which they would not have access outside the context of the Charter.

It is with this willingness to continue making specific concrete and active contributions toward the objectives and the activities of the Committee that Switzerland has asked this year to be admitted as a full-fledged member. On this occasion, our country would like to thank the delegations that have already expressed their support of the nomination of our country, it is an honour for Switzerland that its admission is submitted at the fiftieth anniversary session of the Committee. May this anniversary coincide, for our country, with a celebration of joining the Committee as a full-fledged member.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank Madam Archinard for her statement on behalf of Switzerland. As you know, Switzerland is not a member of the European Union but I can tell you that it is a European space nation that has always been very active and present in all our joint endeavours in Europe related to space activities. Some of us have taken part in the Council that held sessions in Switzerland and we can commend Switzerland for its wisdom and its always valuable contributions to the debate. I see that Mr. Gonzalez, on behalf of the Chilean delegation, has asked for the floor.

Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I see that you are being regularly congratulated and I certainly share that feeling. May I offer some thoughts. This was a statement that I made yesterday and where implicit mention was made of these. There are a couple of components which should be clear within the framework of this plenary and which have become subject of not so much consultations as re-statements, in respect of Latin American delegates.

I want to refer to the Fifth Conference of the Americas, held in Quito, it was very successful, there was a fine presentation by both Ecuador and Colombia, the delegation of Colombia referred to the work done by the working group there and also in respect of the work done at Cartagena de Indias and then also all the work that was done together with the temporary secretariat at that time. It is important to incorporate some of the other bodies, as GEOSS for example, or IFA which, I do not know whether it was the case in Santiago but they were present in the preparatory conferences. They facilitated the dialogue that took place both in the case of Cartagena de Indias and also we arrived there, more or less, with an agreed agenda, so we worked strongly, firmly, in a very concrete way which led on to action. As far as the plan of action was concerned, in Quito we had a very pleasant surprise, it was a Chilean initiative in UNISPACE 82, paragraph 453 of the final report of UNISPACE II, which was then repeated and endorsed later by General Assembly resolutions on the subject of interregional and international cooperation. This led also to a matter related to constitutional law, there was a *de juris* opinion here which was expressed and this mandate was then taken on board by the General Assembly resolutions. The delegation of Argentina made a very important statement there which was corroborated, perhaps not explicitly but it was certainly explicit in the case of Argentina, to create a regional space organization. This was a proposal made some time back and which, of course, we welcome with great satisfaction. It is not just something that happens in the United Nations that you dealt with satisfaction but this was a proposal which was very well accepted.

Time has elapsed since Quito and I must stress that the temporary secretariat is in function now together in cooperation with the expert group. It is dealing with the substance procedures format of the organization which was agreed by the Quito Declaration. I do not know whether my friends here want to go into further detail as to the statement but in one of the parts of the Quito Declaration express reference is made, perhaps not in those terms but there is an express reference, to the creation of this space regional organization and in the discussion, I chaired the political consultations which took place, we had a formal policy consultation here and I had discussions with various delegations to find ways to structure this regional organization but more than that, what is

important is that thinking had to take place and all this was reflected in my country and also in the General Assembly. We saw this mechanism, this modality, these formats coming up, it is also because we are talking here about setting up an interregional body and we had a very interesting meeting, it was either in 2006 or 2005, I cannot remember but, we had an important meeting of a regional nature which was in Nigeria which was very relevant in terms of regional relations.

What is involved here is a question of solidarity, we have much to offer to Africa, how to work together in exchanging views in the whole area of nature and so on, and to avoid situations which would complicate life for us. This organization fits into a vision. First of all, what is involved is great integration within Latin America and I would like to stress one of the main concerns in Chile, that is have integration in all areas, particularly in political areas with Latin America. In the case of Argentina, we have 22 or 25 bilateral committees in all areas of life and in all of Latin America we have important relationships and we must use these. We can only tackle the challenges facing us if we work under a viewpoint which can be implemented, we must start with principles and we need the sort of organization being proposed to us by Argentina, we think that is an appropriate one and it is an instrument which will allow us to exchange particular experience in this whole area. Let me stress, too, that Argentina has also achieved certain experiences, had some very positive cooperation with us in our University of La Serena, there has been a project where we have established this National Council of Argentina which has a legal status, which is linked up with the Foreign Ministry and all the work thus being done under CONAE is very important.

Things of great merit are being proposed here and this is something which must all be reflected when we come to the stage of preparing our report. It should be understood clearly by the Bureau that the intention of Latin America is not to be exclusive. We do not just want to refer to Latin America, we want to be inclusive, to share with other continents similar experiences, similar thinking and the international organizations and other countries. It is very important, therefore, to suggest and, perhaps the Secretariat could take note of this, that a collaborating organization for the structuring of this kind of question could be IIASA. We all know what IIASA is, after all it is here in Vienna, it is a fundamental organization working in that kind of studies and then also we must think of China, who is making a tremendous contribution to IIASA. This is an organization that deals with planetary problems and there could be very important input from there. I just quote IIASA as an example.

Finally, briefly, let me refer to the contribution made by the distinguished representative of Switzerland. She mentioned the possibility of specifically supporting the SPIDER platform related to natural disasters and the particular experience there because of the geography of the country. We also have very good diplomacy which has been shown, at least towards my delegation, so it is a matter of great satisfaction for my delegation. I think we must continue to reflect on these fundamental aspects which I have mentioned in this statement. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I thank our distinguished colleague, representative of Chile for his contribution. I noted that the Ambassador of Colombia has also asked for the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. C. ARÉVALO-YEPES (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I think that within this effort, which we have to think about when we are looking at regional meetings such as the Space Conferences of the Americas, one of the elements which is very difficult to implement is what comes from the structuring of future work. It is a very diverse continent, it has symmetry and asymmetry, which means that topics like these require denature, some sort of thinking which allows for the creation of areas for development of topics which could well seem futuristic but as we all know and, certainly many delegations will not disagree, all these are daily needs. I am thinking, for example, at the ARCAL agreement, it is a regional agreement in the nuclear field and any external observer from a developed country will know about ARCAL and they will see that this response to specific needs in the use of nuclear science for the development of medicine, agriculture and mining. I am just trying to make a parallel in respect of space technology for development and it is important to know that in the area of integration which we see in various continents, particularly in the region of Latin America, space plays a very relevant role as has been demonstrated at this conference. I think you, too, have seen and noted and we of course very much welcome the fact that you were present and noted what was happening.

Recently there was the creation of a regional agency or body which could coordinate Latin American space work on an annual basis. This was a Chilean initiative and it was very much strengthened at Quito and, we in Colombia, support this initiative very firmly, we think it is most important, it is missionary in nature and because of it we can, in fact, reduce the asymmetrical components which we have in our region and to do it in such a way that, to be very brief Mr. Chairman, it is a key matter that, at this meeting,

this is one of the topics which has been underlined by the delegation of Ecuador who are the temporary secretariat for the meeting. You mentioned this matter also, Mr. Chairman, when you talked about the Space Conferences of the Americas because the European experiences are very interesting in this area too, could help us greatly when coming to the very many elements where we could try to establish a common denominator in all this area.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, this situation, which is a very important situation, one that should be well weighed and thought about. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Many thanks, Ambassador, for your statement. Indeed, this is something to continue thinking about for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Which is the best way to organize themselves to facilitate the integration of space-related activities and of course our Committee will be most encouraging.

I see, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates that the hour is late. Unfortunately, this is one thing we can do nothing about or nothing to stop, the flow of time. We are going to shortly adjourn this afternoon's meeting of our Committee. We will resume our deliberations tomorrow and I think we will conclude our consideration of agenda item 4, general exchange of views. Then we will still have to look forward to the statement by the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, an important element of our consideration of agenda item 4, then we will proceed to consider items 5 and 6. I will see you again tomorrow morning and 10 a.m. sharp, to resume our deliberations. I would like to inform you that, at the end of the morning meeting, tomorrow, we will have technical presentations by the delegation of Ukraine on agenda item 7. Finally, I would like to remind you that, in about five minutes time, we are expected by the delegation of the Russian Federation to attend a reception which will take place in the Mozart Room in the restaurant downstairs. Thank you and see you tomorrow.

The meeting closed at 5.56 p.m.