

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Unedited transcript

582nd Meeting

Wednesday, 11 June 2008, 10 a.m.

Vienna

Chairman: Mr. G. Brachet (interpretation from French)

The meeting was called to order at 10.13 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Distinguished representatives please be seated so that we can begin the fifty-first session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Distinguished representatives, it is pleasure and honour to welcome you all to the Vienna International Centre and I now declare open the fifty-first session and the 582nd meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

As you are all no doubt aware, the Committee will shortly elects its officers for a two-year term in accordance with the agreement reached at the forty-ninth session of the Committee in 2006.

Now with the Committee's permission, I will continue to preside over this meeting until the new Chairman has been duly elected, at which time it will be my pleasure to invite him to assume the Chair.

Nevertheless, before beginning the election of the officers, the Committee needs to adopt its agenda for this session.

This is item 2 of our agenda. Distinguished representatives, before you, you have for your approval and adoption the provisional agenda for the session, this is document A/AC.105/L270. This provisional agenda was prepared on the basis on the agreements reached at the 2007 session of the Committee which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217 of 21 December 2007.

An indicative schedule of work is set out in the Annex to that provisional agenda. Please note that we are not here to adopt the annotations and indicative schedule of work that are attached. These are only included to assist delegations.

We shall now proceed with the adoption of the agenda itself.

May we adopt the agenda?

I see no objections.

The agenda is adopted.

It is so decided.

Item 3, election of officers.

Distinguished representatives, I now turn to item 3 of the agenda, election of officers.

In paragraph 55 of resolution 62/217 of 21 December 2007, the General Assembly acknowledged the composition of the Bureau of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2008-2009, as reflected in paragraph 50 of its resolution 61/111 of 14 December 2006 and noted that the Committee at its current session would endorse the election of the officers of its Subcommittees and would elect its officers to 208-2009.

In its session last year, the Committee noted that *Ciro Arévalo-Yepes* of Colombia, *Suvit Vibulsresth* of Thailand, and *Filipe Duarte Santos* of Portugal will be elected the offices of Chairman, First

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

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week of the date of publication, to the Chief, Conference Management Service, Room D0771, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria. Corrections will be issued in a consolidated corrigendum.



Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur respectively for the period 2008-2009.

And at its forty-fifth session this year, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee elected Aboubekr-Seddik Kedjar of Algeria for a two-year term of office.

And at its forty-seventh session earlier this year, the Legal Subcommittee elected Vladimir Kopal of the Czech Republic Chairman of the Subcommittee for a two-year term of office.

May I take it that the Committee endorses the election of the officers of its Subcommittees for the period 2009-2009?

I see no objections.

It is so decided.

Now, unless there is any objection, may I take it that the Committee would wish to elect Mr. Ciro Arévalo-Yepes of Colombia as Chairman for a two-year term starting with this session in 2008?

I see no objections.

It is so decided.

Of course, I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ciro Arévalo-Yepes on his election.

Now, before I invite my colleague to assume the Chair, please allow me to make a few remarks as outgoing Chairman.

These remarks will be limited as much as I can in order not to delay the entry into functions of my successor.

Let me just say that I believe that the Committee and its two Subcommittees have carried out excellent work during these last few years. In particular, I think we have been able to make progress on two points which had been on the table for years. First of all the setting up a new United Nations Programme for the Use of Outer Space in terms of disaster management. This is the SPIDER Programme and this was approved by General Assembly resolution in 2006 and has now entered into its implementation phase.

Also we have made significant progress on limiting production of space debris and the Guidelines drawn up by this Committee and, thanks to the

excellent work carried out by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, were adopted last year and endorsed by a General Assembly 62/217, that I have mentioned a few moments ago.

I believe that these two results we obtained over the last few years shows, if need be, that COPUOS can make a contribution, first of all to facilitate any access to space resources, I am thinking of SPIDER here, and also can help ensure greater security within our means for our space activities.

I think that the Committee over the coming years should pursue these lines and try to ensure that space technologies, which are quite significant, be put at the service of humanity, be put at the service of the earthly environment and sustainable development. But also the Committee, I think, needs to look at the means at hand for an optimal use of outer space in good safety conditions and one would hope that the Committee would work on these different points in the coming years.

OK, there you have my desiderata for the Committee. I would hope that you will continue your active participation and to enable the Committee to make a significant contribution in the future to these very important activities, important for the future of mankind and its planet.

And in conclusion, let me extend special thanks to the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in particular Dr. Othman, who has come running, so to speak, since she has been in this position since December 2007 and to Sergio Camacho, who I see in the room and who was the preceding Director, a period which ended in June-July 2007. A special gratitude to Niklas Hedman and his team, whose work in the Secretariat was very efficient and very professional. Thanks to the entire team then. And thanks to you all and I now give the floor and Chair to my successor.

Mr. C. ARÉVALO-YEPES (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is indeed an honour for me, for my country, for the Latin American region to be present here today leading the work of COPUOS. Let me extend my thanks, first of all to my colleagues, Gérard Brachet of France, Előd Both of Hungary, and Paul Tendrideigo(?) of Burkina Faso, for their remarkable work as Chairman, First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur, respectively, of the Committee for the period 2006-2007.

Distinguished delegates, I now would like to turn the election of the other offices of the Committee,

namely the First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur.

Now, unless there any objections, may I take it that the Committee elects Suvit Vibulsresth of Thailand as First Vice-Chairman, and Filipe Duarte Santos of Portugal as Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee for a two-year term beginning the 2008 session?

I see no objections.

It is so decided.

Let me express to both of these gentlemen my warmest congratulations on their election and invite them to take their seats up at the podium.

Distinguished delegates, I would like to inform the Committee that I have received requests from the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Paraguay, Yemen, as well as the Holy See, seeking permission to attend the current session of the Committee as observers.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that in conformity with past practice, we invite these delegations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate, when appropriate. This does not mean, of course, any kind of pre-judging further requests or previous requests involving decisions that it can be concerning status. This is a courtesy that we customarily extend to such delegations making these requests.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It is so decided.

I would also like to inform delegations that I have received communications from the following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in the meetings of the current session of the Committee as observers: the European Community, the European Organisation for Astronomical Research, and the European Telecommunications Organization EUTELSAT.

And I also remind distinguished delegates that in accordance with the Committee's decision at its fiftieth session in 2007, that a final decision on the application of the Secure World Foundation for permanent observer status should be postponed to its fifty-first session in 2008, as I said, for permanent observer status. This Foundation is invited to

participate as an observer at the fifty-first session of the Committee of COPUOS.

May I suggest then that in conformity with past practice, we invite these delegations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate. This is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature.

If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It is so decided.

Now, this is a time at which traditionally the new Chairman makes an introductory statement. It will be a pleasure for me to do this without, I must warn you ahead of time, this is a statement which fairly highly developed in which present the main and most essential elements of the tasks faced and which we have faced in recent times in this Committee and these activities are quite numerous and all of them will require, of course, your attention during the work of the Committee.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, I am honoured to have been elected Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I thank you all for your confidence and I would like to assure you of my commitment to continuing the successful work of the Committee.

At the outset, let me convey my deepest condolences and solidarity with the people of Myanmar who are struggling to survive after the most devastating cyclone to hit Asia since 1991. And also to the Peoples Republic of China where a devastating earthquake last month claimed thousands of lives and has left many more injured and homeless. These recent disasters, once again, show us how vulnerable we are and how important it is to build capacities to mitigate the devastating effects of disasters. Space tools are indispensable on such endeavours and the Committee has continuously made efforts to promote and increase awareness and capacity-building in the use of space technology applications at the international, region and national level. in many critical areas of concern to all humanity, such as disaster management, climate change and food security.

Development in space science and technology is a fundamental prerequisite for any space application for the development of human development on Earth and any exploration of it in the Universe. And our Committee stands at the forefront in bringing the world together in using that technology for peaceful purposes.

I am often asked why should we go into space. I am constantly asked this question and I would always like to answer by citing Stephen Hawking, "In a way, the situation was like that in Europe before 1492. The discovery of the New World made profound differences to the old. Spreading out into space will have even greater effect. It will completely change the future of the human race and maybe determine whether we any future at all. Hopefully, it would unite us to face a common challenge."

So, distinguished delegates, space is the province of all of mankind and should be seen as a kind of globalized common heritage in which science and technology bring us together. It diminishes and narrows differences, makes us less foreign to each other and also closer to new possibilities of creation, advantages and, of course, making us more in solidarity with each other.

This is why I think we need to continue to perfect the models we have for cooperation that take into account the interests of all because this guarantees the viability of our efforts and shall also benefit the developing countries whose needs are so enormous, providing them with the help of these space technologies. We know that this is a scenario in which different trends of the twenty-first century will come into play.

This is a time when we have seen an unprecedented acceleration of technical progress. In addition, when we look at the different dilemmas faced by science and conscience, we see that ethics are more than ever necessary, shared ethics in a common civilization, with a commitment that is not only limited to statistical figures and cost-benefit analyses but rather as in effect of the human being as a totality.

The application of science and technology from space is one of the keys that we have to avoid having the creation of a globalized dichotomy to dividing the world into users and spectators.

The simultaneous nature of the impact on every part of the planet needs to be managed so it is put to the service of mankind with no artificial borders and not particularly(?) occurring to any kind of obsolete approaches here that divide us.

Ladies and gentlemen, with these words, it is for me a great pleasure to welcome you all to the fifty-first session of the Committee. I am pleased to see all of you, coming from different parts of the world, to participate in as well as contribute to the deliberations

of the Committee. And this year I have the honour of welcoming and congratulating two new members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Bolivia and Switzerland. These two countries have been playing an active role in the work of the Committee as observers and I am confident that their membership will enrich the discussions of the Committee and further its goals of promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

I also have the pleasure of welcoming a new permanent observer to the Committee, the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing, an inter-governmental organization composing 24 African States that has been active in promoting and harmonizing the policies of member States across Africa in the areas of surveying cartography, remote sensing and space science. I wish to extend a welcome to you all.

Last year the Committee held its historic fiftieth session. A special focus on 50 years' of space achievements, that was the theme, and it was an opportunity to pay tribute to the accomplishments that had been achieved during the first 50 years of the Space Age. It was always the work of the Committee which, for nearly half a century, has been at the centre of mankind's amazing and utilization of outer space.

Last year we also celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty and the fiftieth anniversary of the Geophysical Year by establishing the 2007 International Heliophysical Year. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, in his opening address to the fiftieth session of the Committee last year, Antonio Maria Costa, recalled the instrumental role the Committee played in constructing the legal regime governing space activities for peaceful purposes and stressed the importance of a continued collective approach to advancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which should include all relevant stakeholders, both public and private.

The fiftieth session of the Committee was marked by very special events, such as the High-Level Panel on Space Exploration Activities, a multi-national exhibition entitled "50 Years of Space Achievements", with nearly 30 States and organizations exhibiting their achievements in space activities, as well as several video documentaries that highlighted national space activities of member States in the peaceful uses and exploration of outer space.

The fiftieth session was also an opportunity to look ahead as to how the Committee can further its efforts aimed at serving humanity by bringing the benefits of space technology to everybody on Earth and ensuring sustainable development.

I am also thinking about the registering of space objects as it was adopted as a resolution by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. Moreover, the Chairman's efforts led to further consideration by the Committee of its future role and activities.

Over the last few years, the Committee saw the establishment of the International Committee on the Global Navigation Satellite Systems and the United Nations Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, UNSPIDER. There is only two among the many other tangible results of the successful implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

Through the Committee's proposal to the General Assembly, the five-year(?) review of implementation and recommendations of UNISPACE III, we also set in motion a very important mechanism for coordinating our work with that of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. And I am pleased to inform you that the Committee succeeded in establishing even closer links with CSD, not only by finalizing its contribution to the CSD for the 2008-2009 cycle of the multi-year programme of work of the Commission, but also to the participation of the new Director for the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Mazlan Othman, at the recent sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that took place in New York from 5-16 May 2008. Please allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Othman on her new post as the Director of the Office and I look forward to hearing more about the activities she undertakes in her new position when she presents her report.

Distinguished representatives and delegates, since our last session, we have witnessed many more achievements in space by the members of this Committee. In the area of human space flight, I would like to commend Malaysia and the Republic of Korea for putting their first astronaut into space. An important bit of news. On 10 October, ANGASA-1(?), the Malay word for astronaut, I hope I pronounced it correctly, Sheik Mustapha Shukka(?) flew to the International Space Station together with United States astronaut Peggy Witson, who was also the first woman with the Space Station crew.

As well as Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Malenchenko, onboard a Soyuz rocket that took off from the Baikonur(?) Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

On 8 April, the Republic of Korea's(?) first astronaut, Yi So Yun(?) flew onboard Soyuz TMA-12 to the International Space Station and spent 10 days onboard the Space Station conducting scientific experiments.

Ms. Yi, the youngest woman to ever be launched into space also carried the United Nations flag on board the International Space Station.

Construction of the Space Station continued last year with the resumption of Space Shuttle flight operations. I would like to commend the efforts of those member States of this Committee who maintained and developed the International Space Station.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to the European Space Agency as the European Scientific Laboratory, COLUMBUS, was flown in February on the Space Shuttle Atlantis to the International Space Station.

We have seen other advances in the global navigation satellite systems. In October 2007, the United States Global Positioning System became the only fully functional global navigation satellite system and I would like to commend the United States as this year GPS celebrates 30 years from when its signals first went on the air and even more so for the fiftieth anniversary of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

China launched its first spacecraft of the Compass Navigation Satellite Systems in February that went to five geostationary and 30 medium Earth orbit satellites.

The Russian Federation is, in 2008, going to have 18 of the Russian GNSS space vehicles on orbit and operational and Europe's Galileo satellite navigation system, SUCHO(?), was secured in November last year, after additional funds were allocated for the project from the EU's unused budget funds.

A new juncture was reached in space exploration as the Global Exploration Strategy was signed by 13 space agencies from all over the world in May last year, representing an important step in an evolving process towards a comprehensive global approach in space exploration.

India announced its intent to initiate a human space exploration programme. It planned landing of an Indian astronaut on the Moon in 2020 and the United States Vision for Space Exploration laid out plans for establishing an outpost on the Moon that call for an open lunar architecture and other nations with commercial interest could also add to this.

We have also observed a number of successful missions to the planets of the solar system which have provided scientists with new fascinating discoveries about Mars.

Viet Nam has launched its first communications satellite, VINESAT-1, covering Viet Nam and the surrounding region on 18 April and the Regional African Satellite Communication Organization has been operating since 21 December 2007, its first geostationary communications satellite, RASCOM-QAF-1, that is covering Africa.

I would like to commend the ongoing work aimed at implementing the Global Earth Observation System of GEOS and the hard work of the Secretariat of the Group on Earth Observation, GEO, in carrying out the 2007-2009 Work Plan.

Distinguished delegates, before turning to the agenda items before the session of the Committee, I will highlight the achievements of the Scientific and Technical and the Legal Subcommittees which held their sessions earlier this year.

I would like to congratulate Aboubekr-Seddik Kedjar of Algeria and Vladimir Kopal of the Czech Republic upon their election as Chairmen to the two Subcommittees and on their skilful guidance of the work of these bodies. With their excellent leadership, the Subcommittees were able to reach many important decisions.

The past decision, distinguished delegates, of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee provided us with up-to-date information on the most recent achievements in space exploration and related applicants. The Subcommittee also provided opportunities to discuss important scientific and technical issues related to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The Working Group of the Whole was convened under the able chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan of India in order to consider the United Nations on Space Applications, the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, space-system-

based disaster management support and the draft provisional agenda for the forty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

On behalf of the Committee, I warmly congratulate Dr. Radhakrishnan for skilfully guiding the Working Group to achieve the significant progress in all these matters.

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications continues to play an important role in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III, particularly in improving capacity of developing countries to use space technology to support their efforts to attain sustainable development.

On the basis of proposals made by the Expert on Space Applications, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recommended the proposed activities of the Programme for 2008 for approval by the Committee at this session as contained in the report of the Subcommittee.

I am pleased to note that the Programme on Space Applications is continuing to enhance its scope of operation. Work continues on a number of projects in tele-medicine and tele-epidemiology, water resource management, impact of climate change on agricultural development and food security, as well as in the areas of environmental protection and disease surveillance. They are all of significant importance for sustainable development. I look forward to the presentations by the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the implementation of such projects in the near future and I would like, on our behalf, to congratulate Ms. Alice Lee, the Expert on Space Applications and her staff for the excellent work of the Programme.

I also wish to emphasize to all member States the success of this programme in carrying out its mandate depends on your full support.

Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites including related applications that contribute to a number of developmental areas continue to feature prominently on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Given its benefits, building capacity in the application of remote sensing technologies, particularly in developing countries, is critical to the acceleration of the social and economic development. And in this context, I am pleased to note the international collaborative endeavours of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, CEOS, the International Astronautical Federation, IAF, and the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, and by

international entities such as the Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership in promoting international cooperation in the use of remote sensing technology, in particular for the benefit of developing countries.

I am also pleased to note that the Secretariat of the Group of Earth Observations, GEO, made its presentation at the Subcommittee at the invitation of the General Assembly and the progress made in the implementation of the 10-Year Work Plan for Global Earth Observation System of Systems, GEOSS.

Space debris remains a major agenda item of the Subcommittee.

With regard to its work on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the Subcommittee continued to consider this item under the Multi-Year Work Plan 2007-2010. The Joint Expert Group, established by the Subcommittee and the IAEA last year, met during the session of the Subcommittee for further consideration of the draft Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space, that is planned to be published by 2010.

On the agenda item on near-Earth objects, the Subcommittee endorsed the new Multi-Year Work Plan 2009-2011, under which the Working Group on Near-Earth Objects will review policies and procedures related to the handling of the neo-threat at the international level in order to draft an agreement on international procedures for handling the neo-threat by 2012.

I would like to thank Mr. Richard Crowther of the United Kingdom for his dedication and able leadership of the Working Group.

Under the agenda item, Space-System-Based Disaster Management Support, the Subcommittee heard a statement by the Programme Coordinator of the United Nations Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, UNSPIDER, on the activities carried out in 2007, within the framework of UNSPIDER on the activities to be carried out during the period 2008-2009. I am pleased to note the progress made in the implementation of UNSPIDER activities for 2007, including the inauguration of the office of UNSPIDER in Bonn, Germany, on 29 October 2007, ongoing activities to open an office in Beijing, China, as well as a Liaison Office in Geneva, Switzerland in 2008.

I would also like to express appreciation related to the significant extra-budgetary resources that

have been provided by various member States as well as all of the member States that indicated the willingness to make cash and in-kind contributions to support the implementation of the Programme.

Under the new regular agenda item, Recent Developments in Global Navigation Satellite Systems, the Subcommittee considered latest developments in the field of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, GNSS, and the benefits that the use of GNSS brings to the world, economies and societies.

I am pleased to note that the Subcommittee also heard a report on the activities of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems by the Chairman of ICG.

On the item International Heliophysical Year, the year 2007 was the last in the Multi-Year Work Plan. The Subcommittee considered the results of this successful international programme and scientific collaboration to understand the Sun and its influence on the space environment and planets. I am pleased to note that the Subcommittee, at its forty-sixth session, will be discussing, as a single agenda item, IHY 2007 and I am also pleased to note that member States decided to continue to report to the Subcommittee on their activities related to the IHY.

I would also like to mention the involvement, the implementation work on the five treaties. This is a matter which has indeed been delved into under the able chairmanship of Mr. Cassapoglou of Greece. This examined activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies, reviewing present activities and those to be carried out in the near future, identifying the benefits of adherence to the Moon Agreement, agreement identifying the international and national rules governing activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies.

The Working Group also agreed that the Subcommittee at its forty-eight session in 2009 should continue its discussion on these issues.

I am also pleased to note that Austria announced that it would organize an inter-disciplinary seminar on issues related to the Moon Agreement before the next session of the Legal Subcommittee in 2009.

The Working Group on Matters Relating to the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space reviewed responses by member States to a questionnaire on possible legal issues with regard to aerospace objects.

Under the chairmanship of Mr. José Monserrat Filho of Brazil, the Working Group also examined replies by member States on national legislation and practice relating to definition and delimitation as well as the replies on existing questions regarding these issues in outer space.

On behalf of this Committee, I would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Cassapoglou of Greece and Mr. Monserrat Filho of Brazil for the work they have engaged on as Chairmen of these Working Groups.

I am also pleased to note that the Subcommittee had two new items on the agenda, Capacity-Building in Space Law, and General Exchange of Information on National Legislation Relevant to the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space.

The exchange of information under the agenda item, General Exchange of Information on National Legislation Relevant to the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space, within a four-year work plan spanning 2009-2011 enables the Subcommittee to examine the main legislative developments at national level in order to identify common principles, norms and procedures. I am pleased to note that in 2009, a Working Group will be set up on this item and this Committee has already agreed that Mrs. Irmgard Marboe of Austria will be serving as its Chairperson. I would like to sincerely congratulate Mrs. Marboe.

Before moving on to other questions and items before the Committee at this session, I would like to sincerely thank on behalf of the Committee the International Institute of Space Law, IISL, and the European Centre for Space Law, ECSL, for organizing a Symposium on the Legal Implications of Space Applications for Climate Change. This was held alongside the Legal Subcommittee session and drew attention to the complex legal issues relating to the use of space applications and monitoring the effects of global climate change.

I would also like to congratulate the European Space Centre and its Director.

This year we will be looking at other themes such as ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, spin-off benefits for space technology, space and society, space and water, and use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development.

You will all recall that under the agenda item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, the General Assembly requested the Committee to continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas, as well as the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the role that space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Promotion of regional cooperation is, in my opinion, one of the major cornerstones of our work and in this regard, capacity-building is the key. In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Government of South Africa on the organization of the Second African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology and the theme "Building African Partnerships in Space", Pretoria, October 2007.

I am also pleased to highlight the ongoing preparations for the Third African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, to be held in Algeria in 2009.

Moreover, I am pleased to note that ongoing preparations are taking place for the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Guatemala in 2009.

In the Asia-Pacific region, a successful Fourteenth Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum was held in Bangalore, India, in November 2007, entitled "Space for Human Empowerment". It was aimed at strengthening collaboration in sharing disaster-related information, especially through the Sentinel-Asia Project and promoting the use of space education for young people in the region.

We congratulate Viet Nam for being chosen as the host country for the organization of the next Fifteenth APRSAF in 2008.

Cooperation also continued with the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization that provides a cooperative arrangement to promote the peaceful uses of outer space in the Asia-Pacific region.

Distinguished delegates, at this session of the Committee, we shall continue our consideration of the agenda item on Space and Water. At our last session, a Symposium on Space and Water was held to discuss perspectives of future development in the use space

technology for water resources management. The Committee agreed to continue consideration of this item at its fifty-first session, further exploring ways in which space applications could significantly contribute to cost-effective water resource management and we will be hearing a report on other measures in terms of capacity-building.

I would also like to highlight the efforts of many governments and NGOs in this respect, in particular Space Generation.

The Committee will also look at another matter aimed at promoting the use of geospatial data for sustainable development, and this under the pro-annual work programme recently approved. We will be calling for different reports and presentations and experience here.

Distinguished delegates, under the item Other Matters, the Committee will consider several matters. First of all, a decision with respect to requests for permanent observer status with the Committee. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-fifth session and the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-seventh session _____(?) a request by the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, EUTELSATIGO, for the permanent observer status with the Committee. The European Organization of Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, and the Secure World Foundation also have pending requests for permanent observer status with the Committee.

On the question of the composition of the Bureau of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, I am pleased to note that the Committee has seen a successful transition of the leadership of these different bureaux. This year the Committee and its two Subcommittees have elected new Chairpersons and other members of the Bureaux, as put forward by the relevant regional groups.

The Committee at its fifty-first session should reach an agreement on all the officers of the Bureaux of the Committee and subsidiary bodies for the 2010-2011 term of office and for this purpose, the five regional groups need to reach a consensus and transmit the name of their agreed candidate to the Committee. The Committee will also continue at this session its consideration of the future role and activities of the Committee and this on the basis of a Working Paper submitted by the former Chairman of the Committee, Gérard Brachet, entitled "Future Role and Activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space".

Distinguished delegates, there you have an overview of the different activities which were quite myriad and multiple and it is important, I think, to give a detailed description of these. This is why I allowed myself to take so much time.

In terms of conclusion, we have much to discuss and agree upon in the coming days. Nevertheless, taking into account our sound history of different achievements and the successful resolution of different complex issues, while maintaining consensus in that process, which is our guideline here, our rule of thumb, and with your cooperation and valuable contributions, I am confident that we shall obtain full success during this present session.

Our Committee has to fully emerge itself in the issues that I have just presented to you and together, through hard work with each and everyone of us at this session, I am certain that we will meet our common goals and challenges at this session.

I thank you all for your attention.

Now, organization of work. I would now like to turn to some organizational matters. As in the past, the indicative schedule annexed to the agenda which is about the way the Committee earlier this morning will be followed in a flexible manner as much as possible and can be adjusted as we move forward through our work.

General Assembly resolution 3271 requires that members of each United Nations body be informed at the beginning of each session of resources available to it.

And I would like to inform you of the arrangements made for this session of the Committee.

This session is scheduled from 11-20 June 2008. A total of 16 meetings are expected to be held. Our plenary meetings will be held in Conference Room III, this very one. In addition, Conference Room VII and Rooms C0729, C0731, C0733 and C0735 are available for use by this session. Simultaneous interpretation is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Sound recordings will be made for plenary meetings in the original language and in English and unedited verbatim transcripts will be made available following this session of the Committee in all the official languages of the United Nations.

Please note that in the Annex to resolution 56/242 the General Assembly adopted guidelines on

limiting the duration of meetings including the follow: (a) meetings should normally be held during regular meeting hours, namely from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on working days. And intergovernmental bodies should undertake a review of their meeting patterns and reporting cycles and in coordination with Conference Services, suggest their meeting requests for subsequent sessions accordingly.

In addition to the above, for the last years the budget of the United Nations has placed a number of constraints and restrictions on the capacity of Conference Services deliver services as they did in the past. In particular, unscheduled meetings, ad hoc informal consultation meetings be on regular hours, meetings on non-working days and extended meetings of sessions will most likely not be serviced by Conference Services. As they say here, we have got to be on time on our agenda.

But I would like to remind delegates that the General Assembly says that we have got to cut down on the length of reports issued by the Secretariat, including reports of intergovernmental bodies.

I, therefore, would like to inform you that with regard to the current session of the Committee, the Secretariat will endeavour to further shorten the length of the report in accordance with guidelines issued by the Secretary-General, not affecting its quality or content. Therefore, let me ask you for your understanding and cooperation.

Finally, delegates are requested to turn mobile telephones off when entering any Conference Room. And there is a little sign on the wall that tells you to do this which we often ignore. Mobile phones switched on standby seriously interferes with the sound system in Conference Rooms and affect the quality of interpretation and sound recordings. I urge you to please respect this request. Thank you.

General exchange of views (agenda item 5)

Now, get down to the crux of the matter, General Exchange of Views, item 5.

Distinguished delegates, I would now like to begin consideration of item 5 of our agenda, General Exchange of Views.

The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, sorry, Japan, I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador for 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 fifty-first session of COPUOS. I would like to express our sincere congratulations to the Chairman, Ambassador Arévalo, First Vice-Chairman, Dr. Suvit, and Second Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, Professor Santos, as well as Dr. Othman, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and her excellent staff.

I also would like to express our gratitude to the former Chairman, Mr. Brachet, and the Vice-Chairs for their efforts to bring the meeting to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences for the recent lives lost due to the cyclone in Myanmar and earthquake in Sichuan, China. I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to the affected Governments, their people and the families of all victims.

Japan is committed to contributing the relief efforts of these disasters in solidarity with the people of Myanmar and China.

The most significant objective of Japan's space development activities has been to fortify a safe and prosperous society. Japan has made many efforts to expand scientific knowledge of outer space and the planet Earth through its space activities.

During the past year, numerous noteworthy 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.

First, our administrative(?) body, the _____(?) past last month on basic space law. This law promotes international cooperation and diplomacy, advancement of industries, improvement of citizens lives, national security, regulation to the space activities and establishment of a strategic headquarters for space development and the utilization.

Japan will continue to carry out space development and utilization pursuant to the space-related treaties in accordance with the pacifist principles in the Constitution of Japan.

Last September, Japan launched the Lunar Orbiting Satellite, KOGUA(?), which allows for observations with wider coverage and more in-depth investigation of the Moon. KOGUA is growing worldwide attention as the lunar exploration of a larger

scale since the Apollo Project. With this KOGUA Mission, Japan intends to continue to the enhancement of the knowledge for the international community by yielding tangible results to advance our studies on the origins and evolution of the Moon. Images of the details of lunar surface and the Earth rise captured by the high-dimension television camera, caused a sensation among the public, a world image that attracted attention of the people around the world.

During this fifty-first session, we show the high-dimension(?) moons from KOGUA and also display a highly detailed map of the Moon at the Rotunda in the centre of the Vienna International Centre Ground Floor, every day during this session. We hope that all delegates will take this opportunity to watch.

In terms of satellite communications, this May Japan conducted a super high-speed communication test of 1.2 gigabits between our Ground Station and Y-Band Internet Working Engineering Test and demonstration satellite KIZUNA(?), launched in February. The KIZUNA Project aims to construct large volume data transmissions, especially with the Asian-Pacific countries and regions. Last, it is expected to be an effective tool to solve the problem of the digital divide.

Also during the domestic emergency last September, we initiated a test using engineer test satellite eight, Kit No. 8, which enables mobile satellite communication using handheld terminals to support the _____(?) measurement and the rescue operation. Japan thinks this kind of satellite with a capability for prompt information delivery can potentially provide reliable communication, not only in the Earth situations, but also for areas where switching centres cannot be built, such as on mountains or _____(?) pollution(?).

In terms of Earth observing during fiscal year 2008, Japan also plans to launch greenhouse gases observing satellite, GOSAT, which will measure greenhouse gases at the global level with high accuracy. Japan expects this GOSAT Mission to continue to the constellation of policy options for the prevention of global warming. Also Japan is planning an exhibition to introduce Earth observing activities at the Hyakodo-Toya(?) G-8 Summit this July.

Regarding the International Space Station, ISS, Programme, Japan launched this March the first part of experimental module AKIBO(?), an experiment with logistic module _____(?) section. The Japanese astronaut, Dohi(?), docked the module on the

ISS, the second part of AKIBO. A pressurized module was launched in May and it was just installed to the ISS last week by astronaut, Hoshidai(?). Next year astronaut Wakata(?) will begin his long stay in the ISS for the final assembly of AKIBO. Astronaut technology is scheduled for a subsiduant(?) extended stay.

Japan's manned space activities are being launched in this international cooperation. We hope that AKIBO will be widely used by the international community and appreciated as a great scientific asset.

Mr. Chairman, Japan has been active in a number of activities to enhance international cooperation. For example, Japan has long supported the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, APRSAF, and a co-organizer of its annual sessions. Last November, the fourteenth session of APRSAF was jointly organized by Japan and the Indian Space Research Organization, ISRO, and convened with more than 130 participants in Bangalore, India. APRSAF Fourteen was held under the theme "Space for Human Empowerment", with plenary sessions and meetings of whole working groups. Besides receiving activity reports from participating countries and exchanging views, participants discussed concrete steps to be taken to enhance international cooperation.

Dr. Madhavan Nair, Chairman of ISRO, and Mr. Yoshiti Duharada(?), Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology in Japan, co-chaired the plenary and the recommendations of APRSAF Fourteen were necessarily adapted at the plenary. The recommendations of APRSAF Fourteen included the recognition of the successful completion of Phase I of the Sentinel-Asia Project. The plenary also launched Phase II to expand utilization and a number of satellites in the network.

It was also agreed that JAXA will be named as the Secretary of the Joint Project Team of Sentinel-Asia.

The Sentinel-Asia Project is a system that utilizes satellite data to support the examination(?) in the Asia-Pacific region. The network enables in long(?) sharing of disaster information such as images taken by Earth observation satellites, particularly in Asia. The Project is promoted by space agencies that are members of APRSAF and Earth observation institutions in Asia.

Last year a Joint Project Team taking team meetings were held in Singapore and in the Philippines. Just last week, the JPT met in Kobe,

Japan. At present, the Sentinel-Asia has been operating as participants of the 51 national organizations in 20 countries and eight international organizations.

JAXA carried out emergency observations using the advanced land observing satellite DAICHI(?) of the cyclone in Myanmar and of the despicable earthquake in Sichuan, China.

This data and relevant information had been posted on the Sentinel-Asia website.

At the recent JPT in Kobe, we had the honour of the participation of Dr. Othman, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Japan promotes effective cooperation between Sentinel-Asia and the United Nations _____(?) Organization, coordinating with Sentinel-Asia members.

This December the Fifteenth APRSAF will be held in Viet Nam under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, co-organized by Japan. We hope that many participants will attend this forum.

And I would like to announce that next Monday, 16 June, at 6.00 p.m., India, Viet Nam and Japan, the host of APRSAF Fourteenth and Fifteenth, are co-organizing a Reception in the VIC Mozart Room. We welcome all the COPUOS delegates and participants coming to this Reception.

Japan has also been promoting international cooperation in space science to exactly X-ray astronomies satellite, a Japanese-United States cooperative mission, exemplified the observation capabilities and steadily produce results on the structure formation of the Universe, exploration of a near-by Black Hole since its first observation was performed in August 2005.

Also KINOBE(?) solar physics satellite the Japanese mission which included the participation of both United States and the United Kingdom, continues first phase observation in three instruments and AKARI(?) in _____(?) astronomies satellite, a Japan-Korea-Europe cooperative mission, completed the map of holding _____ (not clear) in _____ (not clear). Data from all three satellites has been released to researchers globally and it is expected to progress space science.

Mr. Chairman, Japan continues to make a significant contribution with regard to the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations.

In cooperation with other countries, we will certainly continue to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration recommendations and the Action Teams proposals.

Furthermore, we are also taking concrete steps towards mitigating space debris. JAXA, which played a major role in space activities in Japan, has developed its own space debris mitigation standard. JAXA experts have played an important role in the work of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and Japan will continue its efforts for the mitigation of space debris in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman, regarding the International Heliophysical Year, celebrated in 2008, Japan intends to actively take part in the International Heliophysical Year programmes to further advance the studies on the solar system and the Earth. For our part, the United Nations-ESA-NASA-JAXA Workshop on IHY and Basic Space Science, co-sponsored by JAXA, held in Bulgaria last week, following the Third United Nations-ESA-NASA Workshop on the International Heliophysical Year and Basic Space Science, held in Turkey in 2007.

Participants actively discussed all the studies of the heliosphere inter-planetary space, the Earth's atmosphere, magnosphere and awareness campaigns for space science in developing countries. Additionally, Japan has helped to provide modern astronomical facilities such as the Astronomical Optical Telescope and planetaria for educational purposes for developing countries to the culture _____(?) of ODA.

Japan will continue to work towards identifying the best ways and means to promote space education through collaborations with educational institutions and space agencies in various countries to encourage suitable growth and development of the developing countries to space education.

Japan believes that, as we carry out space activities, it is essential to contribute to the prosperity of the world by participating in international collaborations, based on the broad and long-term vision. With this in mind, Japan would like to express its respect for United Nations efforts in these fields and strengthen efforts to further enhance international cooperation, together with the members of the United Nations and the Subcommittees so that the benefits derived from space activities can be shared and appreciated by all of humanity. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me thank the Ambassador Sumi and thank him for his kind words to the Chair, to the Bureau and Outer Space Affairs.

Now it is my pleasure to give the floor to Ambassador Yoon-Joe Shim from the Republic of Korea. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. Y.-J. SHIM (Republic of Korea): Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the floor. It is with great pleasure that I am leading my delegation to this fifty-first COPUOS session, the first among the Vienna-based international organizations since I arrived in this city 10 days ago.

I believe that under your able leadership, this session will prove to be another valuable occasion for highly productive deliberations. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation to help to ensure that this session will make a further contribution to the international space cooperation.

I would also like to show you our national efforts to develop space technology and cooperate with the international community.

Among other things, let me highlight a particular meaningful event which Mr. Chairman also points out in his statement.

In April of this year, Ms. Yi So Yung(?), Korea's first astronaut, successfully completed a mission by carrying out 18 space science experiments over a period of 10 days at the International Space Station. As a result of the Korean Astronaut Programme, this event not only indicated a major achievement for Korea but it also symbolized close cooperation between the Korean Government and international agencies. In this case, the Korean Government worked closely with the Russian Federal Space Agency.

In addition, Korea believes that this event served as a turning point in Korea's space history and for the future of Korea's space activities as it fuelled the interest and support of the Korean people. As a token of the international cooperation that made the mission possible, the United Nations flag, carried by Ms. Yi So Yu?) will be returned to the United Nations Secretary-General for exhibition in this building.

Korea began space activities in the late 1980s and so far has launched 10 satellites. Korea continues to develop various satellites, such as multi-purpose satellites, or KOMSAT-III's, and geo-orbit

communication, ocean and meteorological satellites, or COMS.

In addition, late this year we have plans to launch the science and technology Satellite-2 onboard the Korea Space Launch Vehicle. For this purpose, a Space Centre is under construction on Venerara(?) Island in the city of Kokung(?) which is located in the southern part of Korea.

This event is particularly significant as it shows that Korea is qualified to join the international space club as a full-fledge member capable of utilizing its own technological launch satellite.

In the area of national legislation, I would like to inform you that the Space Development Promotion Act which entered into force in December 2005 is undergoing amendments to clarify ambiguous legal tones and to streamline national space policy mechanisms. The Space Damage Compensation Act will be effective from this June that have been promulgated in the Korean Government's Official Gazette in December 2007.

Also the Korean Government is now drafting a new Bill on the Establishment and Utilization of the National Spatial Information System.

Distinguished delegates, taking this opportunity, my delegation would like to inform you that preparations for the International Astronautical Congress 2009, to be held in Daejeon, Korea, October 2009, are now well underway. I hope that this event, which will be held under the theme "Space for Sustainable Peace and Progress" will be fully supported in cooperation with COPUOS member countries and affiliated organizations.

Mr. Chairman, even though space activities require high initial cost and are sometimes perceived as a risky investment, both the developed and developing countries are competing in this field. Needless to say, space technology has found a broad application in the daily lives of people, through broadcasting stations, telecommunications, navigation, etc. Currently the global aerospace market amounts to US\$150 billion and is expected to grow rapidly due to a sharp increase in the number of nations that use space technology. The satellite applications sector is showing especially remarkable growth every year.

As a result, this Committee is receiving more attention from the international community than ever before as it is believed to be in a position to play a pivotal role in stepping up international cooperation in

this field. Even their potential for promoting sustainable development in developing and developed countries alike, various programmes on space applications are likewise essential in establishing a safe and secure global society.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating my Government's fully commitment to the collective efforts of the international community to continue to ensure the peaceful utilization of outer space for the benefit of all humankind. Thank you for your kind attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me thank the Ambassador from the Republic of Korea for his kind words to the Chair and to the members of the Bureau and the Office. Thank you.

Now I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Ambassador from Belgium, Cristina Funes-Noppen. You have the floor Madam.

Ms. C. FUNES-NOPPEN (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Chairman, I would like to start off by pointing out the great satisfaction of my country to have had you elected as Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Everyone here is familiar with your personal commitment, your involvement and expertise in this field of activity and thus we are happy to be able to count on your competence to lead the work of our Committee at a time when we are embarking upon a remarkable political dimension in Europe(?).

I would also like to congratulate and thank your predecessor Mr. Gérard Brachet for the dynamic momentum that he imparted to the work of this Committee and the crucial questions that have enabled us, he has enabled us to identify during his mandate.

Sustainable development, intelligent, harmonious development of space activities for the benefit of nations, individuals and environment is a priority for States and international organizations active in the field of outer space. So the stakes are high and no doubt this is the most major challenge before the Committee since the development of these outer space treaties. Trust and transparency are two terms of which at present are guiding the thinking within various organizations. They are a priority objective to enforce a context which is perspicuous(?) to international cooperation and progress for all.

Indeed, weapons build up in outer space as well as the implementation of ways and means to restrict freedom of access and use of outer space are threats in the short, medium and long term for all space activities. In this regard, I would like to point out the interest of item 6 on the agenda item of our session entitled ways to ensure that space continues to be used for peaceful ends.

The integrated approach proposed by various space powers which envisages addressing practical solutions for all sorts of problems such as space debris, radio interference and space traffic management, an approach which is supported by Belgium.

The future programme Space Situation Awareness which will be presented to the member States of the European Space Agency during the series session in the Board(?) in November 2008 is an important element of this approach. Belgium is attached to such initiatives which are in a general multilateral context and linked with other efforts and thinking within the United Nations context, for example, and thinking on disarmament. In this regard we believe that the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has a front ranking role to play indeed. It is the appropriate fora to deal with space activities which are called civilian and it has an equalled technical competence in the field of regulation of space activities at world level and such expertise, we feel, should be made available to other international bodies having to deal with matters having to do with the use of outer space and its applications.

As you know, Chairman, Belgium is a space-active State. Our commitment goes back to the sources of space or Europe and has been unswerving over the last 40 years. This commitment, first and foremost, involves participation in research and development programmes, whether they are undertaken in the context of the European Space Agency or within the context of bilateral cooperation.

Here I would like to welcome our partners, France, Argentina, the Russian Federation, Canada, India, which we have concluded Framework Agreements for Cooperation.

The Belgian Space Project represents about 160 million Euros invested each year and allows our contribution to programme activities which are two to three times the GNP of Belgium.

Furthermore, Belgium institutes a collaborating of various institutes and member States of this Committee. I would like, in particular, to refer

to the cooperation between the Royal Institute for Meteorology and the Pakistan Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, as well as the Space Aeronomics Institute and Environment Canada and the Royal Observatory of Belgium and its Indian partner.

The contribution of Belgium to international space cooperation can also be illustrated by its signing in February 2008, astronaut Frank Dewin(?) long-term mission onboard the ISS in 2009. Mr. Dewin, as a Belgian member of the European Astronauts Corps, has already participated on an ISS mission, Mission Odyssey Amott(?) in 2002, financed by Belgium.

And the field of space applications in private projects also allows Belgium to take a determined part in certain international projects. One of these is Sat-Elections Project which demonstrates the sustainable and cheap use of telecommunications satellite-based systems in order to ensure the interactive training of persons in charge of organizing electric cycles in Africa. This pilot project was conducted upon the request of the Independent Electoral Commission of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in partnership with UNDP, the European Commission and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. It is co-financed with the ESA programmes by Belgium, Italy and Luxembourg. These three countries are financing to the tune of 50 per cent. This project demonstrates, along with others, how important it is to support demonstration projects at local level. These contribute to sustainable, cheap solutions to problems which are vitally important for political, economic and cultural development in developing countries.

Legally as well Belgium is not lagging. We are party to the five United Nations treaties in outer space. At the last session of the Legal Subcommittee, the Belgian delegation proposed a joint statement on the advantages of participating in the Moon Agreement of 1979 and this was supported by most of the States Parties of this Agreement.

In March 2008, Belgium completed the implementation of our Space Legislation. We now have a modern legislative context responding to the resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly, allowing us to welcome space operators and to guarantee them and the public transparency security.

Belgium would like to be associated in the thinking on the problems having to do with the legal aspects involved in this work. The contribution of the Legal Subcommittee would allow us to guarantee

proper solutions to be identified. We, indeed, wish to participate actively and constructively in the work of this Committee under your chairmanship to address the stakes before us. Thank you very much for your work.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you very much for the generous words that you have conveyed to me in particular, as well as the remainder of the members of the Bureau in the course of your statement.

I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of China. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. G. TANG (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Mr. Chairman, at the outset, please allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of COPUOS. We are confident that under your outstanding leadership and with the joint efforts of various delegations, this session will be a success.

My thanks also go to the Office for Outer Space Affairs Director, Dr. Othman, and her entire staff for the efforts expended for this session. My delegation will, as always, participate in this session constructively and cooperative to move our work on various fronts forward.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to you and all member States of COPUOS who offered condolences to the victims of the devastating earthquake in Sichuan, China, as well as sympathy and support to the Chinese Government and people.

Mr. Chairman, in today's world, pursuit of peace and quest for development and promotion of cooperation have become the trends of our times. In sharing development opportunities and jointly responding to various challenges concerned upon many interests and are the common aspirations of all countries. It is the view of the Chinese Government that countries should work hand in hand in building a harmonious world of lasting peace and prosperity for all.

Outer space is the province of all humanity and a harmonious outer space is an important element of a harmonious world. The fundamental goal of efforts to build a harmonious outer space is to ensure that outer space is used for peaceful purposes and to promote common development. Maintaining and strengthening the rule of law in outer space and the promoting of international cooperation in the space

field are important guarantees for building a harmonious outer space.

Mr. Chairman, instead(?) first in going down the path of peaceful development, China, in its space activities, has always been guided by the objective of peaceful uses of outer space and opposed to the introduction of weapons into and an arms race in outer space. China is ready to work with the international community to maintain peace and tranquillity in outer space, use outer space to advance human civilization and social progress and bring maximum benefits to humanity.

After 52 years of development, China has acquired capabilities in space access, satellite development and applications, space infrastructure and ground support, human space flight, as well as space exploration.

Last October, the successful launch of the CHAN____(?) -1 exploration satellite was another milestone in China's space endeavours. Here, on behalf of the China National Space Administration, the CNSA, I wish to thank countries and agencies, including ESA, for their help in China's lunar orbiting exploration project.

While seeking self-development, we are committed to promoting common development and achieving prosperity for all by using space technology. The China(?) -Brazilian Earth Resource Satellite has already provided hundreds of thousands of frames of remote sensing imagery which have been used widely across various fields of national economies and yielded tangible social economic benefits. Last year, China successfully launched and delivered in orbit a telecommunication satellite for Nigeria.

To achieve long-term sustainable common developments, we should make efforts to protect the space environment. In this connection, we appreciate the endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and will continue taking active measures to mitigate debris.

China is prepared to cooperate fully with other countries in contributing to addressing properly issues such as the increasing scarcity of the space resources and the pollution of the space environment by nuclear power sources in outer space, space debris and ejector among others.

Mr. Chairman, maintaining and strengthening the rule of law in outer space is an important guarantee

for a harmonious outer space. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the other four international treaties on outer space, constitute the existing international legal regime in governing outer space and have played a positive and effective role in regulating national activities, safeguarding national interests and maintaining order and promoting cooperation in space.

The current international space law, however, has proved insufficient to prevent the introduction of weapons into and an arms race in outer space, insufficient to regulate commercial space activities of private entities and insufficient to effectively control the pollution and wasteful use of outer space.

In the face of these deficiencies and shortcomings, we need to supplement and consolidate the existing space law.

The Chinese Government supports and strongly advocates the negotiation of relevant legal instruments to prevent the introduction of weapons into and an arms race in outer space.

We support the construction of a legal regime regulating commercial and private space activities. We also support efforts to establish rules and regulations on protecting the outer space environment and preserving the sustainable use of outer space resources. In addition, we also favour attempts to elaborate a comprehensive outer space law while supplementing and consolidating the current space law from the perspectives of law codification and development.

For decades, COPUOS has made an important contribution to the rule of law in outer space and we are confident will continue to play a positive role in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, strengthening international cooperation in the space area holds great significance for building a harmonious outer space. China is committed to developing mutually beneficial and win-win cooperative relations with other countries in the space arena.

In recent years, China has assigned approximately 20 space cooperation agreements and conducted cooperative projects with many countries, space agencies and international organizations, worked with the relevant countries in the Asia-Pacific region to jointly set up the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, APSCO, pushed for the Small Multi-Mission Spacecraft Project and organized a Masters Training Course on Space Technology and Applications in Asia and the Pacific.

The UNSPIDER Beijing office will be up and running as soon as the Host Country Agreement is concluded to facilitate disaster relief using space technology in the Asia-Pacific region.

Furthermore, China has taken an active part in the activities of ICG, IADC, the Global Exploration Strategy Coordination Mechanism, as well as the Earth Observation Organization.

Mr. Chairman, for years we have seen the tangible benefits of space technology for human society. In our disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of the severe earthquake in China's Sichuan Province, we felt keenly the role of space technology. China received satellite images free of charge from a large number of countries, including those received through the International Charter of Space and Major Disaster Mechanism. These images, along with China's domestic satellite assets, have played an instrumental role in disaster assessment and relief effort.

Due to a breakdown of conventional communications, maritime satellite communications also played a vital role. At China's request, INMARSAT doubled its satellite channel resources for the affected areas in China, but at present work in the disaster areas have entered the second phase where space technology is widely used in multiple fields such as disaster assessment, disaster and secondary disaster monitoring, communications, tele-medicine, etc.

Here I wish to thank on behalf of the Chinese Government all countries peoples and organizations who provided help and expressed sympathy to China. We are ready to continue strengthening international cooperation in the field of space applications such as remote sensing by satellite and satellite communications, among others.

Mr. Chairman, let us work together towards a peaceful cooperative and a rule-spaced harmonious space in the process of building a harmonious world of lasting peace and prosperity for all. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to thank the distinguished Ambassador Guoqiang Tang for his kind words to myself, to members of the Bureau and to the Office. Thank you very much Mr. Ambassador.

And it is now my pleasure to give the floor to Adisak Panupong from Thailand. You have the floor Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. A. PANUPONG (Thailand): Thank you Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I am confident that under your chairmanship, the meeting will achieve the successful result with mutually agreed directions into the future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Secretariat under the leadership of Dr. Mazlan Othman for their hard work and excellent arrangement for this meeting and to the past Chairman, Mr. Gérard Brachet, for his excellent work during the past two years.

Mr. Chairman, over the past year, Thailand has had numbers of development regarding outer space activities. Thailand is pleased to inform the Committee that Thailand's first remote sensing satellite, THEOS(?), has completed the final check out late last year and the launching procedures are being carried out to ensure smooth operation.

Once it is placed in orbit and enters into normal imaging mode, Thailand will be ready to provide THEOS data for disaster monitoring and education(?) under the United Nations Charter and other regional cooperation schemes. In the area of information and communication technology, a project on small multi-mission satellites has been undertaken with the cooperation between the Royal Thai Government and the Government of China to support the peaceful uses of space technology, aiming at three main purposes, communications, remote sensing and space science equipment(?).

It is currently at its last stage of building and testing the satellite. We hope to launch it by the third quarter of this year.

Moreover, communication technology has been used for various purposes. One example is a project on distance learning through satellite, based at Wonklankowoods(?) School. This majestic King's private school in Hying(?) in the _____(?) Province. It is an ongoing project providing fundamental education for all of the thousands of schools in Thailand and also providing high-level education and foreign language courses for professional college universities and interested people.

In the area of disaster management, Thailand's National Disaster Warning Centre was established. This Warning Centre utilizes space technology including Earth observation satellite data, geographic information system and communication technology for disaster warning and _____(?) with the 291 warning towers located across the country.

Moreover, Thailand supports the sharing of disaster information obtained through remote sensing satellites and cooperates actively with the regional mechanisms, especially the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and the Sentinel-Asia Project initiated by Japan.

With the success of the first phase of Sentinel-Asia, Thailand, among other Asian countries, is planning to join(?) _____ (not clear) as start-up provider in case of some of disasters.

Thailand also attaches great importance to the UNSPIDER Programme as a gateway to access space-based technologies for exchange of information and technology for disaster management.

In the area of natural resources management, Thailand has applied space technologies in many areas. The Geoinformatics and Space Technology Development Agency has provided a public web-based geospatial database called "Digital Thailand" which is used to locate the present land use as you ask, drought and flood hit areas. The database is also used to conduct assessments of damage caused by natural disasters and in cooperation with the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, to map evacuation route maps for disaster risk reduction.

In addition, the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion monitors the land use change, the uses of natural resource and conducts the database on population growth in watershed areas to effectively manage the natural resources through remote sensing technologies.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the promotion of space education and awareness, Thailand has actively organized various training seminars, workshops and conferences to build awareness of the people. Up to date, more than 12 training courses per year and higher degree programmes, such as PhD, have been established with the cooperation between GISDA(?) and Farr(?) University in Thailand.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, Thailand appreciates the

effort of the Government of China in offering the Masters Programme of Space Technology Applications at various universities and Institute of Remote Sensing Applications of China.

Thailand also regularly sends students to study at the United Nations Centre for Space Technology Education in the Asia-Pacific at Deharadan(?) in India to strengthen capacity in this area.

In addition, Thailand, as an active member of COPUOS in the area of capacity-building, would like to announce the holding of the United Nations/Thailand Workshop on Space Law, to be held in Bangkok, from 24-27 November 2008. I, therefore, would also like to take this opportunity to invite interested persons to participate in the upcoming Workshop.

Before I conclude my statement, please allow me to reassure that Thailand, among other COPUOS members, affirms its commitments to further cooperate in activities of COPUOS to strengthen its work for the peaceful uses of space. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me thank the Ambassador Panupong from Thailand for his kind words.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Dr. Iván Darío Gómez-Guzmán representing Colombia as Executive Secretary of the Colombian Space Committee. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. I. D. GÓMEZ-GUZMÁN (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you. It is an honour for Colombia to attend this session presided by yourself Sir.

(*Interpreter*) there is telephone interference into the microphone making this very difficult.

Now, in my capacity as Head of the Colombian Space Commission, we would like to express our pleasure and honour in participating in this session. We all recognize this body as the maximum authority in space affairs. We reiterate the importance of COPUOS within the United Nations system and whose work and whose orientation have served as the foundation for the peaceful exploration of outer space for many years now.

Now, in the case of Colombia these orientations have led to the creation of the Colombian Space Committee, an institution which defines the

policies, plans and programmes for any project related to science and technology related to space in our country. A very decisive sector, such as telecommunications, climate change, management of natural resources, disaster warning, meteorological forecast, transport navigation, health, education and so on, are all reasons for this Committee to exist.

We believe that globalization of society means that States must work on an intersectoral level together. We must try to generate or own autonomous satellite capacities, this includes geographical coverage and the provision of space data, transfer of strategic information for decision-making by governments and so on. This means that the people involved in this area must develop programmes for research, technological development training and human resources for the sake of national and international technical cooperation in this field.

Our Committee is the body which not only strives to obtain a maximum of the use and benefit from space data but also to help build the appropriate capacity for dealing with these various areas of research, as is the case of aeronautics space research as well as others.

Likewise, Korea(?) is setting up of basic educational programmes going elementary school to the highest level in space technology.

In the case of Colombia, the Colombian Space Committee is focused on four specific topics, earth observation, geostationary orbit and the placing of satellites and ensuring educational research and infrastructure development activities and this latter which aims at providing all actors for economic and social development in our country with the data coming from geostationary satellites and Earth observation is an important element.

Now, without any doubt, we need scientific, technical and financial cooperation from developed countries in this regard. This, in order to allow developing countries, like my own, to use these technologies and to close the technology gap that exists between the developed and developing worlds in the geospace field.

Four structural projects have been initiated in my country. This has to do with the design and pre-feasibility study of telecommunications satellites with the design and pre-feasibility of Earth observation satellite and with an increase in training and capacity-building for Colombians in the space field.

Columbia has a strong determining to be an active participant in the international space community. We want to promote in articulation between Latin American countries and the space effort, the idea being here to create our own capacities in term of science technology and space innovation and basically using appropriate technologies, technologies appropriate to our own countries and regions.

Chairman, the Colombia delegation wishes you all success in continuing your efforts on some aspects of our agenda and which are particularly important. We wish to reiterate our support for the conclusions drawn from the United Nations Conference on Space Exploration. And we also support the Action Plan approved by the General Assembly in October 2004. Columbia attaches great importance to the maximization of benefits and utilization and applications of world satellite navigation systems in service of sustainable development, as well as capacity-building and installed capacity in this regard.

Columbia participated in a recent seminar for Latin American satellite communications in 2005 and for Colombia it is important that substantial follow-up be applied to this and better technical cooperation. This, in turn, requires cooperation from governments that have greater capacity and we are pleased to reiterate our invitation to participate in a global satellite navigation conference to be held in Medellin. Columbia, at the end of this month.

Likewise, it is also important to have a non-discriminatory approach to tele-observation data, remote observation data, for peaceful uses. Also, I understand concerns that exist on the free availability of high-resolution images of sensitive areas on the Internet. Here, we would recommend that in order to come up with guidelines for national policy, this should be established within the framework of the national space data infrastructure.

We have to reconcile the incredible progress made here in terms of technology with our telecommunications needs. There has been a huge increase in the market for telecommunication data. This is for _____(?) the Internet applications and the access to the general public.

Colombia wishes to reiterate the geostationary is a limited and natural resource of countries with special characteristics and now reaching saturation point and we should ensure equitable access of all States to these resources, taking into account the special needs of developing countries, as well as the

geographical needs and location of certain countries, with the help of the ITU. Scientific and technological progress, commercialization and utilization are growing of this resource and this means that it is absolutely indispensable you have a definition and limitation of it.

Chairman, it is an honour for Colombia to see you presiding the fiftieth session of COPUOS and for the next years you can count on the strong support of our country in your efforts which will certainly be crowned a success. And we hope the deliberations of the Committee will have economic, social and sustainable benefits for all countries. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you. It is also an honour for me to express my thanks to you representing Colombia and the Space Committee. Thank you for your generous remarks and your kind words to me and the members of the Bureau and the Office. My thanks to you.

I have no further speakers for government delegates. Would anyone else like to take the floor on the general exchange of views during this morning's session at this time?

I see no one. Let me then give the floor as an observer to the International Institute for Space Law, Mr. Ernst Fasan. You have the floor Mr. Fasan.

Mr. E. FASAN (International Institute for Space Law): Thank you Mr. Chairman. May I join the previous speakers in sincerely congratulating you for your re-election, the Vice Presidents and thank the Director, Mazlan Othman, and the staff of the Bureau for their outstanding work.

Honourable Chairman, distinguished delegates, the International Institute of Space Law is honoured to address the Committee in relation with its recent request for permanent status of observer at COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

After a history of almost 50 years, being founded in 1960 as part of the International Astronautical Federation, the Institute has become a fully independent, non-governmental organization in June 2007. Consequently, the leadership of the Institute has expressed the wish to establish its own observer status with the Committee.

Ever since operating, under the auspices of the IAF, the IISL enjoyed the close and _____(?) cooperation with this Committee, exemplifies in many ways, firstly that the organization of the successful

IISL/ECSL Symposia on Space Law, held every year for the members of the Legal Subcommittee.

Secondly, by the participation since many years of IISL members as official IAF observers in the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee.

Thirdly, the organization of a Symposium on Space Law during UNISPACE III in 1999.

And lastly, by compiling the legal and space policy components of the United Nations "Highlights in Space" Report since many years.

The purposes and objectives of the IISL include the cooperation with appropriate international organizations and international institutions in the field of space law and the carrying out of tasks for fostering development of space law. They also include the studying of legal and social science aspects of the exploration and use of outer space and the holding of meetings, colloquia and competitions on juridical and social science aspects of space activities.

The IISL has held 50 annual colloquia on space law and has published their proceedings. The IISL presently has individual and institutional elected members from over 40 countries, are distinguished for their contributions to space law development. The Board of Directors is composed, recognized experts in the field of space law.

The IISL, Mr. Chairman, would be honoured to be granted the permanent status of observer at COPUOS in order to continue our close cooperation with the United Nations in general and COPUOS specifically.

The IISL has famously filed a request for the general consultative status with ECOSOC.

The President of the IISL will be present during the last two days of this session herself.

We hope that our request will be considered favourably by this Committee. Thank you your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me express my thanks to the representative of the International Institute of Space Law, Ernst Fasan, and thank him for his kind words in our regard.

It is now pleasure to give the floor to Ambassador Raimundo González Aninat from Chile. You have the floor.

Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ ANINAT (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you very much Chair. First of all, please allow me to share the very emotional moment in that we have in seeing you preside over this session. You have a long trajectory, so to speak, in terms of space activities in your country, also as a seasoned diplomat and you have a very clear idea of the international dimension of these problems faced by developing countries. I am quite sure that you will be commended by many people but this is, I think, quite justified in terms of your personal and professional qualification. We, in Latin America, are all very proud of you. Obviously you can count on our full support. So I do not need to say it to you, do I, since we are really partners here.

Let me just refer, and this is why I took the floor, the presentation from the representative of the International Institute for Space Law, an Institute for which my country has great respect and which has made an important contribution.

It would be a pleasure to have a systematic and regular access to the proceedings of meetings that they disseminate because this is a part of their functions and because it is also linked to their just aspiration, which we support, having that Institute become a permanent observer to this Committee.

Let me say to Professor Fasan, sorry, I seemed to have brought some of the smog from Chile and my lungs with me, but I wanted to say to Dr. Fasan that he can, of course, count more than our support but our interest in seeing him participate in our meetings here for the excellent input that he can give us. Of course, we see their participation in the context of having this Institute, as I said, disseminate its proceedings and reports of its different meetings, very important meetings, that it holds.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Just one second, one short second, Ambassador, the representative is not hearing your words. Now let me ask Professor Fasan to please listen very closely to what Ambassador Raimundo González has been saying and follow up on his suggestions. It is OK. I can see him in the corner and I think he did not realize that he was, in fact, being addressed here.

Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ ANINAT (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): OK, well then let me summarize what I just said, please Mr. Chairman. I am

not going to reiterate all of the facilitations that I gave you because that would be a bit excessive and with shall have some kind of bias which is purely emotional on my part.

I wanted to say this. We appreciate the work of the IISL which, I think, has made an important contribution. Moreover, I think it would be very good if this Institute be allowed to have participation in the Sixth General Assembly so that we can have a more updated, more modern aspect put on certain matters to be dealt with there. We support them in their bid to become a permanent observer here. But, of course, we expect from their side, as well as from other observers, that they disseminate systematically to all members of the Committee, the proceedings and the Acts of meetings that they hold during their conferences, during their sessions. We want to obtain a maximum amount of information for our intellectual benefit as to what they do, especially something as important as the IISL which has a great deal of prestige.

In this respect, I would like to make it for the record, in this plenary, that (1) to sum up, they can count on the support of Chile in their bid for permanent status. And secondly, within that context, we hope to see that they provide a steady supply, beginning now, or when they get their status, specific proceedings of their different meetings. He mentioned something like 50 meetings being held. I do not know whether any other member of the Committee has had access on a continual basis to the reports from those 50 meetings but from now on, I think we should be able to count on another 50 for the future and I think we would very much appreciate having that possibility. It is, I must point out, that it is very important for us that they be granted that status as permanent observer to this Committee. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you very much Ambassador González Aninat for your words which are not at all biased but which are, in fact, very open and direct and which come straight from your heart. So let me thank you on behalf of all of us.

Now I do not know whether the representative of the IISL wants to react at this time or is going to speak up later on this specific point of receiving reports of your meetings.

You have the floor Sir.

Mr. E. FASAN (International Institute of Space Law): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would kindly ask you to have some time to deliberate these

important words and talk it over with our new President, Dr. Masson-Zwaan, and she will be present here. And in way, I thank for these words. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): And I thank you Professor Fasan.

I have received a request from the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to be given the opportunity to take the floor to and address the Committee in this morning's session. So, consequently, following the established practice, is there any objections?

I would now like to invite the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Mazlan Othman, to address the Committee. You have the floor Madam.

Ms. M. OTHMAN (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this opportunity to address this session of the Committee. I welcome you and I am extremely pleased to see you chairing the session of the Committee. I can assure you of the full support of the Secretariat in carrying out your work to a successful conclusion at this session.

I would also like to welcome Suvit Vibulsresth as First Vice Chairman, and Filipe Duatre Santos as the Second Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur.

Also allow me to take this opportunity to thank Gérard Brachet for his outstanding contribution during his term as Chairman and also to thank Elöd Both and Paul Tendridiego(?) for their fine work as First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively, during their terms.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, I am pleased to provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs over the past year.

Let me begin by reviewing the staff resources of the Office.

First and foremost, Mr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, the former Director of the Office, retired in June 2007 after 24 years of distinguished and dedicated service and we wish him greater success in all his future endeavours.

In 2007, the Office had the services of 20 regular staff members and three Associate Experts, Mr. Gaog(?) Magel(?) of Austria, joined in April 2007 as

Associate Expert in the UNSPIDER Programme, and Ms. Entemella(?) Binni(?) of Italy joined in December 2007 as Associate Expert in the Committee Services and Research Section.

In February 2008, Mr. Tony Lu(?) joined the UNSPIDER office in Bonn as an Associate Expert provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea. We are, indeed, very grateful to the Governments of Italy, Austria and the Republic of Korea for their support.

Also the German Aerospace Centre has provided the services of two experts on a non-reimbursable basis, Mr. Robert Backhouse and Mr. Gil(?) Zalsinski(?), who have already joined the UNSPIDER Bonn office as Senior Experts. We thank the Government of Germany for their support.

Most recently, Ms. Natascia Rodrigues from the Committee Services and Research Section, and Mr. Martin Reiterhober(?) from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, were temporarily reassigned to the UNSPIDER Programme against two other UNSPIDER P-4 Programme Officer posts until the recruitment procedure for those two posts is successfully completed.

I am pleased to bring to your attention the proposed Strategic Framework of the Programme on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the period 2010-2011, a copy of which will be circulated to delegations. The document number is A/63/6/PROGRAMME5. The proposed Strategic Framework has been prepared following guidelines provided by the Programme Planning and Budget Division, PPBD, of the Secretariat, to all United Nations Programmes. The Bi-Annual Plan sets out the overarching objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievements that will guide the work of the Office in implementing the Programme during the biennium 2010-2011.

In preparing this document, the Office took into account the Plan of Action of the Committee to further implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The proposed Strategic Framework has been submitted by PPBD to the Committee for Programme Coordination, CPC, which is currently holding its forty-eighth session on 9 June to 3 July 2008. The CPC is scheduled to review the Programme's Bi-Annual Plan next Tuesday, 17 June. I would, therefore, be pleased if the Committee could review the Plan and to provide its comments to the Office.

Following the CPC, the proposed Strategic Framework, including the CPC's recommendations thereon, will be transmitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session when it considers the Secretary-General's Strategic Framework for the biennium 2010-2011.

Finally, I would like to express the Office's deep appreciation to those Governments and donors that have through their cash and in-kind contributions enabled the Office to implement the activities of the Office during the past year. Only one third of the activities typically carried out would be possible if we were to rely entirely on regular budget resources. The availability of extra-budgetary resources and the support received from our host countries have become a critical component to the success of the Programme on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and we are, therefore, profoundly grateful to those Governments and donors that generously support the various activities conducted by the Office.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, the Office has continued to support the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. This has been a high-priority activity of the Office and there were several accomplishments in 2007. For the sake of brevity though, I will highlight only two of them.

A concrete result of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III was the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, ICG. The goal of the ICG is to promote the greater use of global navigation satellite systems capabilities to support sustainable development and to promote new partnerships among Committee members and institutions, particularly in developing countries.

The Office for Outer Space Affairs, as the Executive Secretariat of the ICG and the Providers Forum, will develop GNSS applications, training courses and workshops and encourage support for regional GNSS reference systems.

Within the ICG Work Plan, user and applications sector views are to be considered in the ICG deliberations on compatibility and interoperability from the user perspective.

The third meeting of the ICG will be held from 8-12 December 2008 at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, United States of America. The fourth meeting of the ICG is scheduled to take place in 2009 in the Russian Federation.

We are also pleased that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 62/217, endorsed the UNSPIDER Programme's Plan of Work for the period 2008-2009 and also approved the core regular budget resources requested in order to enable the Office to fully implement this Work Plan.

As the major part of the resources required for this new Programme is derived from member States, I would like to thank those member States that have already provided cash and in-kind support and urge all other member States to seriously consider contribution to this new Programme and to benefit from the options(?) that is being made available.

We informed member States attending the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the progress of the work of the UNSPIDER Programme in 2007, including the status of the implementation of the UNSPIDER offices in Bonn and Beijing, the Liaison Office in Geneva, as well as the setting up of the Network of Regional Support Offices, taking advantage of the commitments already made, specifically the office made by the Governments of Algeria and Nigeria.

Regarding the setting up of the said Network of Regional Support Offices, we will be seeking guidance from this Committee on the formulation of guidelines to be followed by the Office in the establishment of these Regional Support Offices.

These two accomplishments are concrete results of the excellent work carried out by the UNISPACE III Action Teams.

I would also like to inform delegations that, pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 62/217, I presented the work of the Committee at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May this year. I also had the pleasure to inform you that the contribution by the Committee to the work of CSD for the thematic cluster 2008 and 2009 was distributed to the CSD Sixteenth

Furthermore, two paragraphs on the role of space technology applications to sustainable development were introduced in the Secretary-General's Report on the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on the section on drought.

Mr. Chairman, the Space Applications Section of the Office, assisted by the Committee Services and Research Section, successfully organized seven workshops, one training course, one seminar and one

expert meeting, making it 10 activities in total, under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2007.

The Expert on Space Applications will later provide you with detailed information on these and other activities of the Programme, including the activities planned for 2008 in her statement.

The Office is pleased that the Programme continues to enjoy the generous support of Governments and donors, thereby, enabling a large amount of opportunities for professionals from developing countries to enhance their knowledge and skills relating to the use of space science and technology and their applications.

However, the cost of travel in recent years has escalated to such a degree that the financial resources available have now reached a critical level to cover all the Office programmatic obligations. It also limits the opportunities for the Office to be appropriately represented at important global and regional space conferences and meetings that have direct and substantial impact on the work of the Office and the Committee. This growing challenge will be among the considerations the Office will need to take into account as it begins to prioritize and plan the range of activities to be organized by the Space Applications Programme and the Office as a whole in the biennium 2010-2011.

Distinguished delegates, during the last year, the Office continued to discharge the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the United Nations treaties on outer space. With reference to the 1976 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, and the General Assembly resolution 1721-16B of 20 December 1961, the Office continued to maintain the United Nations Registry of Objects Launched into Outer Space. Information received in accordance with the Registration Convention, as well as General Assembly resolution 1721-16B, has been circulated to all member States.

In addition, Belgium and Greece have recently informed the Secretary-General that they have established national registries of objects launched in to outer space.

As delegates are aware, the Committee's Multi-Year Debate on the Harmonization of Registration Practices concluded successfully in 2007, with the General Assembly adopting resolution 62/101 on recommendations on enhancing the practice of States and international intergovernmental organizations in registering space objects. The Office

is pleased to inform the Committee that it has begun implementing the resolution, as it requested. A model registration form has been developed and, with resolution 62/101, will be shortly disseminated to all Permanent Missions. In addition, the form will be made available in all official languages of the United Nations through the Office's website.

The Office has also begun working with several individual States of Registry in harmonizing their registration practices. The Office would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to States for their assistance and cooperation in working with the Office in applying the Registration Convention and other instruments.

As always, the Office stands ready to assist States in issues relating to registration of space objects and to other United Nations treaties on outer space.

Regarding the support provided to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2007, the staff of the Committee Services and Research Section continued to be fully occupied with the past year. The Office prepared a large number of documents and publications for the Committee, the Subcommittees and their Working Groups, as well as the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities.

The Office also responded to numerous requests for information from other United Nations bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, contributed to activities that promote the work of the Committee, maintains the Office website and coordinated several outer space exhibitions at the Vienna International Centre.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, under its Capacity-Building Programme on Space Law, the Office continues to promote the understanding, acceptance and implementation of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space to support the exchange of information on national space law and policy and to encourage the increase of education opportunities in space law.

This year the Office will hold, jointly with the Government of Thailand, and the Geoinformatics and Space Technology Development Agency, GISDA, the Sixth Workshop on Space Law. This Workshop, which will be held from 24-27 November in Thailand, will focus on the international responsibilities of States under the treaties and establishment of national, legal and policy frameworks. We would like to thank the Government of Thailand and ESA for their support of this Workshop.

I am also pleased to inform delegations that in response to the Legal Subcommittee's request last year, the Office organized a meeting in December 2007 to consider preparing a curriculum for a basic course on space law that could be included in the education programmes of the Regional Centres on Space Science and Technology Education that are affiliated to the United Nations. The report of this meeting is contained in document A/AC.105/908.

I am further pleased to inform the Committee that the work on the curriculum has continued via e-mail since the meeting in December.

In line with the above, every year, the Office compiles a Directory of Education Opportunities in Space Law. The Office is currently exploring improved information technology options to enhance the timeliness and accuracy of the information updated to the Directory. I would like to inform distinguished delegates that the updated version of the Director is available on our website. It is hoped that this Directory will assist member States and will promote cooperation among member States and education institutions in relation to space law. In particular, it is hoped that information on education opportunities will assist developing countries in establishing indigenous capabilities in space law.

At the recent forty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee, the Office took note of the views expressed by member States as reflected in the report of the Subcommittee, regarding ways to strengthen capacity in space law, particularly in developing countries. At the request of the Subcommittee, the Office will consider ways of implementing these expectations and recommendations and will inform the Subcommittee at its forty-eighth session in 2009 on any actions taken or planned in this regard on the national, regional or international level.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, the Office participated in a Workshop on Space Law, co-organized by the Ministry of Information and Communication of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Iranian Space Agency held in Tehran on 17-18 November 2007. The Workshop focused on the applications of space law in national space activities.

The Office also participated in a summer course on space law and policy of the European Centre for Space Law, held in September 2007 in The Netherlands.

I am also pleased to inform member States that the Office continues its cooperative activities with the Institute of Air and Space Law at the Cologne University. In order to further the status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space, the Institute has, since 1989, produced a collection called "Space Law Basic Legal Documents", which is available online as well as in hard copy. The Office will continue to explore these mechanisms of ensuring that information relating to space law reaches the widest possible audience, including cooperating where possible, with space law institutions and to make accessible a variety of documents, materials and information resources that would be useful to both government officials and academia, particularly those from developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, in 2007 the Office continued to provide Secretariat services to the meetings to the Group of 15, comprising the five officers of the past Bureaux, the five officers of the current Bureaux and the five officers of the next Bureaux of the Committee and its Subcommittees. The Office is very pleased to support this Group that spans six years of expertise and institutional memory in the leadership of these intergovernmental bodies.

Distinguished delegates, the Office continues to coordinate and enhance inter-agency cooperation in space-related activities within the United Nations system by organizing and setting a Secretariat of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, which is the primary coordination mechanism of the United Nations system to achieve better cooperation and promote more synergy in space-related activities.

The Chair of the Inter-Agency Meeting, Mr. Francesco Pisano, of UNITAR, will make a statement at this session of the Committee informing distinguished delegates of the progress and achievements made by the Inter-Agency Meeting at its twenty-eighth session held from 16-18 January in Geneva, as well as future plans to present the report of the Inter-Agency Meeting for the consideration of the Committee.

Meanwhile, I would like to refer delegations to the report of the Inter-Agency Meeting and also to the report of the Secretary-General on the Coordination of Space-Related Activities within the United Nations System, which contains directions and anticipated results for the period 2008-2009 and serves as a strategic tool for the United Nations to avoid duplication of efforts in the use of space applications and in space-related activities.

I would like to particularly draw your attention to the endorsement by the Inter-Agency Meeting of the Office proposal to reach out to the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and to assist it in its efforts to build partnerships by raising awareness of the benefits of space technology and its applications to achieving sustainable development in Africa.

As part of that effort, the Office will produce a report, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, and in consultation with other United Nations entities, to highlight the use of space technology, of sustainable development in Africa, to be presented to the Third African Leadership Conference that will take place in Algiers in 2009.

As part of this discussion on the means of strengthening further inter-agency coordination and cooperation, the Inter-Agency Meeting considered its current reporting structure and schedule of annual meetings and expressed its desire to shift the dates of this annual meeting closer to the sessions of this Committee and to report to this Committee.

In addition, the Meeting agreed that the Secretary-General's Report on Inter-Agency Coordination will be tabled as an agenda item at an appropriate time at the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executive's Board for Coordination in order to create an awareness of the increasingly vital role that space technology and its applications play in the work of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, the Office has maintained its cooperation with space-related intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. For the sake of brevity, I will mention only a few of the activities in which the Office participated.

The Office, as you know, is an operating body to the International Charter of Space and Major Disasters, and we maintain a 24/7 hotline service which is used by the United Nations agencies to fax in requests for Charter imagery. In 2007, a total of 11 requests for imagery were received from various United Nations agencies bringing the total of times the United Nations has benefited from the Charter to 44. The United Nations is the single largest user of the Charter. The Office continues to support the United Nations systems to access and use space-based solutions for emergency response.

Last November we organized, together with ESCAP, the Fourth United Nations-Wide Meeting of the Use of Space Technologies for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance, which focused on how all United Nations agencies can access and use free satellite data and value added products through both the International Charter of Space and Major Disasters, and Sentinel-Asia.

I would also like to express the appreciation of the Office to the International Astronautical Federation, IAF, as well as to the International Institute of Space Law, for their assistance in preparing the annual publication entitled "Highlights in Space".

The Office is also very grateful for the support of the Committee on Space Research for its contribution to this publication in alternate years.

We are equally grateful for the excellent cooperation that we have received from IAF and the host countries in organizing the series of United Nations/IAF Workshops in conjunction with the International Astronautical Congress. On a yearly basis, this cooperation makes it possible for participants from nearly 30 developing countries to participate in the IAC. The next Congress will be held in September 2008 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, the Office is pleased to inform the Committee that it continues to regularly update its website, as well as providing member States with reference tools, such as the Online Index of Objects Launched Into Outer Space, the National Space Law Database, and the Treaties Database. The website also provides texts of the treaties and relevant General Assembly resolutions and documents in all official languages of the United Nations.

The Office would like to take this opportunity to invite member States to provide texts of their national space law for inclusion on the website.

I am also pleased to inform the Committee has set up a special webpage to assist member States in accessing the series of limited distribution type of documents. That will be before delegations at this session. The address of this webpage can be found at this session's Conference Room Paper CRP.1, which has been distributed in the document boxes for delegations.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, with respect to outreach activities, as in previous years, the Office has continued its efforts to increase the

awareness of the general public of space benefits and to inspire young people. The Office continued its public outreach activities during October in celebration of World Space Week. In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the advent of the Space Age, the United Nations Postal Administration, UNPA, issued two sets of stamps in October. Using the artwork developed for the stamps, the Office and UNPA developed a children's poster, 1,000 of which were distributed in October alone. The Office would like to thank Mr. Robert Green of UNPA in New York, and Ms. Clarissa Posin(?) of UNPA in Vienna, for their invaluable assistance and support.

In cooperation with UNIS, the Office invited school students, aged six to 10, to the Vienna International Centre, to learn how space technology is used to solve problems on Earth. The children were briefed by experts from the Office on Space Technology. They were shown video documentaries on space-related themes and were given a crash course on operating a robotic rover. The Office would like to thank the Austrian Space Forum for the provision of a small robotic rover and Mr. Gerhard Brimmer(?) of the Forum for his enthusiastic demonstration of the complexities of tele-robotics.

The outreach activities for the fiftieth anniversary of the Space Age concluded with a panel discussion at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during the deliberations of the Fourth Committee of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly in October on the theme "Space Tools and Solutions for Climate Change". The panel comprised of Mr. Gérard Brachet, Chairman of COPUOS, who delivered the introductory remarks, Mr. David Rhind(?) for presentation the International Panel on Climate Change on "Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge", Mr. Timothy Striker, presenting CEOS on "Space-Based Contributions to Climate Monitoring", and Mr. David Stevens of the Office for Outer Space Affairs on UNSPIDER.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, the Office maintains the United Nations Permanent Space Exhibit that continues to attract visitors of all ages and remains one of the highlights of the tours offered by the United Nations Information Service. In 2007, over 48,000 visitors participated in the Guided Tours offered by UNIS. The Office would like to thank the Government of Japan of providing a scale model of their lunar probe, CELINE(?), also known as KAGUA(?), and a new model of the HII launch vehicle for display in the exhibit. We would like to express our deep appreciation to member States and space

agencies that have made contributions to the United Nations Permanent Space Exhibit.

Please give me this opportunity to thank and express its appreciation to Sergeant Gerard Coups(?) of the United Nations Security and Safety Service, and Mr. Kamel Kavay(?) of the UNIDO Building Management Services, for their invaluable assistance in the staging of the exhibition and other outreach activities.

The Office would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Nasra Hassain and the staff of UNIS for the invaluable assistance and advice in all of these outreach and promotional matters. In particular, the Office would like to express its appreciation to Ms. Sonya Winterburger, Ms. Jaya Mohan and Mr. Lothan Nicola(?) of UNIS and the Tour Guides for their efforts.

Next year in 2009, the Office, in cooperation with UNESCO, national astronomical societies and ethical(?) institutions around the world, will celebrate the International Year of Astronomy, drawing upon the successful deployment of the astronomical facilities through the United Nations Basic Space Science Initiative, as well as the International Heliophysical Year 2007, public outreach activities relating to astronomy, including exhibits and competitions are being planned. The Office would like to invite member States to join this worldwide celebration. For more information, please contact the Secretariat.

Finally, Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, as delegates no doubt recall, in 1961, both Yuri Gagarin and Alan Shepherd took a historic step for humankind with their flights into outer space. Coincidentally, this was also the year that this Committee first met, in November 1961. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of all these historic event, the Office proposes to hold a series of public outreach activities throughout 2011. The centrepiece of the celebration will be a large exhibition during the June 2011 session of this Committee at the Vienna International Centre. The exhibition will have two themes. First, the five decades of space flight, and the second, achievements of this Committee over the last 50 years. The Office invites delegates to propose commemorative events to celebrate these milestones and in particular calls for member States and intergovernmental organizations that have human space flight programmes, to actively contribute to the exhibition in June 2007(2011?). More details will be provided to delegates during this session.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, let me conclude then by assuring the Committee of the commitment of my Office to increasing the awareness of the relevance and importance of space exploration and applications to the betterment of the human condition, and particularly to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to partake in those benefits. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you ever so much Mrs. Othman.

We have finished on time but before we conclude, however, I would like to thank Mrs. Othman for what she has said in the course of her statement and especially I would like to thank her for having spoken about the effectiveness of the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. This is something to really be noted. I am very happy that Mr. Camacho is here. He is the former Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. He has not gone on to other matters. He continues to accompany us in his work. I would like to indeed welcome Sergio in our midst.

Indeed, the Office, as guided by Mrs. Othman, has been able to indeed demonstrate its virtuosity in making the most of the funds given to it by member States. Indeed, we have a medium-term plan through 2011. This demonstrates our medium-term vision and Mrs. Othman's very effective work as its Head.

Before I conclude this morning's session, I would like to give you indications to this afternoon's programme of work.

We will resume at 3.00 p.m. exactly to pursue our general exchange of views before we go on to item 6, Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes. And that to be followed by the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

And after plenary, I have the honour and pleasure to invite you to a Reception in the Mozart Room of the Restaurant of the Vienna International Centre.

Do you have any questions or comments on our work plan for this afternoon?

If that is not the case, we are going to be adjourning the meeting for now. Thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 1.02 p.m.