Opening address by Mr. Niklas Hedman
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UNITED NATIONS/ARGENTINA
WORKSHOP ON SPACE LAW

"Contribution of Space Law to Economic and Social Development"

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Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to welcome you, on behalf of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, to the Eighth United Nations Workshop on Space Law, which is being jointly organized by UNOOSA and CONAE, and with active support by ESA.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to CONAE for hosting this Workshop. I would also like to thank our speakers and chairpersons, who have generously given us their time and expertise to ensure that we all enjoy the maximum benefits from this Workshop.

Distinguished Participants,

At the outset I feel obliged to pause for a moment and reflect on the present devastating experience and effects of the forces of nature hitting our societies. At this moment there are many people suffering from the hurricane "Sandy" and related severe weather conditions affecting a number of countries in this part of the World. We should keep this on-going tragedy in mind throughout our present Workshop.

I am bringing this to our attention because loss of life and property could be diminished if better information was available through improved risk assessment, early warning and monitoring of disasters. In that regard, the integrated and coordinated use of space technologies and their applications can play a crucial role in supporting disaster management by providing accurate and timely information and communication support.

Challenges to our societies, including that of global climate change, and to food security and global health, are all interlinked with disasters. Meeting those challenges would be facilitated if efforts for an increased coordination are made to ensure a systematic, timely and adapted integration of the space-based technology applications of remote sensing, satellite telecommunication and global navigation satellite systems to multi-source geospatial datasets.

You may wonder why I bring this up in a Workshop on Space Law. Well, the overarching objective of this event is to look into legal and institutional aspects of governance at global, interregional, regional and national level to meet economic and social needs for development. As you will see throughout this Workshop we have a strong focus on legal aspects of the use of space technology and space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development.

Last year the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space submitted its contribution to the Rio+20 Conference on the topic of harnessing the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. The Committee, in its report, provided a set of recommendations on ways and means of strengthening the use of space-derived geospatial data for the purpose of supporting sustainable development policies. **[see document A/AC.105/993]**

Among those recommendations COPUOS pointed to the need for establishing sustainable national spatial data infrastructure; enhancing autonomous national capabilities in the area of space-derived geospatial data, including the development of associated infrastructure and institutional arrangements; engaging in or expanding international cooperation in the area of space-derived geospatial data and increasing awareness of existing initiatives and data sources; as well as supporting the United Nations in its efforts to access and use geospatial information in its mandated programmes to assist all Member States.

I am therefore pleased to note that the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference entitled "The Future We Want", which is annexed to General Assembly resolution 66/288, in its *paragraph 274* recognizes the importance of space-technology-based data for sustainable development.

I would also like to point out, in this connection, that the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has presented its report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "Realizing the Future We Want for All". This is a comprehensive assessment of the overall involvement of the UN system and the report will be part of the intergovernmental process leading up to 2015. **[available through the UNOOSA website at www.unoosa.org under "What's New"]**

There are many areas covered in that report where space-based technologies and data are of crucial importance. In direct relation to space tools, I would like to bring to your attention *paragraph 73*, which acknowledges the importance of improved scientific understanding of the space environment, as well as *paragraph 79*, which brings to attention the importance of improved access to geographical information and geospatial

data for more accurate environmental and social impact assessments and more informed decision-making at all levels.

Distinguished Participants,

This Workshop on Space Law is the eighth in a series of workshops that UNOOSA has organized together with host countries with the intention to promote the adherence to the five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space and to assist States in building capacity in space law. The series of workshops uses a multi-leveled approach that seeks to increase knowledge and awareness of the international treaties and principles on outer space developed under the auspices of the United Nations, and to provide a basis for their implementation on a practical level through the development and administration of domestic legislation and regulatory regimes.

Each year, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, reaffirms the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including relevant norms of space law, and urges States that have not yet become parties to the treaties governing the exploration and use of outer space to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to them, as well as incorporating them into their national legislation.

Given the growing number of benefits derived from space science and technology applications, the conduct of space activities by States, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities as well as private sector continues to expand. The successful implementation and application of the international legal framework governing the conduct of space activities therefore depends on the understanding and acceptance, by policy- and decision-makers, of that legal framework.

Bearing this in mind, it has become increasingly important to ensure that space law and policy, including the ratification of the United Nations treaties on outer space, is considered a matter of priority by all countries involved in space activities. I take this opportunity to quote *operative paragraph 9* of the 2011 United Nations Declaration on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Human Space Flight and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, whereby the Member States of the United Nations:

> "*Acknowledge* that significant changes have occurred in the structure and content of the space endeavour, as reflected in the emergence of new technologies and the increasing number of actors at all levels, and therefore note with satisfaction the progress made in strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space by enhancing the capacity of States for economic, social and cultural development and by strengthening the regulatory frameworks and mechanisms to that effect."
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> **[see GA resolution 66/71 of 9 December 2011, annex]**

Through the Programme of our present Workshop we will have many opportunities this coming week to discuss and assess a number of substantive topics connecting legal matters with areas of interest to governance of space activities, economic and social development, regional cooperation, and capacity-building efforts in space law. I therefore trust that we are all looking forward to a particularly intensive and exciting week.

Welcome!