Sri Lanka, Item 8

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

To begin with, let me express Sri Lanka's appreciation of ~~our satisfaction at~~ the increasingly strong recognition that this Committee has been according over the past years to the notion of 'indispensability of space as a driver of the global agenda on sustainable development' ~~–~~ —including ~~–~~SDGs 2030, Sendai Framework, ~~for Disaster Risk Reduction,~~ and ~~the national commitments of States Parties to~~ the Paris Agreement on climate change.

However, one important observation that we wish to make ~~to be made~~ in this regard ~~context~~ is that, while countries across the world, including developing countries such as Sri Lanka, continue ~~e~~ to initiate numerous programmes for harnessing the potential space applications in various fronts of sustainable development, their national efforts are continuing to be seriously compromised by the limits of their national technological capabilities in the space domain ~~of space~~.

Let me take the example of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, has made significant initiatives in deployment of space technology applications in a diverse range of national programmes, spanning the fields of agriculture, environment, natural resources management, water resources, forestry and wildlife, urban development, weather and ~~meteorology and~~ climate, ~~change, transport and logistics,~~ and disaster risk reduction. However, we are still at an early stage in terms of realizing a state of maturity in ~~e~~ operational use of those applications~~,~~ in ~~the~~ country's efforts in sustainable development.

A recent survey undertaken in this regard has shown that one of the major constraining factors that impedes the development of some of those applications, by way of ~~in~~ elevating them from their current research or experimental levels to ~~a~~ mature operational levels, or ~~in~~ scaling up of current successful pilot projects into system~~–~~wide operational applications of technology, is simply the limitations in availability and affordability of access to high resolution earth observation satellite data–earth observation data of higher resolution than what is normally freely available at present.

It is often observed to be the major ~~same common~~ constraint whether we talk about applications related to agro-ecological resilience or precision-agriculture concerning SDG 2~~1~~ `zero–hunger', applications concerning environmental management and climate change mitigation and adaption concerning multiple SDGs including SDGs 13 'climate action', SDG 14 'life below water' and SDG 15 'life on land', sustainable urbanization related applications concerning SDG 11 'sustainable cities and communities', or social development related applications concerning SDG 1 'No ~~eradicate~~ poverty' and SDG 3~~4~~ 'good health and wellbeing'.

Sri Lankan delegation believes that th~~Th~~is limitation remains a major capacity gap, which ~~that~~ needs to be addressed in the true spirit of achieving 'space accessibility'—one ~~of~~ the strategic objectives, representing one of the four pillars upholding the Space 2030 Agenda~~, namely 'space accessibility'~~.

Mr. Chairman, there are three key points that I would like to highlight in this regard.

The first point is the relative size of the potential impact that enhanced availability and affordability of data is most likely to yield when compared against the typical costs of the intervention involved~~needed~~—in other words the massive impact that affordable access to high resolution earth observation satellite data alone can potentially make.

Secondly, when it comes to issues of global scale and impact, including but not limited to, those concerning ~~the~~ protection of natural eco-systems and climate change mitigation and adaptation, an intervention of the aforesaid nature would amount to mobilizing and leveraging the human resource capacity of the countries across the whole world in addressing ~~some of~~ those common ~~major~~ challenges facing humanity.

Thirdly, it will contribute to addressing a disparity amongst nations in their technological capability in the space domain that has been observed to be translating into, and constituting, a growing disparity in national capability of the countries in ~~to~~ realizing ~~e tt~~heir full potential in ~~of~~ socio-economic development. This may be perhaps called a `space-divide' – a major capacity gap that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, we wish to call upon the COPUOS, its subsidiary bodies, relevant working groups, and the Secretariat to give due consideration to the above facts in the planning and implementation of the work programmes under the Space 2030 Agenda.

Thank you.

Name of the Delegate: **SANATH PANAWENNAGE**

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