

Space 2030: space as a driver for peace

Welcome remarks by Ms Simonetta Di Pippo

Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, it is my honour to welcome you all to this evening's event on Space2030: Space as a driver for peace.

I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt appreciation to our fellow co-organizers; to Executive Director Robert Skinner and his fantastic team at the UN Office for Partnerships and to Ms Namira Salim, Executive Chairperson of the ground-breaking organization SpaceTrust. This event has only been possible due to the support, dedication and great collaboration between our three organizations.

I would like to also express my gratitude to everyone joining us this evening. Your presence here is a testament to our shared interest in space affairs, and the increasingly significant role space is playing to accelerate sustainable development around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, I'm proud to say that I lead a talented team in Vienna who work every day to assist international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. We achieve this through a range of activities. For example, we support the implementation of the five UN treaties that constitute the legal framework governance activities in outer space. In the same vein, we are also working with Member States on a range of transparency and confidence-building measures – or TCBMS - with regards to maintaining the peaceful uses of outer space. For example, last year here in New York we co-convened with our partners at the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, a joint meeting of the UN General Assembly 1st and 4th Committees. These two Committees of the General Assembly cover both the non-civilian and civilian uses of outer space respectively.

Besides these normative functions, UNOOSA is also on the ground, delivering capacity building activities with countries around the world, enhancing access and use information and data that only space can provide. This capacity building work covers the entire spectrum of space science and technology, from Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and Earth Observation to Telecommunication.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three years ago, the world united around three agreements for global development. This is the world's first data-driven approach to a global agenda, a fact which underlines the key role space science and technology will play in accelerating achievement of these agreements. What remains to be seen, however, is how we can work collectively to organize our efforts to deliver the full potential of space for sustainable development. The path to realizing this ambition is captured by the "Space2030" agenda, which Member States will negotiate over the next two years to deliver, for the first time in history, a strategic vision of the UN and its Member States in outer space affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all well familiar with the 17 different Sustainable Development Goals but did you know, for example, that of the 169 targets underpinning the goals, no less than 40% are reliant on access to space? This statistic will probably rise substantially when incorporating telecommunication satellites to Earth Observation and Global Navigation Satellite Systems. Such research only begins to illustrate the importance space has for effective policy-making. From city halls to the General Assembly, when policymakers need to make well-informed policy decisions, they are turning to space.

Let me be very clear: space is fundamental to effective policymaking in the 21st century. The challenge, therefore, is how to keep space as a peaceful environment in which science and technology can continue to deliver the information and data that is helping to make effective policy decisions around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is well known that global interest in space is growing rapidly. Coming from the UN I am, however, in a privileged position to see such developments from a truly global perspective. So, please allow me to share a few more statistics. Did you know that, for example, as of 2018 over 70 UN Member States have established national government space programmes? This demonstrates the extent to which countries are investing – and exposing—their national interests in the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space.

Another statistic; right now, we have over 1,800 satellites in current orbit, just above our heads. In 2017 alone, the world registered - through UNOOSA - a record 553 new objects. The way we are launching our satellites is also changing, with about half of all launches last year being made by commercial entities.

It is crucial that we begin to truly appreciate the extent of which our societies are reliant on space, and therefore how pivotal it is that space remains a peaceful, secure environment in which we can invest our time and resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For over half a century, the UN has been supporting the peaceful pursuit of common goals in space that have illustrated the very best of what humankind can achieve. It is fundamental that we continue to bring the benefits of space to everyone, everywhere. This is why UNOOSA, as the UN entity dedicated to space affairs, is proud to join our partners from UNOP and SpaceTrust in welcoming you to this evening's event.

I would now like to hand you over to our master of ceremonies for this evening, Ms Namira Salim, Founder and Executive Chairperson of SpaceTrust.

Thank you