

Opening Statement
by
Simonetta Di Pippo
Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the final part of UNISPACE+50 Symposium. Over the past day and a half, a great number of exceptional individuals have gathered here in this room to celebrate with us the 50th anniversary of the first Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, also known as, UNISPACE I, held in Vienna in 1968.

This panel is a unique gathering, in the history of UNOOSA since it is the first time so many high level representatives of space agencies have come together under the roof of the United Nations and we are proud to offer you the platform for this truly historic event.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you attending this exciting and important panel and thank you to all who have shared with us ideas and insights in the discussions and special sessions during these past two days.

Distinguished guests,

The last 50 years have changed the way our society lives and operates. We have built a long-standing legacy as explorers, inventors, and curious beings who want to know their place in outer space.

There have been many lessons learned on how to move forward, how to overcome challenges, and how to do things together, rather than on our own. It also reminds us that we can work together to make the world a better place for the benefit of all people around the globe.

None of this would be possible without mutual respect and equal engagement among nations to address the common challenges of humanity through constructive and knowledge-based partnerships.

Six decades of space diplomacy have also resulted in the establishment of the legal regime on outer space, including five treaties and five principles and a variety of national legislations. The international community, especially through the United Nations, have already come a long way in regulating behavior in space reflecting the growing community of nations and actors.

And to be able to welcome such a high number of representatives of Space Agencies here today is a clear sign of the importance we all

attached to our shared passion and to jointly work together on the future of the peaceful uses of outer space.

Yet, while most of us take the advantages of space exploration and innovation for granted, there are still millions who lack access to the benefits stemming from our ability to utilize outer space.

The gap in these capabilities cannot become yet another area of dominance of developed countries. Instead, the countries with established space agencies and space programs, together with the United Nations, must ensure that we bridge this “space divide” and bring more and more countries into the space family.

Dear colleagues, distinguished representatives of the space agencies,

As you know, one of the aims of UNISPACE+50 is to promote the “Space2030” agenda and to address the use of space technologies and applications for everyone, everywhere supporting the three main global United Nations frameworks; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris climate agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Space has been used as a tool to support development of humankind for decades but there is still room for improvement and through partnerships we will be able to achieve the desired effect.

The increasing number of actors – space agencies and the growing commercial space sector – is a significant factor influencing the very nature of space activities, offering new opportunities for partnerships but also influencing overall space governance. The international community, especially through the United Nations, has already come a long way in regulating behavior in space reflecting the growing community of nations and stakeholders.

We do need to strengthen the global governance of outer space activities and outline a long-term vision for space as one of the key drivers for sustainable development, as achieving the goals and targets of the three global frameworks demands concerted efforts by the institutions and requires employment of the right tools at the right time.

With space agencies, as the natural partners of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, this panel serves as a fantastic venue to start the debate on how can we, together, shape the implementation plan of “Space2030” for the benefit of all.

To be able to welcome such a high number of representatives of Space Agencies here today is a clear sign of the importance we all attach to our shared passion and underlines the interest to jointly work together on the future of the peaceful uses of outer space.

I believe that this is will not remain an exception but will rather serve as the first of many such gathering under the umbrella of the United Nations as the global facilitator of international cooperation among nations for the benefit of humankind.

I am sure the following discussions will provide us with great insights to the work of the space agencies from various regions of the world and underline to us how important – and universal – space truly is.

This is a great opportunity to pave the way for the future generations.

Let's do it – together!

Thank you