Opening Speech by Mr. Niklas Hedman
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UNITED NATIONS/ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN WORKSHOP ON SPACE LAW 2009

"Role of International Space Law in the Development and Strengthening of International and Regional Cooperation in the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space"

8-11 November 2009
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to welcome you, on behalf of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, to the Sixth United Nations Workshop on Space Law, which is being jointly organized by the United Nations, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian Space Agency (ISA), and supported by the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO).

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian Space Agency for hosting this Workshop. The Iranian Space Agency has provided outstanding support in making the Workshop happen by supporting the participation of a number of experts, organizing special events for the participants and providing the excellent meeting facilities for the duration of this Workshop.

I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) for supporting this event. APSCO, as a new observer organization to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer

Space, has an important role to play in fostering and strengthening regional and inter-regional cooperation in space activities.

I would also like to thank our speakers and chairpersons, who have generously given us their time and expertise to ensure that participants enjoy the maximum benefits from this Workshop.

This Workshop on space law is the sixth in a series of workshops that the Office 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. National space laws and other regulatory frameworks are necessary for States to implement their obligations under the United Nations treaties and to meet their specific national requirements.

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. In developing international and regional space cooperation States should assure that all actors conducting space activities comply with requirements of international space law and that this branch of public international law properly reflects the needs of contemporary space activities.

The successful implementation and application of the international legal framework governing space activities depends on the understanding and acceptance, by policy- and decision-makers, of the legal framework governing the conduct of space activities. The presence of suitable professionals, particularly in developing countries, that are able to provide legal advice and disseminate information and knowledge relating to space law is therefore dependent on adequate opportunities for education in space law and policy.

It is within this context that, together with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian Space Agency we have organized this Workshop to provide an overview of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space; to examine and compare various aspects of existing national space laws and the further development of national space legislation; to look into the role of regional mechanisms for space cooperation; and, to consider the current state of university level studies and educational programmes in space law, and ways of enhancing their availability, in particular for the benefit of countries in the region.

Bearing this in mind, I would like to briefly touch upon the aims of this workshop:

First, the Office hopes this Workshop will promote understanding, acceptance and implementation of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, taking into consideration that a successful implementation and

application of the international legal framework governing space activities depends on the understanding and acceptance of those legal treaties and principles, by policy-and-decision makers. Today 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.

Given the growing number of benefits derived from the use of space applications, the conduct of space activities by States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector, continues to expand. These advances, together with the emphasis placed annually by the General Assembly and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the importance of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, have made the development of space law and policy a priority for a growing number of countries.

A second objective of this Workshop is to promote the exchange of information on national space laws and policies, for the benefit of professionals involved in their development and implementation, bearing in mind that the development of space law and policy in a country relies on the presence of suitable professionals able to disseminate information and knowledge on the existing legal framework governing activities in outer space.

In this regard, the Workshop will consider issues relating to the commercial activities in the field of exploration and use of outer space. As the space sector is increasingly becoming part of the general civil economy of states, corresponding legal regulations, developed at efficient and effective regulatory level, are required. It is important to recognize the prevailing authority of international space law and its fundamental principles, in emerging national norms relating to commercial space activities.

Mechanisms for regional and inter-regional coordination and cooperation are essential for strengthening space activities at all levels. It is therefore with great pleasure APSCO is represented at this Workshop to provide insight to the regulatory framework for this important entity.

Third, this Workshop will also consider the development of university level studies and educational programmes in space law, with a view to promoting national expertise and capability in this field. The availability of such professionals is determined by the availability of educational opportunities and institutions that address the subject of space law and policy.

Distinguished Participants,

The Office is continuously building up an information network for professionals interested or actively involved in the development of space law. We will be adding the names and contact details of all participants of this workshop to a mailing list of the Office, for the purpose of disseminating updated information on space law in the future.

We look forward to staying in touch with as many of you as possible, and will do our utmost to meet any requests for information in the years ahead.

I trust that you are looking forward to a particularly work-intensive and interesting session, and I sincerely hope that this workshop will be useful to your current and future work.

Thank you for your attention.