

Opening Statement
Azzedine Oussedik, Chair
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Fifty-seventh session, Vienna, 11-20 June 2014

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the fifty-seventh session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I am honoured to have been elected Chair of the Committee and I thank you all for your confidence in me. I assure you of my commitment to continuing the successful work of the Committee.

Together with my colleagues in the bureau, Mr. Diego Stacey Moreno of Ecuador, in his capacity of First Vice-Chair of the Committee, and Mr. Samir Mohammed Raouf of Iraq and Mr. Xinmin Ma of China, in their capacity of Second Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Committee for this and next year, respectively, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Yasushi Horikawa, who skilfully guided the work of the Committee for the past two years together with his bureau members for that period, Mr. Filipe Duarte Santos of Portugal and Mr. Piotr Wolanski of Poland.

I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Secretariat for its outstanding preparations for this session. In this regard I would like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Mazlan Othman, who retired from the position of Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in December 2013, and I have the pleasure of welcoming Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo as the new Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. I look forward to working closely with the Secretariat in the coming period.

At the very outset, and in view of the decisions by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/75 of 11 December 2013, I sincerely welcome Belarus and Ghana as the newest member States of the Committee, which now brings the membership to 76 States. I also welcome the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET) as the newest international organization with permanent observer status with the Committee.

Distinguished Delegates,

Our Committee has for many decades made extraordinary achievements in advancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and is continuously serving as a unique platform at the global level in fostering such common efforts. In 2011 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of human space flight, commemorating the first human space flight performed by Yuri Gagarin, and the 50th anniversary of the Committee, as manifested by the General Assembly in its 50th Anniversary Declaration adopted through resolution 66/71. In 2013 we celebrated another historic event, the 50th anniversary of the first space-flight performed by a woman, cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, and the tenth anniversary of the human space flight by China. I would also like to recall that in 2012 we commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Landsat programme and the worldwide evolution of remote sensing from space, which was timely considering the Rio+20 Conference held that year.

This year we recognize the 50th anniversary of European cooperation in space and the 45th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission for the first time placing humans on the surface of the Moon.

Commemorations of this nature truly bring forward the importance of space exploration, science, technology applications and diplomacy.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Committee is continuously making efforts to promote and increase awareness and capacity-building in the use of space technology applications, at the global, regional, interregional and national level, in many critical areas of concern to all humanity. Space tools are multifaceted and they strongly support the implementation of actions called for in the global development agenda.

As recognized by the General Assembly, our Committee and its two Subcommittees, assisted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, stand at the forefront in bringing the world together in using space science and technology to preserve the Earth and the space environment. Our Committee and its Subcommittees in that regard serve as a unique platform at the global level for enhancing our efforts to strengthen the role of space tools for sustainable development and to meet the challenges to humanity. Regional and interregional cooperation in space activities is emphasized and the need for closer coordination between the Committee and other intergovernmental bodies involved in the global development agenda is underscored.

Challenges to our society, including that of global climate change, and to food security and global health, are all interlinked with disasters, and we need a holistic approach to those problems and concerns in order to make sound decisions with long-term effects. Meeting those challenges would be facilitated by efforts for an increased coordination to ensure a timely and adapted integration of the space-based technology applications of remote sensing, satellite telecommunication and global navigation satellite systems. The development of multi-source geospatial datasets in using such technology would also help better address those challenges.

Through our agenda item on space and sustainable development and under the item of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee devoted to socioeconomic development in the context of the Rio+20 conference and the post-2015 development agenda, we are working towards a common approach to those global processes within the Committee as a whole. At the same time we note the need to increase awareness at the global level to fully recognize the importance of space tools and space-derived geospatial information to meet the objectives of the global development agenda.

The General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is now completing its work on sustainable development goals, and the post-2015 development agenda is taking shape. In this context, and building upon the contribution of the Committee to the Rio+20 conference articulated in its report A/AC.105/993 from 2011, the establishment and strengthening of sustainable and standards-driven spatial data infrastructures merit recognition as means of implementation of those development goals and objectives.

Concerted efforts are required to ensure continuous monitoring and assessment of the environment in meeting sustainable development objectives at all levels. It is therefore essential to increase the number of countries with enhanced autonomous capabilities to access and use Earth Observation and in-situ geospatial data and information in support of decision making processes at national, regional and international levels. This includes the development and implementation of associated standards-based infrastructures and relevant institutional arrangements by means of strengthening capacity, knowledge sharing and technological cooperation while promoting a multi-sectoral approach.

Distinguished Delegates,

Against this background, international cooperation at regional, inter-regional and global level is essential. As an example I would like to refer to the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development (ALC), particularly its third Conference (ALC 3) held in Algiers in 2009 which highlights the importance of establishing a framework for regional cooperation

to promote mutualisation of human and material resources available within African countries to respond to the African concerns regarding appropriation of space tools using methods as for the African Resource Management Constellation (ARMC).

This African concerns was consolidated by the Mombasa Declaration adopted at the fourth Conference (ALC4) held in Kenya in 2011, which recognizes among others the essential contribution of space science and technology to the well-being of humanity and to the economic, social and cultural development of Africa in particular; and considers that space transcends boundaries and local interests permitting the development of comprehensive solutions to address common challenges faced by all African countries; and recognizes that good conduct of space activities is beneficial to all countries, and compliance by States and international organizations of the treaty provisions relating to Space should be encouraged.

The African Leadership Conference therefore brings to attention the need for African States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to participate actively in the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees and to promote better coordinated African participation in the Committee.

It is of importance that regional and inter-regional perspectives of international space cooperation involving conferences and mechanisms are being addressed in view of our common efforts to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. I would like to underline the particular role of regional mechanisms in providing platforms for enhanced coordination and cooperation between space faring nations and emerging space nations and in establishing partnerships between users and providers of space-based services.

In this sense I recognize the activities and programmes of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the more recent coordination mechanisms of the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development (ALC), which I already mentioned above; the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF); the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO); and the Space Conference of the Americas.

The role of international organizations and other entities in the space field continues to be of major importance to our common endeavour to promote space activities at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. In this context, I would also like to highlight the important role that the Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, affiliated to the United Nations, play in enhancing cooperative efforts. The Regional Centres have firmly established infrastructures for advanced training in the field of space science and technology, and their long-standing education programmes are highly successful, including building upon the scientific

curricula developed through the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the latest on GNSS and on space law. Likewise, the network of UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices around the World caters for regional coordination efforts in the area of disaster risk reduction.

We gain invaluable support by many other efforts and through support given to the Committee and its Subcommittees by our permanent observer organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, in cooperation with our members, through projects, conferences, seminars, symposiums and panel discussions for the benefit of our common work.

The International Astronautical Congress (IAC), which provides a platform for fundamental dialogue between all stakeholders in the space field, both at Governmental and private sector level, was last year successfully hosted by China. I look forward to this year's IAC to be hosted by Canada.

I would also like to mention the International Space Exploration Forum (ISEF) that was held in Washington in January this year, hosted by the United States in collaboration with the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA). A large number of States attended the 2014 Forum and emphasized the importance of the further advancement of exploration and utilization of outer space for the benefit of humankind. The role of COPUOS was emphasized, particularly in the fields of ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and protecting the Earth from asteroids and other potentially hazardous objects.

With all this in mind, we should look further into further promoting greater dialogue between our Committee and mechanisms for regional, interregional and international cooperation in space activities for the benefit of global development and in partnership with various actors in the space arena.

Distinguished Delegates,

The General Assembly in 2013 adopted resolution 68/74 of 11 December 2013, entitled "Recommendations on national legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space", and which is the result of a multi-year programme of work under the dedicated Working Group of the Legal Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Ms. Irmgard Marboe of Austria. Through its resolution 68/75, the General Assembly welcomed the recommendations for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat, which is the result of a multi-year programme of work under the Working Group on Near-Earth Objects, under the chairmanship of Mr. Sergio Camacho Lara of Mexico. These are the most recent examples of prominent results of the work of the Committee and in particular its two subsidiary bodies.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee made considerable achievements earlier this year and through the work of our two Subcommittees we are demonstrating the importance of making concrete progress in terms of long-term sustainability of outer space activities and in enhancing the capacity of States in promoting economic, social and cultural development with the use of space tools, and by enhancing the understanding of regulatory frameworks and mechanisms to that effect.

I would in particular like to congratulate Mr. Elod Both of Hungary and Mr. Kai-Uwe Schrogl of Germany on their skilful guidance of the work of the Subcommittees. Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. V. K. Dadhwal of India, Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom, Mr. Peter Martinez of South Africa, Ms. Setsuko Aoki of Japan, Mr. Jean-Francois Mayence of Belgium and Mr. Jose Monserrat Filho of Brazil for their excellent leadership this year of the respective Working Groups of the Subcommittees.

Many other experts in science, technology, law and policy, including the Co-Chairs of the Expert Groups under the long-term sustainability item, have offered their skills and time to assist our Committee and Subcommittees in the processes leading to concrete results. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to all of them for their extraordinary contributions in advancing our common endeavour to continuously manifest the unique role played by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to the Office for Outer Space Affairs and Secretariat of our Committee and its subsidiary bodies for outstanding support to our common endeavours. I am again pleased to note the activities undertaken by the Office in its capacity as the Executive Secretariat to the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG). The United Nations Programme on Space Applications and UN-SPIDER continue to play important roles in many areas critical to our work. I am also pleased to note the continuous commitment by the Office in capacity-building efforts in space law and policy.

Distinguished Delegates,

In concluding, it is important for our Committee as a whole to continue assessing its role and its work in the continuously changing environment that surrounds the peaceful uses of outer space with an increasing number of space-faring

and non-space faring countries and actors participating in space activities. We need to look into ways and means of advancing our work and achieve concrete and tangible results in addressing the on-going global process leading towards the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals and in meeting the post-2015 development agenda.

We have a hectic programme before us at this session, and we have a series of exciting side events, exhibitions and receptions that will give us all an outstanding platform for dialogue on important topics before us. With your cooperation and valuable contributions, I am confident in the success of this session.

I thank you all for your kind attention.
