

**United Nations/United Arab Emirates High Level Forum:
Space as a Driver for Socio-Economic Sustainable Development**

20 November 2016

Statement of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here today to this High Level Forum organized by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in cooperation with the Government of the United Arab Emirates. By focusing in the coming days on *Space as a driver for socio-economic sustainable development*, you will address several critical issues where scientific research and technical developments in the space field can contribute to overcoming challenges to sustainable development.

Just a few weeks ago the Paris Agreement on climate change entered into force on 4 November. Together, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction represent the most significant action in years to uphold our mandate to “save succeeding generations”.

Space science and technology, and their applications, are indispensable tools to support implementation of the goals set by these global development agendas. I therefore commend the efforts of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in organizing this important High Level Forum together with the Government of the United Arab Emirates.

The year 2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE I), held in 1968 in Vienna. The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, is working towards UNISPACE+50 in 2018 as an opportunity to strengthen the role of the Committee and the Office in global governance of outer space activities and in fostering international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

This High Level Forum is a platform for such cooperation as it has brought together multiple stakeholders in the space arena, including various United Nations entities, and exemplifies that outer space is an inherently multilateral domain.

Your presence at, and contribution to, this High Level Forum is of great value. This will be an important milestone towards UNISPACE+50 in providing concrete deliverables pertaining to space for development.

The protection of an already fragile near-Earth space environment and the expanding role of space science and technology applications in meeting the growing challenges to humanity, societal development, and to planet Earth stand at the core of your work over the next few days. I wish you engaging and fruitful discussions this week and look forward to learning of your recommendations for harnessing space for sustainable socio-economic development.