

*United Nations/United Arab Emirates High Level Forum*  
*“Space as a Driver for Socio-Economic Sustainable Development”*  
*20 - 24 November 2016, Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

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**Opening Statement**  
**by**  
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**Office for Outer Space Affairs**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the High Level Forum on “Space as a Driver for Socio-Economic Sustainable Development”. This is the first Forum in a series of three fora on the important topic of space science and technology for the attainment of sustainable development. This series of high level fora will seek to deliver recommendations for harnessing space technology and applications for socio-economic development and offer a platform to collect inputs as we all work towards the fiftieth anniversary in 2018 of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50).

UNISPACE+50, which will be a segment of the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in June 2018, will be the time frame that we will work towards at this HLF. is the first deadline for our activities in the context of the High Level Fora.

At the outset of this event, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the United Arab Emirates for hosting this First High Level Forum in partnership with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. I would also like to extend my thanks to you, participants and speakers, for accepting our invitation to take part in the deliberations of this High Level Forum.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The Office also aspires towards making greater contributions to the efforts of the United Nations in achieving global development goals.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee, supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, have, for the past 50 years, contributed extensively to fostering international cooperation in space activities at the international, regional, interregional and national levels for the benefit of all countries.

This First High Level Forum, therefore, presents us with a great opportunity to focus on substantive inputs to be appropriately translated into recommendations on the potential of space technology and innovations for addressing new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

I am pleased that this Forum will focus on space agenda topics of great value and interest to our stakeholders, namely:

- space economy, which is “the full range of activities and use of resources that create and provide value and benefits to human beings in the course of exploring, understanding and utilizing space”;
- space society, which refers to a society that carries out its core functions while making the best use of space technologies and space-based services and applications;
- space accessibility, which refers to all user communities and decision-makers being able, on an equal basis, to benefit from and use space technologies and space-based data; and
- space diplomacy for the purpose of fostering socio-economic sustainable development, defined as cooperation among nations in using space technologies and applications to address common challenges facing humanity and to build constructive, knowledge-based partnerships.

I will provide you with a deeper analysis in my presentation later this morning..

Distinguished Delegates,

As already mentioned, the year 2018 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50).

UNISPACE+50 is considered an important milestone for the Office and the international space community as it is an opportunity to take stock of the contributions of the three global UNISPACE conferences, convened in Vienna in 1968, 1982 and 1999. These global conferences examined the practical benefits of space science and technology and their applications with special focus on the needs of developing countries, global and regional development agendas, and the benefits for society at large.

In this regard, the UNISPACE+50 process will align its thematic priorities and long-term outputs with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement. It will also examine where stronger space governance and supporting structures are required to protect the space environment and secure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities to ensure that the benefits of modern collaborative space governance strongly support nations in implementing the three agendas I just mentioned.

In the lead up to UNISPACE+50, this series of high level fora, if you wish a kind of “*Davos for Space*”- style exchange platform, is an exceptional opportunity to engage with all Member States, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations space agencies,

experts, key figures, the private sector and academia, and to initiate international collaborations and research that span the globe at a time when space tools are becoming indispensable for the attainment of the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This First Forum is indeed a great start to the process of enhancing the cooperation and coordination of our community, and expanding to other users communities, with a particular focus on the space sector for the economy, society and development of all nations. Therefore, I encourage you to fully involve yourselves in the deliberations and development of a set of recommendations that can help to further shape and position space activities as drivers for innovation, socio-economic development and diplomacy in the process towards UNISPACE+50.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have a busy schedule ahead of us over the next few days, but I am certain that, through a constructive dialogue, we will address the cross-sectoral impact of integrating the economic, environmental, social, policy and regulatory dimensions of space in chasing global sustainable development.

Before concluding, on behalf of the United Nations I would like once again to thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting this First High Level Forum. I would also like to thank the Secure World Foundation, Sierra Nevada Corporation's Space Systems, and the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems for co-sponsoring this event. I would also like to extend a special thanks to the United Arab Emirates Space Agency and the Mohamed Bin Rashid Space Center.

This first meeting of the High Level Forum is an historic one and I thank you all for having decided to devote your time to support this endeavor of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to create a long-term lasting platform for all the interested stakeholders to build together the future of space on a global scale. The results of this endeavor depend on you.

I therefore wish you full success in attaining the goals of this High Level Forum and helping shape forum as our common exchange platform.

Thank you.