

Transcript of Space Agencies statement of TUBITAK, Turkey – Vienna – June 19, 2018

Dr. Orkun Hasekioglu

Thank you Madame Director.

I thank the United Nations Office for the Outer Space Affairs for inviting us and organizing this important event commemorating the first United Nations conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of the Outer Space that was held here in Vienna fifty years ago. In retrospect, we admire the insight of the first organizers in their foresight to recognize the impact of the use of outer space in all aspects of life.

Turkey is a signatory to the UN Outer Space treaty and the other four UN treaties. We are committed to and value the universal principles embodied in these treaties and the principles adopted by the General Assembly. In fact, these universal principles guide our space program.

Distinguished Participants,

In my remarks, I will briefly mention the current status of the space program in Turkey and two important events that are closely related with the UNISPACE+50 meeting:

First, the inauguration of the United Nations Technology Bank in Turkey earlier this month and second, the adoption of the five- year Development Plan for Space applications.

The current state of space technologies in Turkey:

In 2003, the Turkish Scientific and Technological Research Council (TUBITAK) Space Institute built and launched the first earth observation satellite in Turkey as part of the disaster management program dedicated to monitor natural and man-made disasters.

Since then, in addition to the several more earth observation satellites, with continuously increasing capabilities, we are designing and building a commercial communications satellite - Turksat 6A - that will be launched to the geostationary orbit in 2020.

Turkey is a member of international space organizations such as Asia Pasific Space Coopertion Organization – APSCO- and Inter Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology – ISNET - that are established to foster cooperation in and coordination of space-based capabilities for the benefit of the humanity. In addition, We are in preparation for associate membership to the European Space Agency.

Distinguished Guests,

TUBITAK considers space technologies crucial to the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and as an enabler for Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, forty percent of the Sustainable Development Goals can be addressed through space technologies.

At the national level, TUBITAK continuously promotes and facilitates integration of geospatial data and applications into high-level decisions in the areas of agriculture, urbanization, natural resources and disaster management.

We recognize the role of United Nations and in particular, UNOOSA, to facilitate international cooperation and global governance mechanisms.

To serve this purpose, together with the United Nations, Turkey has inaugurated the United Nations Technology Bank at the TUBITAK campus in Gebze, Turkey, earlier this month.

The UN General Assembly approved the Technology Bank charter and the Turkish Parliament ratified the home country agreement with the UN.

The purpose of the UN Technology Bank is to build Science and Technology Capacity in the least developed countries. There are 47 least developed countries constituting about one billion of the world population. One of the instruments of the technology bank will be the transfer of technologies relevant to health, food and agriculture, clean water and environment. As also demonstrated vividly in the panels, space technologies and utilization of earth observation data are central to these objectives.

Turkish Government is making an annual two million US dollars contribution to the UN Technology Bank Trust Fund. We encourage other member nations to participate in the fund, and representatives from the least developed countries to contact us to make use of the Technology Bank services.

Lastly, our five-year development plan on Space Technologies, covering the period 2019-2023, has recently been completed and will be ratified by the Turkish parliament this Summer.

The plan emphasizes a broad range of aspects related with Space, including human resources, international relations, legislating national space law in coordination with the UN space treaties and regulations, utilization of satellite earth observation data to address societal challenges, indigenous technologies in design, production and launching of space systems.