

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space***Unedited transcript*550th Meeting

Wednesday, 7 June 2006, 10 a.m.

Vienna

*Chairman: Mr. A. A. Abiodun (Nigeria)**The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

The CHAIRMAN: Distinguished delegates, good morning. I am pleased and honoured to welcome all of you back to Vienna International Centre and I now declare open the forty-ninth session and the 550th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

As you are all no doubt aware, the Committee will shortly elect its Officers for the next two-year term in accordance with paragraph 57 of General Assembly resolution 60/99 and the agreement reached at the forty-sixth session of the Committee in 2003. In the interim period, I will continue to preside over this meeting until the new Chairman has been duly elected, at which time it will be my pleasure to invite him and the new Bureaux to assume the Chair.

Before commencing with the election of its Officers, the Committee, however, should adopt its agenda for this forty-ninth session.

Adoption of the Agenda (agenda item 2)

Distinguished delegates, you have before you for your approval and adoption the Provisional Agenda for the session, contained in document A/AC.105/L.263. This Provisional Agenda has been prepared on the basis of the agreement reached at the 2005 session of the Committee, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/99. An indicative schedule of work is set out in the Annex to that document. Please note that the annotations and the indicative schedule of work are not part of the agenda for adoption by the Committee and

we should thus proceed with the adoption of the agenda itself.

If I hear no objections, may I take it that the agenda is adopted, as presented to you all?

*It is so decided.***Election of officers (agenda item 3)**

Distinguished delegates, we now proceed to agenda item 3 and that is the Election of Officers.

In paragraph 57 of its resolution 60/99, the General Assembly noted that the Committee, at its current session, would endorse the election of the Officers of its Subcommittees and would also elect its Officers for the period 2006 to 2007 for the COPUOS Bureaux.

At its session last year, the Committee noted that the candidatures of Gérard Brachet of France, Elöd Both of Hungary and Paul R. Tiendrebeogo of Burkina Faso, for the offices of Chairman, First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur, respectively, of the Committee for the period 2006-2007.

At its forty-third session earlier this year, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee elected Mr. B. N. Suresh of India Chairman of its forty-third session and Professor Mazlan Othman of Malaysia Chairman of its forty-fourth session.

Also at its forty-fifth session earlier this year, the Legal Subcommittee elected Raimundo González Aninat, the distinguished Ambassador of Chile, as

In its resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that, beginning with its thirty-ninth session, the Committee would be provided with unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. This record contains the texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages as transcribed from taped recordings. The transcripts have not been edited or revised.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week of the date of publication, to the Chief, Conference Management Service, Room D0771, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria. Corrections will be issued in a consolidated corrigendum.



Chairman of the Subcommittee for a two-year term of office.

May I take it that the Committee endorses the election of the Officers of its Subcommittees for the period 2006 to 2007?

I see no objections.

It is so decided.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the Committee would wish to elect Mr. Gérard Brachet of France as its Chairman for the two-year terms, starting from this session, in 2006 for the next two years?

I see no objection.

Mr. Gérard Brachet is duly elected.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Brachet and the new Bureaux, I would like to make my own personal remarks as the Chairman from June 2004 to this very hour, June 2006.

In the year 2006, upon the nomination of my own Government, the Federal Government of Nigeria, and the endorsement of the African Union, all of you by consensus elected me to serve as your Chairman for the two-year period beginning at the forty-seventh session of COPUOS in 2004 and ending at the opening of this, its forty-ninth session, in 2006. This is that moment of closure for my tenure of office as your Chairman. I thank the Government of Nigeria, the African Union and all delegations of this Committee for entrusting me with the responsibility of COPUOS chairmanship in the past two years. With your cooperation, I have tried to do my best in that position.

However, we need to ask ourselves one question. What have we achieved collectively within that period, June 2004 through June 2006?

In quick succession, let me re-capitulate a few things.

We made history in 2004 when the General Assembly devoted a Special Session to the issue of outer space and specifically reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In its subsequent resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004, the General Assembly endorsed the Committee's Plan of Action, contained in the related Committee's report, A/59/174. The Action Teams that were established after UNISPACE III to champion the

implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations, played the key roles in determining the contents of the Action Plan. We all owe the Action Teams and the Secretariat a depth of gratitude for their dedication and constructive contributions.

We also broke new grounds at the General Assembly in 2004 with a Press Conference and a Panel Discussion. And in 2005, COPUOS made illustrated presentations to the Fourth Committee on the role of space in human development. I hope these efforts to give maximum visibility, at the political level at the General Assembly, to the work of this Committee and its subsidiary bodies, will not only continue, but will also be enhanced with the passage of time.

Furthermore, the Committee and its Legal Subcommittee reached agreement on the "Application of the Concept of the 'Launching State'". This was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/115.

This Committee has also established communications with and is making input through our Secretariat, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the contributions that space science and technology can make to the thematic clusters selected by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

We equally have the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management, otherwise known as DMISCO.

The General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of this Committee and approved the admission of both the Kingdom of Thailand and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as members of this Committee.

And also between June 2004 and June 2006, this Committee and its subsidiary bodies also registered significant progress in a number of key areas, which include the following:

Draft protocols on matters specific or particularly on near-Earth objects;

Mitigation of space debris;

On-going establishment of an International Committee on Global Navigation Systems, that is GNSS;

Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

Development of draft protocols on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. That was a mistake I made at first. I wanted to say we made progress in near-Earth objects, not draft protocols on matters on near-Earth objects;

We also made progress as part of our contributions to give effect to the General Assembly resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003 which proclaimed the 10-year period, starting from 2005, as the International Decade on 'Water for Life'. In that regard, we introduced "Space and Water" as a new item on the agenda of the Committee in 2004;

We already began discussions on the celebrations to be organized in 2007, particularly for the fiftieth anniversary of the space age, the fiftieth session of COPUOS and the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty. We are also giving support to proclaim the year 2007 as the "International Heliophysical Year", taking fully into account the successes of the International Geophysical Year of 1957;

Through a variety of its own initiated activities, as well as the activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, particularly the United Nations Space Applications Programme, the Committee continues to strengthen and reinforce its support for international cooperation and the need for all member States of the United Nations, particularly the developing countries, to actively participate in space activities for their own social and economic development.

At the regional level, the Space Conference of the Americas and the annual meetings of the Asia-Pacific Ministers on Space Applications continue to wax very strongly. The year 2004 witnessed the inauguration of the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology. The first Conference was hosted by Nigeria, with the cooperation of Algeria and South Africa, in Abuja in 2005. The second Conference will be hosted by the Republic of South Africa in 2007 and the third by Algeria in 2009.

The Conference in Nigeria also provided the opportunity to brief delegates on the establishment of the African Space Foundation, which will be formally inaugurated towards the end of this year. In terms of vision, the African Space Foundation seeks to: transform Africa into a space-active continent through a total engagement with science and technology which

are the foundations of the space enterprise; and to the development of infrastructures that are adequate and sustainable to meet the needs of its people and its international challenges and obligations.

We also look to the future. In this regard, if you recollect, this Committee invited Professor Kopal of the Czech Republic, in 2003, and he delivered, at our 2004 session, a special lecture on a historical perspective and reflection on the development of COPUOS, with particular emphasis on "Progressive Development of Space Law by the United Nations".

Similarly, upon this Committee's invitation in 2004, Dr. Karl Doetsch of Canada provided us, in 2005, a special insight into his perspective on the motivation for the establishment of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee, their achievements and the need for the Committee to consider what its future goals should be. His presentation was titled "Observations on the Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee".

On the basis of Dr. Karl Doetsch's presentation on what I perceived as his call for the relevance of this Committee in the evolving global space environment, I presented an informal paper on "Planning for Future Roles and Activities of the Committee" for the consideration of this Committee. I do not need to remind any one who was here last June how some of you here today treated my so-called non-paper.

On its completion of the discussion of my paper last June, the Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to prepare a working paper, taking into account the Chairman's informal paper and giving due regard to the views expressed by representatives at that session of the Committee, for consideration at this, the forty-ninth session of COPUOS. In response to that request, the Secretariat has produced document A/AC.105/L.265 which is now before all of you. I invite all delegates to carefully go through this document in order that we could have an informed and an educated discussion when our new Chairman, Mr. Gérard Brachet, tables this document under agenda item, Other Matters.

The above lists of progress and areas of achievements of this Committee notwithstanding, we all know that all roses come with thorns. The Committee, realistically, has a number of problem areas that affect the conduct of its work and which it needs to sincerely address. On this occasion, I will only touch on two of them for the benefit of all of us

and in particular for the urgent attention of the new COPUOS Bureaux.

This matter should, as a matter of urgency, address, forthrightly, the menacing issue of non-attendance and participation in the work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies by a significant number of its members. I have personally observed the growing nature of this problem for many, many years as a member of this Committee's Secretariat and as a delegate. We need to address this problem in order to ensure that only active and deserving members sit in this chamber. There are many other countries that are non-members and who could probably serve this Committee better but are being denied the opportunity of doing so because those inactive and non-participating members are not vacating their usually empty seats.

Secondly, the uniqueness of COPUOS and the cornerstone of its success over the years rest on the organization of its work by consensus. On your behalf, I wish to thank Austria and its distinguished ambassadors, particularly Ambassador Peter Jankowitsch, Ambassador Hohenfellner and Ambassador Walter Lichem, for their foresight and unflinching contributions to the success of this Committee and to enshrining the concept of consensus as its operating culture. All of us must do our best to always reflect on the importance of that arrangement before challenging our colleagues in this Committee with unbecoming phrases such as "I insist". By definition, consensus means cooperation, collaboration, finding or seeking a middle ground among divergent views. I recommend this for proper intake by all delegations.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for the support you have given me in the last two years in the discharge of my responsibilities.

I equally would like to thank my co-members in the Bureaux, Ambassador Ciro Arévalo of Colombia, who is here with us, and Dr. Parviz Tarikhi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Second Vice-Chairman, who is unavoidably absent at this meeting. Similarly, I want to thank Dr. Dorin Prunariu of Romania, the immediate past Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and Professor Sergio Marchisio of Italy, the immediate past Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee, who will be here with us as from next week.

And as all of you know, there is very little we can do in this room without the support of Dr. Camacho, on my immediate right, and the entire staff

of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Dr. Camacho, please convey my personal thanks and sincere gratitude to all the staff of the Office for the support they have given me as Chairman and the Committee itself while we have operated in this chamber in the past two years.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to all the interpreters, Documents Control Office and the Conference Officers for their support and hard work.

And finally, I would like to congratulate the new COPUOS Bureaux that is coming in under the leadership of our new Chairman, Mr. Gérard Brachet of France. Along with him comes Dr. Elöd Both of Hungary and Mr. Paul Tiendrebeogo of Burkina Faso.

I thank you all for what you have done in the last two years. Thank you very much.

I now invite the new Chairman, Mr. Gérard Brachet of France to take his place as the new Chairman for the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, beginning at this forty-ninth session of the Committee.

Thank you.

Mr. G. BRACHET (France) (Chairman) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to start by turning to all delegations of the COPUOS and I would like to thank all of you for the trust that you have placed in me in electing me to the chairmanship of this Committee for the period during 2006 to 2008.

Some of you will know that in my career dealing with space, I have paid particular attention to the United Nations Committee in this domain and it has been my pleasure to make presentations, and I am thinking of 20 years ago now when I spoke before this Committee at headquarters in New York. And I have followed the work of the Committee with particular attention and I would like to underline the remarkable work done in the 1980s on drafting the resolution on remote sensing. And this is a resolution which we sometimes mention during our work here.

I should now like to turn to the election of the other Officers, namely the First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur.

Unless there are any objections, may I take it that the Committee elects Mr. Elöd Both of Hungary as First Vice-Chairman and Paul Tiendrebeogo of Burkina Faso as Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee, for the two-year term starting from the 2006 session?

I see no objections.

It is so decided.

I extend to Mr. Both and Mr. Tiendrebeogo my warmest congratulations on their election and invite them to take their seats at the podium.

Attendance by non-members of the Committee

Distinguished delegates, I should like to inform the Committee that I have received a number of requests from Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Israel, the Dominican Republic, the Holy See and Switzerland, that countries would like to attend the current session of the Committee as observers. I, therefore, suggest that, in keeping with past practice, we invite the representatives of those States to attend the current session and to take the Committee as appropriate.

That is, of course, without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decisions of the Committee with regards to the status of speakers. It is a courtesy that we customarily extend to such delegations.

I see no objections.

It is, therefore, so decided.

Statement by the Chairman (agenda item 4)

Distinguished delegates, I would now like to move on to the next item on the agenda and present my statement to the Committee.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to have been elected to the chairmanship of the COPUOS and I would like to thank you for the trust that you have placed in me and I am anxious to underline that I pledge to oversee the work of this Committee fruitfully.

Before I start, I should like to express my condolences to the people of Indonesia and I would like to express to them my solidarity following the devastating earthquake on the island of Java recently and which has led to thousand of deaths and very large numbers of people left without homes and many people injured.

Representatives, I am delighted to welcome you to the forty-ninth session of the Committee and to see you coming from all corners of the world to take part in these deliberations. For almost 50 years now,

the Committee has been the centre and witness of the amazing exploration and use by mankind of outer space. This Committee has always supported initiatives to develop space exploration and to put such techniques at the service of all countries. And I have no doubt that we will continue such efforts and that our discussions will be fruitful.

I would like to start to thank and congratulate my predecessor for his very competent helmsmanship of the Committee over the last two years. Under his chairmanship, the Committee has had significant successes and has provided significant assistance to the General Assembly in the five-year examination of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third UNISPACE Conference, which we are all familiar with. And this is something which you will know is something that we have examined here on a number of occasions under the title "UNISPACE III + 5". In addition, the General Assembly has approved the Committee's Action Plan and for the implementation of this Plan, and I have no doubt, that Mr. Abiodun will continue to help us, in his capacity as representative of Nigeria, in this work. Once again, thank you very much dear friend for all your efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the forty-fifth anniversary of the first inhabited space flight this year and that opened new horizons in space exploration. On 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet astronaut, carried out the first inhabited, the first manned space flight on the Vostok spacecraft and I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on this exploit.

Twenty-five years ago, Columbia, the American Shuttle, carried out its first trial flight and thus became the first spatial launch vehicle to be re-used in history. This was the beginning of a remarkable adventure which has seen much glory but also tragedy. The severance (perseverance?) of the United States of America in pursuing this programme and the contribution of the programmes, the implementation of an international cooperation model which has been exemplary in space, namely the International Space Station, these are all things which are unanimously recognized. I would like to congratulate the United States of America on the occasion of this anniversary and I look forward with interest the brief documentary focusing on the Space Shuttle Programme which is going to be presented to us by the American delegation under item 5 of the agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen, since our last session, we have seen a number of space advances which have been accomplished by members of this Committee

when it comes to manned space flight, for instance, the Chinese spacecraft, Shenzhou-6, has been successfully launched with two astronauts on board and it re-entered Earth in October 2005. The American Space Shuttle has carried a new flight mast last year and we look forward to another flight this summer.

We have also seen a series of successful space missions towards planets in the solar system which have provided our scientists with new, fascinating data on Mars and Venus. And we have also seen the launch of a new mission towards the solar system's most distant planet, Pluto, although some people do not consider that Pluto is a planet, of course.

In May 2005, India launched its cartography satellite, Cartosat-1, thanks to a satellite launch vehicle in polar orbit and at the beginning of this year, Japan launched its Earth observation satellite, Daichi, that we are familiar with. And we have also seen the pursuit of the development of a European navigation by satellite, Galileo, with the launch of the first Giove-A in December 2005. In the same month, the Russian Federation launched three supplementary GLONASS satellites in order to complete its navigation satellite constellation. The Islamic Republic of Iran launched its first communication satellite and a Thai company launched iPSTAR-1, the biggest satellite ever to have been placed in geostationary orbit.

I would also like to welcome initiatives to set up the world Earth observation system, called GEOSS, and I would also like to welcome the Secretariat of the Working Group on World Observation, the GEOSS Secretariat, in drafting and now implementing the working plan for the group for 2006. This work should lead to sustainable advantages for humankind and should contribute to enforcing the coordination of investment, current and future investment, that is, in Earth observation systems. Of course, the CEOS, the Earth Observation Satellite Committee, that I am very familiar with because it was an honour for me to preside over this Committee in 1997, will continue to play a foremost role in this regard.

And I would like to end this list by welcoming the efforts of the members of the Committee who are particularly interested in maintaining development of the International Space Station. Expedition 12, composed of the American astronaut, William McArthur and Russian astronaut, Valeri Tokarev, arrived at this Station in October 2005 without difficulty. And Expedition 13, with Pavel Vinogradov, the Russian astronaut on board, and the American astronaut, Jeffrey Williams, followed up in March 2006. And I would also like to recall that when we

saw this crew change take place, the Brazilian astronaut, Marcos Ponte, was able to fly in space and was the first astronaut from this major country of Latin America to do so and I would like to congratulate Brazil on this and I would like to congratulate all these space explorers.

Delegates, next year, the Committee will hold its fiftieth session and that will be the ideal opportunity to recall exploits accomplished in the first 50 years of the space era, that is since Sputnik-1 was launched in 1957, and to think about the direction that should be taken in the next 50 years. I am planning a number of events which will put us in a position better to raise awareness amongst other bodies of the United Nations system, as well as governments and public opinion of what we are doing. And I imagine that this is something that we will return to during our session.

As you know, our world leaders decided at the September 2005 World Summit that they would reinforce and update the United Nations Organization's Working Plan in order to take into account the needs of its member States. And to this end, they requested of the General Assembly and other competent bodies that they should re-examine all mandates pursuant to General Assembly resolutions and other bodies going back more than five years. And the Assembly intends to examine mandates which are no longer relevant, topical and to look into the resources which need to be refocused on domains where there is a greater degree of priority. I consider that this is a process that, in short and long term, could be useful for the work of our Committee, the Working Plan of our Committee in the area of international cooperation with regards to the peaceful use of outer space insofar as the Committee is focusing on the ongoing evolution of space activities and the ways to make the Committee's Action Plan fully operational.

And I should like to recall that last year, we talked about the evolution of space activities and we talked about a possible drafting of a long-term plan to bolster the Committee's role in the area of international cooperation dealing with the peaceful use of outer space under the any other business item of our agenda. In this regard, it is neither(?) standing that the Office for Outer Space Affairs is going to be distributing a working document on the proposal that was made at last year's session. And this Secretariat's document is based on the unofficial document, or the working paper rather, presented by the Chair of the Committee at the forty-eighth session, and this takes due account of the points of view expressed by representatives at that session.

I should like to welcome the work accomplished last year by Mr. Ade Abiodun, my predecessor, and by Mr. Karl Doetsch, the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee from 2001-2003, in helping the Committee to examine its role, which is constantly evolving, in promoting international cooperation in the area of the peaceful use of outer space.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to note that the 2005 World Summit recognized the importance of the role of science and technology in promoting sustainable development. World leaders committed in particular to support research in order to take note of the particular needs of developing countries in the areas of health, agriculture, conservation and the conservation and exploitation of natural resources and the management of the environment, of energy and exploitation of forests and impact of climate change.

They also committed to encourage technology transfer and to help developing countries to draft national human resources, science and development strategies and to cooperate a new(?) limitation of a world advance warning system on natural disasters. And the tools which are made available for the exploitation of space applications and the benefits that are associated with this will play a key role in the pursuit of such objectives.

Since 1999, and since UNISPACE III, the COPUOS has brought a number of its activities in line with the objectives of the Millennium objectives, as defined by the Millennium Summit in the year 2000 and to which were honed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 and reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit.

The UNISPACE III Conference had space techniques and service of mankind as its main theme and I have to say that I am quite proud to recall the unique approach that was adopted by this Committee in applying these recommendations and this was how teams were put together to work on the recommendations in priority areas. A number of them have already led to such results. And I will mention two in particular. The establishment of the International Committee on World Systems for Satellite Navigation, and I think that work of the Ad Hoc Group of this Committee here has been the work which was pursued successfully yesterday. And the current debate I would like to recall on an international entity to be set up to coordinate the use of space techniques to manage disasters and the name we use for this is DMISCO. And I think that work is

underway here at this very moment. I look forward to future discussions on setting up such a body and the final report of the Experts Special Group to meet during the current session of the Committee.

I also note with satisfaction that public health teams and teams on the environmental monitoring, sharing of knowledge, sustainable development and near-Earth orbit objects, are continuing their work with the aim of reinforcing international coordination in these areas.

Thanks to proposals made for the examination of UNISPACE III + 5 of the General Assembly, we set up an important mechanism, a coordination with of our action with the United Nations Sustainable Development Committee. And we have given you a new thrust to this, deciding last year to present reports on the contribution of space to the various themes examined by the Committee. I would like to thank delegations contributing to this document on the uses of space techniques for energy and monitoring of air pollution. I would like also to thank the Secretariat for acting as liaison with the Secretariat of the Sustainable Development Division of the DAES in transmitting the contribution of the Committee to the Commission. The document that we examined in February was presented to the Commission just a few weeks ago.

And it is my conviction that we will continue to make progress this year in the implementation of the recommendations of the UNISPACE III. This will involve our studying following appropriate reports, the application made last year of three priority measures to find last year, that is maximizing the advantages represented by current space capacity in terms of the management of disasters, drawing as much as possible on the use of world navigation systems, applications of world navigation systems by satellite for sustainable development, reinforcing capacity in the area of space activities.

Excellencies, delegates, as you will know, we have a very busy programme ahead of us. And before we deal with the items on our agenda at this session, I would like to resume the progress made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee which have already held their sessions this year. And in this regard, I would like to congratulate Mr. Suresh of India and Mr. González of Chile. I would like to congratulate them upon their election to the respective chairmanships of these two Subcommittees which they are guiding with great competence. Thanks to their knowledge, the Subcommittees have been in a position to take a

number of important decisions, as regards the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

This Committee has taken stock of recent advances with regards to space exploration and related applications. This session was also the opportunity to deal with a number of important scientific and technical issues in the area of international cooperation with regard to the peaceful use of outer space.

The Plenary, once again, under the excellent chairmanship of Mr. Nasim Shah of Pakistan, and examining the application of the UNISPACE recommendations and the United Nations Programme for the Implementation of Space Techniques and the provisional draft agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The Working Group also studied progress that has been achieved under the application of the Action Plan approved by the General Assembly, within the context of UNISPACE III, as well as the contribution of the Committee to the work of the Sustainable Development Committee that I mentioned previously. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to congratulate Mr. Shah for his very competent guidance of the Working Group and I note that significant progress has been achieved in these areas.

The United Nations Programme for the Application of Space Techniques is continuing to play a key role in the application of UNISPACE III recommendations, in particular when it comes to developing the capacity of developing countries for the use of space techniques to support their efforts in order to achieve sustainable development. On the basis of proposals made by specialists in the area of space technique applications, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recommended the Committee that it should approve at this session the activities proposed for the Programme for 2006, as presented in the report of the Subcommittee.

I am satisfied note that the Programme for the Application of Space Techniques is broadening its field of operations and, since, including in its Programme of Activities, with regards to the launching of pilot projects to demonstrate the effectiveness of space techniques in the various areas of social and economic development, a great deal of progress has been made. A number of tele-medicine projects and water management projects have been launched. These are significant in their areas with regards to sustainable development. At the moment it is currently involved in convincing relevant figures, highly-placed figures, in the area of sustainable development of the cost-effectiveness of the application of space techniques for

a number of pilot projects. I look forward to presentations in this regard.

I would also like to congratulate Ms. Alice Lee, who is the specialist on the application of space techniques. and her staff on the excellent work that has been done on this Programme. Everybody knows that in helping developing countries to bolster their capacity in the area of space, that this Programme is playing an important role. And I would also like to underline the fact that the success of this work depends on the support of all member States.

As regards remote sensing of the work of the Earth by satellite and the related applications with regards to development, these questions continue to be a major concern for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Given the advantages of remote sensing, developing countries, in particular, must develop their capacity in this area in order to make sure that the social and economic development is accelerated. In this context, I am satisfied to note international collaboration between CEOS, that I mentioned earlier, as well as the International Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing Society, SIPT, the International Astronautical Federation and COSPAR.

Space debris continues, as you know, to be a major subject of concern for the Subcommittee. This year, the Committee (Subcommittee?) once again convened its Working Group to examine the draft guidelines on the reduction of space debris and this was drafted during intersessional meetings by the Working Group. This draft has now been made available to all countries to make sure that it will be approved at the 2007 session of the Subcommittee. On behalf of this Committee, I would like to thank Mr. Claudio Portelli from Italy for his very effective chairing of the Working Group's debates on space debris. I should also like to underline and welcome the constructive dialogue between members of the Committee and the inter-institutional coordination with the IADC, as well ongoing work in the Working Group between sessions.

In this context, I would like to underline the need for all countries to show responsibility in their actions and to preserve the space environment which is in a position to guarantee the long-term sustainability of outer space as a safe place for activities on the low-Earth orbit, the near-Earth orbit. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind the huge risks for the use of and for the peaceful exploration of space that would result from uncontrolled proliferation of space debris.

With regards to the work of the Subcommittee working on the question on the use of nuclear power sources in space, 2006 was a very rich year. The Subcommittee, in conjunction with the IAEA, held a Technical Workshop on the objectives and the range and the general characteristics of a possible safety norm to be applied to nuclear power sources in space. This Workshop was particularly good when it came to the exchange of points of view and information with regards to applications on course planned and currently forecast, or foreseeable rather, in this area. And I was able to note this personally because in February I took part in a number of sessions of that Workshop.

In this regard, I would like to thank the Office for Outer Space Affairs for contribution to the organization of that Workshop and I would like to thank the Government of the United States of America for its financial assistance by way of covering interpretation costs.

During and immediately after the Workshop, the Working Group on the Uses of Nuclear Energy Source in Space developed a draft report and decided to hold intersessional meetings during the actual session of the Committee. These initiatives will facilitate examination by the Subcommittee and the Working Group in 2007 of a possible framework for technical security for the use of nuclear energy sources in space, including the modalities for developing it.

We would also like to applaud the contributions of the IAEA and we most particularly would like to applaud the contributions of Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom for whom we would also like to express our gratitude for his devotion and his high skill level that he demonstrated in directing the work of the Group.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee achieved its Work Plan over a three-year period of time in spatial tele-medicine. He also shared his experiences and his know-how in this area. A number of international projects with regard to monitoring of various epidemics have been put forth to the Subcommittee. And it is my pleasure to note that the examination of this item, in the last three sessions, has been an excellent opportunity for member States and observers to learn the lessons from their experiences and share them and establish partnerships in this area. There have been a number of interesting presentations on the subject of geo-crossing objects and we will be hearing it during the 2007 session. It was decided to create a working group to look at it more specifically and the mechanisms that could be used to this end.

The Subcommittee continued examination of space systems in the service of disaster management in keeping with the three-year plan. And with regard to this item of the agenda, a workshop was held on disaster management, looking specifically at the use of satellites and telecommunications and weather satellites in this regard. It also examined the proposal of an Expert Working Group, made up of special experts, who would be looking at creating an international body in order to ensure coordination and supply the means for realistic optimization of space services and to ensure their efficiency in order to meet disaster management needs. It was with great satisfaction that I note that the Subcommittee agreed on a number of specific measures in this regard in terms of orienting the experts so that they may end their studies in this regard and I am very hopeful about the Subcommittee's examination of this during this session and its report thereon.

With regard to the item of the agenda, Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the Work of its Forty-Third Session", the Committee will be examining international satellites in terms of search and rescue. As you know, there was a partnership programme set up between COSPAS-SARSAT for France at the end of the 1970s, and I impatiently await the reports on their activities. I would also like to specify here, in fact, that a programme was set in place in order to save some 19,000 lives during several 5,000 emergency situations.

I would also like to draw your attention to the most recent Colloquium during the Legal Subcommittee on "Spatial Radar with Synthetic Openings and their Applications". During the Colloquium, a number of presentations looked at the issue of space radar and synthetic openings, both that occurred recently and those in the future, and there was the issue of how industry might broaden and develop the use of all data that are obtained thanks to these radar in various areas such as social and economic development. According to tradition, this was alternated with colloquia from industry on COSPAR/FIA (IAF?) and the Subcommittee will be holding in its forty-fourth session another colloquium on the subject of the "Use of the Equatorial Orbit and Applications in Space: Challenges and Opportunities".

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to draw your attention to the work of the Legal Subcommittee during its forty-fifth session.

The Subcommittee reconvened and continued its work on the state of application of the five UNISPACE treaties and issues relative to the definition

and delimitation of outer space and the practice of States and international organizations with regard to registry of space objects.

The Working Group on the five United Nations treaties on the peaceful uses of outer space met a number of times. It was presided over by Mr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece and they developed a document which looks at the advantages of adhering to and acceding to such a Convention and international responsibility for damages caused by space objects and this will be distributed to member States. I would like to thank Professor Cassapoglou for his commitment in this regard.

The Working Group on issues related to the definition and delimitation of outer space has also made headway in looking at the work developed in the forty-fourth session of the Subcommittee, under the chairmanship of Mr. José Monserrat Filho of Brazil, who very skilfully led them. It was agreed that a number of items of the Subcommittee will be taken into account when it analyzes States' response to the questionnaire on space objects. We would like to thank him for his devotion and his skill in conducting the work of the Group.

The Working Group on the practices of States and international organizations with regard to the registry of space objects continued its work in looking at a framework for a working plan, to be developed over several years, adopted by the Committee. Under the efficient leadership of Mr. Kai-Uwe Schrogl of Germany, the Working Group agreed on a number of groups of elements which might be a foundation for achieving a consensus on recommendations and the specific conclusions which are reflected in the Subcommittee's report and which it should be developing for its forty-sixth session in 2007.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to warmly thank Mr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece, Mr. José Monserrat Filho of Brazil and Mr. Schrogl of Germany for their very wise and sedatious(?) way of serving as chairmen of these various Working Groups.

In keeping with custom, the International Institute of Space Law and the European Space Law Centre, organized a Colloquium on the "Legal Aspects of Disaster Management and Space Law's Contribution". This Colloquium was very rich in lessons learned and led to a great deal of interest as well as in-depth contributions from the members of the Subcommittee. I would like to thank both institutions for their efforts in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, representatives, I would now like to look at the other issues on the Committee's agenda.

This year, we will be looking at means of ensuring that space continues to be used for peaceful purposes, advantageous consequences of space technology, space and society, space and water and the recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society.

As you know, one of the items of the agenda is the means of ensuring that space be continued to be used for peaceful purposes and the General Assembly asked that the Committee continue to examine means of promoting regional cooperation and interregional cooperation in this area based on experiences gathered during the Conference of Space Americas and the role of space technology and what it might play in terms of applying recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

And I would like at this time thank the Governments of Nigeria, Algeria and South Africa for having successfully organized the first Conference of African Leaders on Science and Space Technology, around the subject "Space: A Vital Instrument in the Service of Development of Africa. This Meeting was held in Abuja in November 2005.

I would also like to draw your attention to the preparatory work for the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas that will be taking place next month, I believe, in Quito. This Conference is the result of true regional cooperation in Latin America, including Ecuador, Chile and Colombia, who were all involved in organizing this and in organizing previous regional conferences.

I also note with satisfaction that, for its part, Viet Nam remarkably organized the Twenty-Sixth Asian Conference on Remote Sensing in 2005 in November.

These regional conferences are not only a means of facilitating the exchange of knowledge and innovative ideas at a regional level, but they also raise awareness in terms of solutions that space might bring to help us meet the challenges of development.

With regard to the contribution of space in implementing the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, I would like to call your attention at this time to the updated list of initiatives and programmes related to space and that are involving United Nations systems bodies, as well as

members of this Committee, in order to provide a follow-up and specific implementation of the Plan announced during the Summit. The Secretariat has distributed document A/AC.105/2006/CRP.4, which provides information on this list and I would urge members of the Committee to take advantage of this very precious resource and use it. I would also invite you to continue to share necessary information so that the list can be as complete as possible and so that it may continue to be a useful instrument for end-users and for those who use space means, or think of using space means, in terms of implementing measures recommended by the World Summit.

The exploration of space and the evolution of space science is a source of motivation for young people to study scientific and technical disciplines. Education is one of the priority areas for the United Nations and it is vital to achieve the objectives enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and I would urge all representatives to actively participate in discussions of the Committee on teaching and education in the context of the item on the agenda devoted to space and society. During this session, we will finish our examination of the subject relative to space and education, which was a focal point in the agenda for the Work Plan agreed in 2003 to cover three years. This year the Committee has been invited to develop a number of specific action plans, which are very concrete, in order to incorporate space in education to strengthen the teaching of subjects related to space and increase the number of space tools in the service of education, ensuring that space services contribute to meeting the objectives of the Millennium for development and for access to education. The Committee is also invited to develop a brief document on the role of space in education, as well as its relationship between space and education, which will be transferred to the General Conference of UNESCO.

During this session of the Committee, we will continue to discuss the item of the agenda concerning space and water. During our last session, we saw a number of interesting presentations on the success of space technology applications for the management of water resources. One presentation looked at the development of a pilot project which is geared to establishing water resources in the Chad Lake, which today account for a twentieth of what they were at the start and I impatiently await and anticipate knowledge of the initiatives that were recently undertaken in the context of the pilot project by members of the Committee. Moreover, I hope that there will be a number of other important reports on initiatives at a regional and national level that use space technology in order to manage water resources. Our work in this area

will help us significantly in order to achieve the goals set in Objective No. 7 of the Development Goals for the Millennium, as well as, and that means, of course, reducing by half, by now and 2015, the percentage of the population that does not have access to a sustainable supply of potable water.

And in this regard, I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the important work carried out in Austria, the European Space Agency and the Office for Outer Space Affairs organized a Colloquium in Graz last September in this regard. And at this time, the co-organizers met and worked with decision-makers and space agencies and national and international entities who work with the issue of water resources management. The Colloquium made it possible for a group of experts to work, on a voluntary basis, to provide assistance in the area of water management and development in order to take advantage of space technology, it would more effectively manage water resources.

This year, the Committee will be examining a new item of the agenda of the recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society. In this context, it will be reviewing the results of the Summit and with the agreement of the ITU, it has been invited to provide information on this subject. It will also be examining the means by which space techniques and applications can contribute to the application of the Summit's recommendations.

With regard to management of the composition of the Committee Bureaux and its subsidiary bodies, I note with pleasure that the transition has been very successful and this year, the Committee and the two Subcommittees have elected new Chairs and new members of the Bureaux based on the candidatures presented by the regional groups that were concerned.

And I note with satisfaction that the regional groups have appointed members for the Bureaux for the period of 2008-2009 and thus I would like to congratulate Ambassador Ciro Arévalo from Colombia, Vladimir Kopal from the Czech Republic, Aboudekr Seddik Kedjar from Algeria and Filipe Duarte Santos from Portugal, for their appointments. And in this regard, I would urge the Group of the States from Asia to communicate the name of their candidate who would serve as First Vice-Chair of the Committee so that all candidates will be known for the Bureaux, in keeping with the agreement of 2003.

Ladies and gentlemen, following the Colloquium which was held last year on the subject of

“Space and Archaeology”, the Committee agreed to study a number of other areas which benefit from space applications and their uses. This year, there will be a Colloquium on the subject of “Space and Forests”. This Colloquium will make it possible to get an idea of the current use of space techniques in the management and monitoring of forests and it will further highlight some of the more particularly useful applications which developing countries might be able to use in order to develop and manage this very precious natural resource. I have no doubt that these presentations will lead to a great deal of interest amongst members.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome a new observer to the Committee, i.e., the European Institute of Space Policy, which is based here in Vienna and representatives of this Group have always actively participated in our sessions in the past, both at the Subcommittee and Committee level, and I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Organization and welcome him to our Committee. I am sure that the Committee would benefit from the ESPI’s contributions.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, representatives, the coming days will be full of discussion and decisions. And giving the remarkable achievements and the resolution of a number of complex issues which we have been able to achieve, based on consensus, with your cooperation and with your precious contribution, I am convinced that this session too will be crowned with success.

Our Committee should go in depth into each of the items that I have just introduced. Together, and thanks to the assiduous efforts of each and every one of us, I am convinced that we will meet our common goals and the challenges before us.

Thank you.

Organization of work

Distinguished representatives, I would now like to touch upon several issues regarding the organization of our work. As in the past, I will look at the agenda. The indicative agenda has been annexed and it will be followed as flexibly as possible. We will adjust it as needed to for our work.

Resolution 32/71 of the General Assembly requires that members of each of the United Nations bodies be informed at the beginning of each session of the resources available to it.

I would now like to inform you of the arrangements made for this session of the Committee. This session is scheduled to be held from 7 to 16 June 2006. A total number of 16 meetings are expected to be held. Conference Room III, Conference Room VII and Rooms C0713, C0727 and C0729 are also available for use by the session. Simultaneous interpretation is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Sound recordings will be made for the Plenary meetings in the original language and in English and unedited verbatim transcripts will be made available following this session of the Committee in all the official languages of the United Nations.

Please note also that in the Annex to its resolution 56/242, the General Assembly adopted guidelines on limiting the duration of meetings as follows.

First, meeting should normally be held during regular meeting hours, i.e., from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m., on working days.

Two, intergovernmental bodies should undertake a review of their meeting patterns and reporting cycles and, in coordination with Conference Services, adjust their meeting requests for subsequent sessions accordingly.

In addition to the above, for the last few years, the budget of the United Nations has placed a number of constraints and restrictions on the capacity of Conference Services to deliver services as they did in the past. In particular, unscheduled meetings, ad hoc informal consultations, meetings beyond regular hours, meetings on non-working days and extended meetings or sessions will most likely not be serviced by Conference Services.

I would also like to remind delegates of the General Assembly’s request to cut down on the length of reports issued by the Secretariat, including the reports of intergovernmental bodies. I would like, therefore, to inform you that, with regard to the current session of the Committee, the Secretariat will endeavour to further shorten the length of the report, in accordance with the guidelines of the Secretary-General, without affecting its quality or content. I would, therefore, ask for your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

Finally, delegates are requested to turn mobile telephones off when entering the Conference Room. Indeed, I note that I am the first one not to have respected this recommendation. Let me know correct

it. Mobile phones, switched on and on stand-by, seriously interfere with the sound system in conference rooms and hence impact the quality of interpretation and sound recording. I, therefore, strongly urge you to please adhere to this request. Thank you.

General exchange of views (agenda item 5)

Distinguished representatives, I would now like to begin our consideration of item 5 of the agenda, General Exchange of Views.

The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of the United States of America. Is that correct? No, we actually have a question from the Czech Republic first. Mr. Kopal, you have the floor Sir. Microphone for Mr. Kopal please.

Mr. V. KOPAL (Czech Republic) (*interpretation from French*): First and foremost, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate you and present you my warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I am sure that your efficient and wise stewardship of this Committee will help us to fulfil all our functions and meet all of our goals. And further, I would like to congratulate your colleagues, i.e., the First Vice-Chair, Mr. Both and the Second Vice-Chair and Rapporteur.

If I take the floor at this time, it is only to ask that the text of your very important statement full of facts, events and full of ideas and projects for our activities and for the future of this Committee, be made available to all delegations. And I would also make the same request with regard to the statement made by the outgoing Chairman of this Committee.

Thank you very much Sir.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Mr. Kopal.

I confirm then that the text of my statement, as well as that of my predecessor, will be made available and distributed. In fact, I think they are already available and they should be distributed very soon.

Thank you and I would also like to thank you for your congratulations, both to me and to my colleagues, the First and Second Vice-Chairmen.

And now, I would now like to turn to the statement of the representative of the United States of America. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. G. L. SCHULTE (Mr. K. HODGKINS?) (United States of America): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, congratulations to you on your new position as Chair of COPUOS. Congratulations as well to the other new members of the Bureaux.

I would also like to extend my delegation's thanks to Dr. Ade Abiodun for his outstanding contributions as past Chairman of this Committee. And, of course, we wish to recognize the superb work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

The exploration of space is an international endeavour and I would like to note the accomplishments of several nations in our common question.

Congratulations to China for the highly successful Shenzhou-VI mission this past October.

Congratulations should also be extended to Japan for the successful launch of the Astro-E1 mission last July, and more recently its ALOS mission.

We wish also to recognize the European Space Agency and Russia for the successful launch last November of the Venus Express mission.

And we would also like to extend our congratulations to the European members of EUMETSAT on a successful geostationary satellite launch of METEOSAT-9 last December. We look forward to EUMETSAT's upcoming launch of MetOp next month, the first European operational polar satellite.

As was noted by you, Mr. Chairman, the year 2006 marks the forty-fifth anniversary of Yuri Gagarin. This was a huge achievement in the exploration of outer space.

This year is also the twenty-fifth anniversary for the United States Space Shuttle Programme. On 12 April 1981, Space Shuttle Columbia, commanded by John Young and piloted by Robert Crippen, was launched on the very first Shuttle mission, STS-1.

As a tribute to the hard work and bravery of the individuals involved in this revolutionary programme, we would like to present a video here in the Committee, and with your permission, Mr. Chairman, we wish to show this brief video now and then resume my remarks.

Thank you.

Video (not transcribed as not very clear)

Thank you Mr. Chairman, thanks to all the delegates here for allowing us to present this video. I would like now to resume my statement.

Last July's launch of Discovery was our first Shuttle mission following the tragic loss of seven astronauts in the Columbia tragedy of 2003. As President Bush stated then "the cause in which they died will continue. Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on". Next month will bring the next step in the return to flight for the United States Space Shuttle Programme with the return of Discovery to outer space.

The mission will include an ESA astronaut from Germany who will join the Space Station crew and will carry the Italian-built Multi-Purpose Logistics Module, known as Leonardo, with more than two tons of equipment and supplies aboard.

The crew of Space Shuttle Discovery will perform maintenance on the Space Station and deliver more supplies and cargo for future Station expansion.

The crew will also continue to test new equipment and procedures that increase the safety of Space Shuttles.

We would also like to highlight some achievements over the past year in other parts of the United States Space Programme.

We have begun the orbit of Mars, with the success of the Mars reconnaissance Orbiter.

The Mars Exploration Rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, have passed their second anniversary on Mars.

We are also very pleased with the Deep Impact mission and its encounter with Comet Tempel-1 last year; the continued success of the Cassini mission to Saturn and its moons; and the successful return of the Stardust comet samples on 15 January of this year.

Finally, we are very excited about the beginning of the first-ever spacecraft exploration of

Pluto, with the launch of NASA's New Horizons mission on 19 January of this year.

Before turning to the work of the Committee for this session, I would like to underscore the importance the United States puts on international cooperation in outer space.

Currently we are moving forward to implement a vision for space exploration and we greatly encourage international collaboration.

The NASA Administrator has publicly stated that NASA continues to work together with the commercial and international communities on concepts for supporting lunar operations and lunar science activities.

Over the past year, NASA hosted four workshops on space exploration that were very well attended, including 30 international space organizations.

Through these workshops, we have begun to identify potential areas for collaborative lunar robotic exploration, and ultimately human exploration beyond low-Earth orbit.

Mr. Chairman, once again our agenda for this session of COPUOS holds the promise of producing tangible results on a number of important topics.

I anticipate an interesting exchange of views on the spin-off benefits of space exploration and on strengthening the role of COPUOS in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Committee will be considering again this year an item dealing with space and society with a special emphasis on education. This will be an excellent opportunity for delegations to share information on national and international efforts to demonstrate to the general public how space activities could enrich their daily lives.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to support the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as well as the Plan of Action included in the comprehensive implementation report to the United Nations General Assembly, A/59/174. We support the Plan of Action and intend to work at the national and international levels to ensure that as many of the recommendations as possible are fulfilled.

We were particularly pleased with the unique contribution that the Action Teams made to these efforts.

Under the voluntary leadership of governments, this innovative mechanism has allowed governmental and non-governmental entities to participate in the follow-up to UNISPACE III while preserving the pivotal role of member States.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and I would like to thank him in addition for presenting this interesting little film on the American Space Shuttle. We are all witnesses of the remarkable success of that Shuttle and, of course, we do not forget the two unfortunate accidents that preceded it. And I would like to say that I personally was twice present during the launch of a Space Shuttle from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, including one where there was a French astronaut in the crew.

Now the breadth and the technology ambition of this Programme are quite extraordinary and I think that this is something that was mentioned in the video, namely that we are talking about implementation which goes above and beyond everything which has been done hitherto in the area of space exploration. And all we need to expect now is that this will be surpassed by other ambitious projects.

Thank you very much Sir for showing us this film.

I should now like to recognize the Japanese delegation. I think that Ambassador Shigeki Sumi would like to take the floor on behalf of Japan.

Mr. S. SUMI (Japan): Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegations, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I am honoured to address the forty-ninth session of COPUOS. Please allow me to extend a heartfelt welcome to the new Chairman, Mr. Brachet, the First Vice-Chairman, Mr. Both, and the Second Vice-Chairman, Mr. Tiendrebeogo.

Our gratitude also goes to the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Abiodun, and other outgoing Vice-Chairmen. Under his excellent chairmanship and their teamwork, we achieved such valuable outcomes in the last two years.

I would also like to express our deepest gratitude and respect for the efforts of Mr. Sergio Camacho-Lara, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and his excellent staff.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences for the recent lives lost due to the earthquake in the island of Java, Indonesia, and flood in the northern part of the Kingdom of Thailand. I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to the affected nations, their people and the families of all victims. Japan is committed to contributing to the relief efforts of these disasters, together with the people of Thailand and Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman, among the most significant objectives of Japan's space development activities has been the creation of a safe and prosperous society. Additionally, Japan has made several efforts to expand its knowledge on outer space and the planet Earth by embarking on many space activities. I would now like to take this opportunity to share some examples of the fruits of our endeavours.

To begin, Japan has been active in promoting the International Space Station, ISS, in cooperation with all countries involved in this project. Japan's main contribution to the ISS has been through the development of the Japanese Experiment Module, JEM, which involves experiments and research in outer space. Additionally, Japan is making a maximum effort to establish flight operation teams for the ISS. As part of these activities, the Japanese astronaut, Souichi Noguchi, demonstrated excellent teamwork ability during his flight on the Space Shuttle Discovery where he carried out significant work of the mission including a space walk. Japan recognizes that the development of the ISS and JEM will contribute to the further utilization of outer space and in turn improve the quality of our lives. We are fully convinced of this. In this regard, Japan expresses its thanks and praise to the NASA United States for its Discovery Programme which we witnessed now in the film a few minutes ago.

Japan has recently made a couple of achievements in the field of space science and exploration, namely the successful landing and taking off of HAYABUSA on the asteroid ITOKAWA and the launching of both new X-ray astronomy satellite SUZAKU and the new infrared astronomy satellite AKARI. We expect these accomplishments to be a great asset in the development of the field of astronomy in the twenty-first century.

Recently, JAXA and the European Space Agency, ESA, succeeded in an optical communication

experiment between the Japanese experimental satellite KIRARI and the ESA satellite, ARTEMIS. In February, HIMAWARI-6 was launched successfully. This satellite executes meteorological observation and air traffic control. We believe that these achievements contributed to the sustainable development of our society, a goal that we have been aiming for.

Last January, the eighth launching of the Japanese flagship rocket, H-IIA, was successfully operated which placed Advanced Land Observation Satellite, DAICHI, into orbit. DAICHI has already contributed to advanced land observations by monitoring some disasters such as the landslide in Leyte Island in the Republic of Philippines, the eruption of Merahapi Volcano and the earthquake in the Java islands in the Republic of Indonesia and the flood in the northern part of the Kingdom of Thailand. In each case, DAICHI performed urgent observations of the damaged situation and acquired data which, we believe, have been useful to a rescue or a revival plan. Japan will continue to contribute to the immediate understanding of the damages caused by natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman, Japan has also been promoting international cooperation in a number of other fields. For example, in the field of Earth observation, Japan closely cooperates with space-related organizations through the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, CEOS, and contributes to promoting Integrated Global Observing Strategy, IGOS. As a member of the Executive Committee and a co-Chair of the Architecture and Data Committee of the Group on Earth Observations, GEO, Japan has been contributing to promoting the establishment of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems and continues to take the initiative for its implementation based upon the 10-Year Implementation Plan.

Last October, the Twelfth Session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum was held in Kitakyushu City, Japan. At this Forum, space and disaster management organizations in the Asia-Pacific region agreed to collaborate and have launched the Sentinel-Asia project which aims to share disaster information in this area. For the implementation of Sentinel-Asia, the first meeting was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, last February. The second meeting is scheduled to take place in Bangkok, Thailand, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, as well as space, science and technology-related agencies. Japan has been heading these projects with the cooperation of the aforementioned partners and is looking forward to its further expansion in this region.

To summarize, we appreciate the opportunity to present to you today the activities being pursued by JAXA, the disaster monitoring contributions it has made through DAICHI and the Sentinel-Asia project which, again, aims to share disaster information in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Chairman, last October, the Fifty-Sixth International Astronautical Congress, IAC, was held in Fukuoka, Japan. About 2,300 participants joined the Congress and discussed the development of academic research and the promotion of international cooperation on space development. Prior to the IAC, a United Nations/IAF Workshop was held in Kitakyushu, Japan. At this Workshop, discussions were focused on "Space Education and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Development". Japan, for its part, contributes to the building of the foundation for space education in many countries around the world by collaborating and coordinating with space agencies and various entities engaged in education.

Japan continues to make significant contributions with regard to the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. In cooperation with other countries, we will certainly contribute to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration recommendations and the Action Team's proposals.

Additionally, Japan is making efforts in the mitigation of space debris. To illustrate, JAXA has developed its own Space Debris Mitigation Standard which was presented at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, hosted last April. Furthermore, experts from Japan have played an important role in working out the guidelines proposed by IADC. We intend to continue such efforts for the mitigation of space debris in the future.

Mr. Chairman, Japan believes it can make important contributions to global prosperity by participating in international cooperative activities that are based on a broad and long-term vision. With this in mind, Japan would like to express its respect for United Nations efforts in these fields and intends to promote, in conjunction with the United Nations COPUOS members and observers, international cooperation so that the benefits derived from space activities can be enjoyed by the whole of humankind.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you very much Ambassador for your statement.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Japan on the numerous space mission successes that have taken place in Japan since last year's meeting. I would particularly like to congratulate you upon the success of organizing the Astronautics Congress and it was a pleasure for me to participate in that Congress. And I noted the very high quality of the organization and, at the same time, the high quality of the debates that took place during that Congress.

So once again, our Japanese friends have shown us how to do it when it comes to organizing an international conference, providing excellent working conditions for very effective work as well. So congratulations and thank you very much Ambassador.

I now turn to the speakers list and I would like to recognize the Czech Republic and give the floor to my friend.

Mr. P. LÁLA (Czech Republic): Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time our delegation is officially taking the floor at this session, we would like to express how happy we are to congratulate you to your election as Chairman of the Committee. Your long-time distinguished service to promotion of space science and technology is well known, including your important functions of Director-General of Spot Image, Director-General of CNES and many others. However, I had the opportunity to work with you even earlier, at the beginning of your and mine scientific career at Bretigny sur Orge, almost 40 years ago. Your idea of the "cheese function" in the description of the solar radiation pressure effects motion of satellites is still well remembered.

Mr. Chairman, we are fully confident that under your able leadership and with the Secretariat's help, our Committee will make further progress in substantive items of its agenda. Our words of appreciation also go to your Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Both of Hungary and Paul Tiendrebeogo of Burkina Faso. Of course, we would like to emphasize the important contribution of the previous Bureaux, led by Mr. Abiodun, the work of our Committee.

Mr. Chairman, let me also express our sympathy to the people of the regions which were severely hit by recent earthquakes in Asia.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, I would like to briefly inform you on recent developments in exploration and peaceful uses of outer space in the Czech Republic.

The coordination of Czech space activities has reached a qualitatively higher level after the signature of the ESA Plan for European Cooperating States Charter, called PECS, in Prague on 24 November 2004. The other ESA Cooperating States participating at PECS are Hungary and recently Romania. The PECS Charter specifies activities through which the Czech Republic will participate in ESA programmes. The projects are funded from the Czech Republic's contributions to the PECS programme of at least one million Euro per year. And to start the programme, 11 proposals have been selected by related ESA programme boards and by the Czech side. Other projects will be added in next years following evaluation of project proposals submitted to the Czech Space Office.

Mr. Chairman, because the Czech Republic is a new member State of the European Union, it can also participate in space-related activities of the European Commission. The most important joint initiative being taken by the Commission and ESA is a navigation system, Galileo. A coordination board for global navigation systems was established last October at the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic in order to guarantee our adequate participation in the Galileo initiative.

This January, the Directorate for Human Spaceflight, Microgravity and Exploration of the European Space Agency announced the Station Unique Research Infrastructure, called SURE, Announcement of Opportunity to perform fundamental and applied research projects on board the International Space Station. The SURE Announcement of Opportunity is an ESA initiative funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme. It is opened to scientists as well as to small and medium enterprises from European Union member States and associated States, with priority given to new European Union member States, including the Czech Republic. Several proposals have already been submitted to the Commission for its evaluation this autumn.

Mr. Chairman, the Twenty-Sixth General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union will take place in Prague from 14 to 25 August. It is already a second time when this important gathering of hundreds of astronomers is taking place in Prague. The first time it was in 1967 and its success has been

sufficient qualification for IAU to make such exceptional decision.

Following the now established pattern, there will be an extensive scientific programme of six Symposia, 17 Joint Discussions and seven special sessions, as well as four Invited Discourses, on essentially all topics of contemporary astronomy. A new feature in the Prague General Assembly will be the "hot topics" sessions to capture the excitement of the most recent astronomical activities.

The IAU General Assemblies are unique in offering not only a large variety of specialized scientific meetings, but also the freedom to attend meetings in other fields to gain new perspectives on this fast developing science.

Just as important, the General Assembly will give astronomers from around the world an opportunity to meet in order to discuss common interests, to organize cooperative ventures or to renew old friendships. Also there will be an exhibition including scientific companies, institutions, publishers, etc.

I am sure that those of you working in the field of astronomy and astro-physics are already registered and will attend this unique event in our capital this August.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, our delegation intends to present its views on individual items of the agenda in additional statements at appropriate times.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Peter for those very kind words, particularly kind words with regard to the Czech statement. I also recall our work together in the 1970s and I remember my visit to Prague in September or October in 1970, I think it was. It was the beginning of our career in the space arena.

I would also like to take this opportunity to address our best wishes to the Czech delegation for their success in the International Astronomy Congress that will be held in August in Prague. It is a very significant Congress and that will bring together, not hundreds of astronomers, but rather thousands of astronomers, if my information is correct. In any case, best wishes for every success for that Congress. And thank you for your statement.

We will now move on to the statement by Colombia and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Colombia. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. C. ARÉVALO YEPES (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Naturally I would like to begin this statement by expressing, on behalf of my delegation, our warmest congratulations to you, not only in your individual experience and skill, and we are convinced that your experience will be one of the greatest attributes that will be helping us during the COPUOS meeting, but we would also like to congratulate you because you, your country represents a world aspiration in terms of headway and progress in space technology in space and your country has made great contributions in this arena and has had a very constant vision in terms of international cooperation for space.

Moreover, we would just like to reassure you, Mr. Chairman, that you can count on Colombia's support in your endeavours. We also would like to work with you on how to comply with our mandate and I must say I fully agree with much of what you highlighted in your introductory statement. I think this is the path to the future and indeed the coordination exists to have a much more integrated, cohesive COPUOS in terms of the dynamic within the United Nations and in terms of coordination with the academic and scientific worlds.

Of course, I would also like to further congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen and naturally, their experience will represent our Committee very well.

I would also like to thank Mr. Sergio Camacho, whom I would also like to thank and congratulate for the colossal work that he has been putting into this arena.

And, Mr. Chairman, I must also express the condolences of my country to countries in Asia who have fallen victim to them, especially Indonesia. We, Colombia, have a very special relationship with Indonesia and have worked with them closely in many areas. It is a country that I personally know and I am sure that the international community will be able to provide it all the necessary support in this darkest hour for Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman, my actual statement will be fairly brief but still rather focused. First, because we are handing over the baton of regional cooperation to Ecuador for the hosting of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas. This is the conclusion of a significant

stage for Colombia. A number have been witnesses to the efforts undertaken in this area. Promoting science and technology in Latin America is not easy but with the help and cooperation of many countries, we have managed to position an institutionalized Space Conferences in the Americas and I am convinced that, as it is already shown, Ecuador will take this immense responsibility with a great deal of seriousness. And I am sure that in shouldering this responsibility, it will provide us with a model of how to continue with consolidated Space Conferences in the future in Latin America.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to highlight two issues. One, you referenced yourself in your statement, and I think it is vital, and that is that COPUOS, in coinciding with significant anniversaries, that is the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee and what we saw on the video, which is truly impressive, and that is the visual element which demonstrates so impressively one of the greatest adventures of mankind in science. And this coincides with some of the structural changes that we are currently undergoing here. The first one is in the multilateral arena. It seems to me that a change is underway in terms of the perception of this dimension. First, there is a very significant concern in that multilateral approach is not sufficiently linked to the population. And then there is the issue of the fact that we, as nations, it falls upon us, it is incumbent upon us, to preserve the multi-lateral nature of our work.

And, Mr. Chairman, it is very important to continue rigorously with those initiatives that tend to promote this aspect or obey the idea of promoting the whole multi-lateral scheme.

And then finally, there is the establishment of organic links, synergistic links, with other entities while, at the same time, preventing duplication from occurring and that is a constant. And there is desire to improve efficiency in management and to bring about savings and economies in management and this, Mr. Chairman, I believe, is very important for COPUOS. You, yourself, mentioned it. There is a very serious constraint in terms of resources and limits that are placed, not only on us but this means that we need further cooperation with other space agencies and we need to improve our whole network of inter-relationships with other entities in order to achieve the Millennium Goals.

Mr. Chairman,, this is one of the issues that I think that we will be needing to reflect upon. Indeed, there is a mandate, and we need to make an effort to meditate on this and think about how can we take

advantage of this opportunity so that COPUOS can meet the challenges put before us, by the international community, to change.

Above and beyond the multi-lateral dimension, there is also a national issue and, Mr. Chairman, I think that in the past I have covered some of the vital achievements of Colombia and I just would like to very briefly summarize what we have done in the last three years as Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Space Conference.

With a view to improving regional and interregional cooperation through the Space Conference of the Americas, Colombia, in keeping with the Cartagena Plan of Action, undertook action as a Pro Tempore Secretariat, which I sum up as follows.

It ensured coordination and promotion of programmes, at a regional level, through agreed upon mechanisms in the following areas:

Environmental protection and support of sustainable development. And there, I would like to highlight the GNSS Satellite Navigation Seminar and GPS Systems, GLONASS and Galileo satellites, and the use of them to monitor the environment and remote sensing and to improve the use of natural resources;

Early warning and alert system for natural disasters and mitigating the effects of natural disasters and man-made disasters. Here, a series of important measures were taken. Perhaps the most important contribution was identifying the numerology(?) (*not clear*) for uses of international charter.

In the area of space science and technology and space applications, a number of contributions were made during our exercising of the Pro Tempore Secretariat. I just would like to highlight two of them.

One is the draft presentation of the CUPASAT(?) first Colombia satellite for applying a programme for academic satellites with navigation payloads. This is a joint programme with two significant universities in Colombia. Also a number of weeks were spent on strengthening education systems in Colombia in the area of inter-discipline of space.

In space law, a number of measures were taken, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps the most significant of them is that, through a number of meetings held with Colombia authorities, studies were carried out to look at the evolution of space law, with a view to promoting it domestically, particularly so that Colombia would accede to the five space treaties of the

United Nations. We have had a number of experiences and have gained some understanding, based on other countries of the region's experience of the legal framework for space law.

And, Mr. Chairman, this also holds a series of activities that were promoted, and I do not want to speak too much at length at this time about them, but I would like to just say that just one month away from the Quito meeting of the Fifth Space Conference, we will be able to draw a longer list of all the activities undertaken and we can share it at some other time.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Mr. Ambassador for your presentation and for your congratulations to the new Bureaux. As we all know, Colombia has been extremely active in promoting regional cooperation in Latin America and, as you said, you have passed the baton to your colleagues in Ecuador to organize the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas and I wish you every success in that endeavour. And thank you again for your presentation of your activities in the area of space applications.

I believe that we can now give the floor to Brazil, specifically to Ambassador de Souza.

Mr. C. M. VIEIRA DE SOUZA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and assure you of the support of the Brazilian delegation throughout your tenure.

Allow me also to express my since there thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Adigun Ade Abiodun, for his wise guidance of the deliberations of this Committee during its past two sessions.

I also wish to convey my condolences to the victims of the earthquake that struck the island of Sumatra, in Indonesia, last 29 May. Tragedies like that remind us of the instrumental role that the creation of capacity in the use of Earth observation systems could play, not only as a means to guide national efforts to prevent and mitigate natural disasters, but also as a means to achieve consistent and sustainable development worldwide.

Mr. Chairman, some of the most important issues relating to the development of space activities in Brazil were already detailed by my delegation during

the past sessions of the Scientific and Technical and of the Legal Subcommittee.

In a bird's eye view, allow me to briefly remind the Committee of the successful mission accomplished last April by the first Brazilian astronaut, Lieutenant-Colonel Marcos Pontes, at the International Space Station. This mission was called the "Centennial Mission" to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the pioneer flight of the Brazilian aviator Alberto Santos Dumont on the 14 BIS airplane. Its achievement demonstrates the importance Brazil attaches to international cooperation as a means to promote space activities. Apart from its scientific meaning, the mission also had a significant impact on the perception, by the Brazilian society, of the activities undertaken under the Brazilian space programme.

Allow also to recall that earlier this year, Brazil acceded to the United Nations Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. Brazil regards its accession as a fundamental step towards the consolidation of a more suitable legal framework to pursuing its endeavours in the space field.

Brazil strongly believes that international cooperation should be further promoted in order to disseminate the benefits associated with the use of space technologies, especially in the utilization, interpretation and modelling of remote sensing data. In this connection, Brazil and China announced last April their decision to make CBERS-2 images available to South American countries, free of charge, through a friendly web template developed by the Brazilian National Space Research Institute. Brazil and China are also committed to coordinate their efforts to make CBERS data available to African countries. It is worth noting that data from the Brazilian Data Collecting Satellites is already being provided to Mozambique.

Due attention should also be paid to the activities of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean in capacity-building for the development and use of space-based applications. Brazil reiterates, in that regard, its call to all Latin American and Caribbean countries to join the Centre and thus fully participate in its activities.

In the same vein, Brazil wishes to reiterate its full commitment to the activities of the Capacity-Building Committee of the Group on Earth Observation. Brazil hosted, to that effect, in partnership with the GEO Secretariat, the European

Union, Spain and other members of the Group, an international seminar to identify initiatives of capacity-building in the field of Earth observation. The seminar was held last May at the headquarters of the Brazilian National Space Research Institute, having successfully provided inputs to the implementation of capacity-building actions within the GEO Working Programme.

Finally, I could not conclude without commending the Government of Ecuador for hosting the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas next July. The Conference is a most welcome event and Brazil is committed to make it a useful opportunity to discuss appropriate mechanisms for cooperation and coordination amongst all countries in the region, in line with the Cartagena Declaration, which was adopted during the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas.

Brazil also commends Colombia for having presided over the Pro Tempore Secretariat of this Conference.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the forty-fifth session of the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation took the floor in order to call for the consideration of this Committee the matter of fostering international cooperation in promoting the use of geospatial data for sustainable development. Brazil intends to continue consultations on this matter and, to that effect, has prepared a draft non-paper providing the rationale and a possible work plan for the consideration of this subject during the 2007-2009 triennium. This non-paper is being circulated for the consideration of all interest delegations.

My delegation would welcome all views and suggestions that other delegations might have in that regard. On that particular note, and while I still have the floor, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to those delegations which already indicated their support or made contributions to this initiative.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat for their support in the preparation of this proposal.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Mr. Ambassador. Thank you for the information you provided on space activities in Brazil and, once again, I would like to congratulate you on the flight of your astronaut who indeed was able to do so for the hundredth anniversary of a well-known flight by your compatriots in France as well.

And I would just like to say how much I admire the Brazilian space programme. I have had a number of opportunities to go there and meet my counterparts and the colleagues there and see the excellent work undertaken there, especially in the area of using space observation data. I can say, I think, quite safely here, that Brazil is a pioneering country in this field and have achieved remarkable results in that area.

I also believe that you have continued to play a significant role in international cooperation, either in CEOS that you, yourself, chaired, very efficiently indeed, and more recently, in the area of capacity-building by providing liaison between GEO and CEOS and again I would like to congratulate you on that.

Informally, I think, at least, we will be looking at the work that you referred to at the end of your statement which is involved with international cooperation and promoting it in the area of space applications for sustainable development purposes. And we will look at the follow-up to that document, probably that will take place in the context of one of the Subcommittees.

So once again, thank you for your statement.

I believe that we have no other delegations on the list to make statements at this time under item 5 of the agenda. Therefore, we will continue with item 5, General Exchange of Views, this afternoon.

Distinguished delegates, I would like to inform that I have received a request from the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Sergio Camacho, for the opportunity to address the Committee at this morning's meeting.

And, therefore, following past practice, and provided there are no objections, I would now like to invite him to take the floor.

I see no objections.

So Sergio, you have the floor.

Mr. S. CAMACHO-LARA (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you.

(*Continued in English*) Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, I am grateful for this opportunity to provide the Committee with a brief

overview of the work undertaken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs over the past year.

Before proceeding with this overview, I would like to join others and add my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. I can assure you of the support and assistance of the Secretariat in facilitating your work and I am confident that under your leadership the Committee will continue its upward trend in its accomplishments.

I would also like to express our greatest appreciation to our colleague, Mr. Adigun Ade Abiodun, for his leadership over the last two years which most significantly included guiding the Committee in the final stage of drafting its milestone report to the General Assembly on the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, known as UNISPACE III. The efforts of the Committee in expanding the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space and, in particular, the use of space technologies for the benefit of all mankind, were recognized by the General Assembly, through its endorsement of the Plan of Action proposed by the Committee. We look forward to Ade continuing his significant contribution to the work of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to convey the condolences on behalf of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the Government and people of Indonesia for the earthquake that they have just suffered. I trust that the international community will provide the support that will supplement the efforts of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, I would like to begin by reviewing the staff resources of the Office.

Since this Committee met last year, a welcome addition has been made to the Office. Mr. Niklas Hedman commenced with the Office in early January as Chief, Committee Services and Research Section. Mr. Hedman has been previously known to all of you as Sweden's representative to the Committee for almost 10 years. During that time, Mr. Hedman made significant contributions, particularly in progressing the process for the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the preparations by the Committee of its report for the UNISPACE III + 5 review by the General Assembly. His impressive academic and professional credential will continue the tradition of high-level expertise associated with the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

Ms. Natercia Rodrigues, who very successfully carried the load as Officer-in-Charge of the Committee Services and Research Section until the appointment of Mr. Hedman, has now been promoted to a P-4 position and we congratulate her on this very well-deserved promotion.

Also since the last session, Ms. Thresi Elamthuruthil has moved from her position as editorial assistant in the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the Human Resources Management Service as a Human Resource Assistant. Ms. Elamthuruthil served the Office diligently and very efficiently and we wish her success in her new position. The position of editorial assistant has now been filled by Ms. Virginia Ofoedu, who has been with the Office since it was transferred to Vienna, back in 1993, and has been transferred through a very well deserved promotion as well.

Mr. Cicero Dos Santos, who was an Associate Programme Officer in the Office, has moved to the United Nations Offices on Drugs and Crime to take up a position as Associate Drug Control Officer. Mr. Dos Santos served the Office for three years in a dedicated and diligent manner and we wish him all the best in his new role.

And finally, Ms. Raechelle Newman, who was an Associate Programme Officer in the Space Applications Section, has recently joined the Office of the Director-General. Ms. Newman was an excellent worker and colleague and while we will miss her, we congratulate Ms. Newman on her promotion and wish her well in her new duties.

Otherwise, the Office has remained constant and at full-strength since the last session of the Committee.

Turning to the financial resources of the Office, I would like to report on the developments relating to the Office's Programme Budget for 2006.

As you are already aware, the 2006-2007 budget of the United Nations was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2005. Exceptionally, the General Assembly imposed a limitation on the Secretary-General with regard to expenditures for the first year. The budget of the United Nations amounted to about 3.8 billion dollars for the biennium 2006-2007, that is approximately 1.8 billion dollars for the first year, but expenditure was limited to 950 million dollars. The authorization of expenditure of the remaining funds were made subject to a later request by the Secretary-General to be made at an appropriate time. The impact of this decision by the General

Assembly is being felt by all departments and Offices of the United Nations, namely that every department and Office only received approximately one half of the funds that would have been necessary for the fulfilment of programme objectives for the year 2006.

Like every other programme, the Office has only received authorization to spend half of the funds approved for the year 2006 from the regular budget. Although initially it was expected that the remaining funds for 2006 would have been authorized by the General Assembly just before the beginning of this session of the Committee, this has not yet been the case. The current information available to the Office is that the budget of the United Nations is currently still under discussion by the Fifth Committee and that no indication can yet be given as to the projected outcome of the discussions or when the General Assembly might take a decision on the expenditure of the rest of the funds for 2006.

Given the limitation imposed on expenditures, the Office has been planning in a flexible manner, and yet cautious, in its approach towards the planning of its activities, particularly those under the Programme on Space Applications. Should the discussions by the General Assembly result in a significant delay of the authorization of expenditure of the remaining funds for 2006, the Office may be forced to adjust its programme objectives and goals or possibly even postpone some activities for next year. We hope and expect that the discussions will fare well in the Fifth Committee and that the limitation on expenditure will be lifted or that further funds will be authorized in the new few weeks in order for us to continue to financially meet obligations in the immediate future.

With regard to programme budget planning, I am pleased to bring to your attention the Proposed Strategic Framework of the Programme on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the period 2008-2009, a copy of this Proposed Strategic Framework will be circulated to delegations as a Conference Room Paper during the course of this session. This draft Proposed Strategic Framework has been prepared following the guidelines provided by the Programme Planning and Budget Division, with the acronym of PPBD, of the Secretariat to all United Nations programmes. The submission of the Office to PPBD sets out the overarching objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement that will guide the work of the Office relating its implementation of the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space during 2008 and 2009. In preparing this document, the Office took into account the Plan of

Action of the Committee to further implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

I am pleased to invite the Committee to review the proposed biennial plan of the programme and provide its comments. The proposed biennial programme plan, modified as appropriate, will then be submitted by PPBD to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forth-sixth session. Its recommendations thereon will be transmitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session when it considers the Secretary-General's Proposed Strategic Framework for the biennium 2008-2009 for the entire United Nations.

I would like to express the Office's deep appreciation to those Governments, space agencies and donors that have, through their cash and in-kind contributions, enabled the Office to implement a larger number of activities during the past year than what would have been possible with the resources provided under the regular budget, particularly those of the Programme on Space Applications. Under normal circumstances, the funds provided by the regular budget are only sufficient to cover about one-third of the total cost of the activities of the Programme, making voluntary contributions a critical complement to carry out these activities. As this year is proving to be extraordinary with regard to the resources available from the regular budget, the availability of extra-budgetary resources and the reliance on the support of our host countries has made it possible for the Office to remain flexible planning, to which I made reference, in its approach to implementing the activities in 2006. We are, therefore, profoundly grateful to all those Governments and donors who have provided either cash or in-kind contributions for the various activities of the Programme and the Office. Without these additional resources, the Office would not have been in the position to plan and implement some of the activities that might be coming later in the second half of this year.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, I would like to give you some brief information on the United Nations reform in relation to the work of the Committee and the Office.

As you would recall, in its resolution 60/1, the General Assembly endorsed the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document that was adopted by the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly.

In that document, the Heads of State and Government had agreed on a number of far-reaching

management reforms to strengthen and update the programme of work of the United Nations. The General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations were requested to review all mandates older than five years of the intergovernmental bodies with a view to discarding obsolete mandates and to strengthen those with high priorities. The Secretary-General was asked to facilitate the work of the General Assembly in that process by reviewing all mandates of the intergovernmental bodies that were older than five years and indicating which had been completed or had become obsolete with a view to refining the Organization's focus and renewing its objectives.

On 30 March 2006, the Secretary-General presented his report entitled "Mandating and Delivering: Analysis and Recommendations to Facilitate the Review of Mandates". That report was prepared on the basis of the information collected from all the secretariats responsible for servicing relevant organs. The Office participated in the exercise with regard to the Programme on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

In his report, the Secretary-General addresses a number of issues, including burdensome reporting requirements, overlap between and within organs, duplicative architecture for implementation and the gap between mandates and resources. The Secretary-General has not proposed any particular changes as regards the Programme on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, but the Office expects that any decisions made by the General Assembly in the future relating to procedural documentation and servicing matters will also apply to the Committee. The Office will continue to monitor the reform process closely and will, at every opportunity, report on any decisions that might directly or indirectly impact the work of working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, the Office has continued to support the Action Teams in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. This has been a high priority activity for the Office.

With regard to the study on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management, known as DMISCO, the Office continued to support the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts conducting that study. The Ad Hoc Expert Group presented to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee during its forty-third session earlier this year, its report prepared for the Subcommittee and as

contained in document A/AC.105/C.1/L.285. The Subcommittee commended the Ad Hoc Expert Group for the finalized study and asked that the experts follow-up with other organizations that had ongoing initiatives in the use of space technology for disaster management, such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, being implemented by the Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations, GEO, and the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, and to present the results of those consultations to the Committee during the current session. Additionally, as requested by the Subcommittee, the Office corresponded with all member States, requesting them to officially communicate their possible commitments to the proposed entity. I am pleased to inform the Committee that at this moment, those countries who offered to provide resources for the establishment of DMISCO are meeting with a view to harmonize those commitments into one viable proposal for the implementation of the entity. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts will consider that proposal tomorrow as it finalizes its work for presentation to the Committee during the course of this session, most likely next Monday.

With regard to the invitation by the Assembly to the providers of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, GNSS, to consider establishing an International Committee on GNSS, I am pleased to inform the Committee that the United Nations International Meeting for the Establishment of the ICG, International Committee on GNSS, was established on a voluntary basis as an informal body for promoting cooperation, s appropriate, on matters on mutual interest related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and to promote value-added services, as well as compatibility and inter-operability among GNSS systems. This would also increase their support to sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

It was also agreed that the Office would serve on an interim basis as the focal point for matters relating to organizing the establishment of an ad hoc working group and the first meeting if the ICG. In March 2006, on the margins of the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Office organized an informal meeting of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the ICG. At that meeting, the ICG laid out its plan to continue work on refining the draft Terms of Reference and to develop a draft substantive work plan for the ICG to be considered at its first meeting. The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the ICG took place just before the beginning of this session of the Committee,

that is yesterday, to address further international cooperation in promoting the use of the GNSS applications, continued work on its draft Terms of Reference, as well as on its substantive work plan for the ICG. I understand that the Committee will be briefed on the results of that meeting in reports at this session.

The above activities are contemplated in the strategy of the Office for carrying out activities identified in the Committee's Plan of Action. That strategy was presented to and considered by this Committee during its forty-eighth session last year. The strategy of the Office, as agreed by the Committee at that session, can be found in document A/AC.105/L.262. The Office is committed to and actively engaged in implementing this strategy.

Mr. Chairman, regarding the Programme on Space Application, the Space Applications Section of the Office, assisted by the Committee Services and Research Section, as needed, was again very busy this year. Among other things, the Space Application Section successfully organized 11 workshops under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2005. The Expert on Space Applications will provide you with more detailed information on these and other activities of the Programme, including the activities planned for 2006 in her statement later at this session.

In supporting the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2005, the staff of the Committee Services and Research Section continued to be fully occupied in the past year. The Office prepared a large number of documents and publications for the Committee, the Subcommittees and their Working Groups, as well as for the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The Office also responded to numerous requests for information from other United Nations bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, contributed to activities that promote the work of the Committee, maintained the Office website and coordinated several outer space exhibitions at the Vienna International Centre.

For the first time last year, the Committee Services and Research Section organized a panel of speakers at the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly on topics dealt with by the intergovernmental bodies during their sessions in 2005. The intention of this panel was to promote a more interactive dialogue in the Fourth Committee when it considers the item on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. This format of panel speakers, which is a new approach being examined by the General Assembly, appeared to be very useful and

motivated greater interaction by delegations at the Fourth Committee. It is anticipated that this will also feature at the corresponding session of the Fourth Committee later this year.

With respect to capacity-building, in the past year, the Office continued to promote the understanding, acceptance and implementation of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, to support the exchange of information on national space law and policy and to encourage the increase of education opportunities in space law.

I am pleased to inform you that in 2005, the Office organized the fourth United Nations Workshop aimed at building capacity in space law. The Workshop, entitled "Meeting International Responsibilities and Addressing Domestic Needs", was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 21 to 24 November 2005 and was organized together with the Government of Nigeria, through its National Space Research and Development Agency.

Approximately 75 participants from 21 countries attended the Workshop. Participants held positions in governmental departments, space agencies, international organizations, national universities, research institutions and the private sector.

A detailed report, including the recommendations, observations and conclusions, can be found in document A/AC.105/866.

I convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of Nigeria and its National Space Research and Development Agency for their support in providing a number of experts to participate in the Workshop, in organizing special events for the participants, supporting the living expenses of some of the participants from developing countries, as well as for providing excellent meeting facilities.

With respect to inter-agency cooperation, the Office continues to enhance coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system. We take the lead in organizing the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, which meets annually to exchange information and coordinate space-related activities of the United Nations entities. This year, the twenty-sixth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting was hosted by UNESCO, in Paris, from 18 to 20 January 2006.

As in previous years, the Inter-Agency Meeting held a half-day open informal sessions for members of this Committee. This year, representatives

from nine United Nations entities and delegates from 18 member States exchanged views on the use of space technology for sustainable development and disaster management by United Nations entities. As such sessions have proven to be an important component in the cooperation between this Committee and the Inter-Agency Meeting, I invite delegations to propose themes that would be of interest for discussion with United Nations entities during a similar half-day open meeting following the Inter-Agency Meeting session next year. That meeting will be held here in Vienna. We will then discuss those themes with the focal points of the Inter-Agency Meeting in order to identify a theme that would be most interesting for you and for United Nations entities.

I am pleased to inform you that the Meeting continues to update a list of major space-related initiatives that respond to recommendations contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At this point, the list contains space-related initiatives implemented by both United Nations and members of the Committee. The list has substantially grown over the past year and has been made available on the Internet. It has been distributed as CRP.4 to this Committee. The list continues to serve as a useful tool for end-users and space-capability providers who are implementing, or plan to implement, actions called for in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. I encourage you to use it and to continuously update its contents.

At its 2006 session, the Inter-Agency Meeting considered two new agenda items: the participation of United Nations entities in the process of the Group on Earth Observation, GEO, and lessons learned from the application of space technology for disaster relief. The Inter-Agency Meeting also addressed the matter of enhancing the cooperation of United Nations entities with the Committee. The Meeting noted that participation in the work of the Committee provided a great opportunity for United Nations entities to directly liaise with member States with regard to any space-related initiative that would require participation at the national level.

With respect to cooperation with space-related IGOs and NGOs, the Office has maintained its cooperation with space-related IGOs and NGOs. For the sake of brevity, I will mention only a few activities in which the Office has participated.

The Office continues to participate in and provides technical support to the Working Group on Education, Training and Capacity-Building, WGEdu, of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites,

CEOS. The WGEdu concentrates its activities on building capacity in developing countries.

The Office has been a cooperating body to the International Charter Space and Major Disasters since 1 July 2003, a mechanism to which any entity of the United Nations system responding to a major emergency can request and receive free satellite data and value-added products. Since joining, the Office has activated the Charter a total of 24 times to respond to major natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. The recent activations by the Office were for the landslides in the Philippines in February and the floods in Suriname last May.

I am also pleased to inform you that the Office, together with the Governments of Colombia and the United States, co-sponsored the International Workshop on the Use and Applications of GNSS, held in Bogotá in September 2005. The Workshop aimed at promoting GNSS application projects that could benefit the region of the Americas. The Workshop was one of the activities organized by Colombia as the Pro Tempore Secretariat for the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas and was also a follow-up activity to the United Nations/USA series of workshops on the use and applications of GNSS.

Finally, we are grateful for the excellent cooperation that we receive from IAF and the host countries in organizing the series of United Nations/IAF Workshops in conjunction with the International Astronautical Congress, the IAC. On a yearly basis, this cooperation makes it possible for participants from nearly 30 developing countries to participate in the IAC.

With regard to the International Space Information Service, I am pleased to inform the Committee that the Office has just completed a restructuring of its website. The improved site includes an enhanced search engine, a streamlined menu structure and a comprehensive site map. The website also includes a number of online databases on treaty status, national space law and the online Index of Objects Launched into Outer Space. I invite delegates to visit our new website and to provide comments on ways to enhance it.

The Office would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Information Technology Service, in particular Ms. Iris Schaechter, Mr. Tobias Schoessler and Mr. Alexey Tepaev, for their invaluable assistance in the migration of the website.

I am please, Mr. Chairman, to inform the Committee that the Office has developed a special web page to assist member States in accessing the series of "Limited Distribution" type of documents that will be before the delegations at this session. The address of the web page dedicated to this service will be included in a copy of my statement.

With respect to outreach activities, as in previous years, the Office has continued its efforts to increase the awareness of the general public of space benefits and to inspire young people.

The Office operates the United Nations Permanent Space Exhibit that continues to attract visitors of all ages and remains one of the highlights of tours offered by the United Nations Information Service. In 2005, over 47,000 visitors participated in the guided tours offered by UNIS. The Office would like to express its deep appreciation to member States and space agencies that have made contributions to the United Nations Permanent Space Exhibit.

In addition to the permanent exhibit, in June 2005, the Vienna International Centre was host to an exhibit by the Government of India on its space activities. We would like to express our appreciation to the Government of India for its efforts in making this exhibit a resounding success and for the donation of a number of models to the United Nations Permanent Space Exhibit.

To celebrate World Space Week 2004, which had the theme "Discovery and Imagination", the Office invited school students aged 10 to 14 to participate by designing and building a model of a base on Mars that would be suitable for humans to live in and conduct research. Classes from Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia and the United States participated. The photographs of their designs for the Mars bases are displayed on the Office's website.

The Office is pleased to announce that an exhibition by Germany on the imagery of the planet Mars is being held during this session of the Committee. The large exhibition, including 3-D imagery taken from the Mars Express probe, is located in the VIC Rotunda. An opening ceremony and reception is scheduled for the evening of Monday, 12 June. We would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Germany for its efforts in developing this exhibition.

The Office is also pleased to announce that Thailand is holding a poster exhibition on the Thailand Earth Observation System. The exhibition is located

just outside this Conference Room. The Government of Thailand has also informed the Office of its intention to hold a larger exhibition during the 2007 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The Office would like to thank the Government of Thailand for its efforts. In order to illustrate the value of satellite imagery related to forestry and in support of the Symposium on Space and Forests, GEOSPACE Austria is also organizing a poster exhibition that is located outside of this Conference Room. We are also very grateful to GEOSPACE Austria for its contribution.

Finally, the Office would like to inform delegates that a small ceremony unveiling a United Flag that was flown onboard China's first manned spaceflight will take place on Tuesday, 13 June at United Nations Permanent Space Exhibition. We would like to invite delegates to the ceremony. Details on the event will be communicated to delegates at a later date.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, next year is a special year. It is the fiftieth anniversary of the space age and the fiftieth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. To celebrate these significant milestones in the history of developments in outer space, the Office intends to hold special events in 2007 and is currently coordinating with interested parties the carrying out and planning of such activities.

Mindful of the significance of the following year in increasing the awareness of the relevance and importance of space applications to the betterment of the human condition, the Office will continue to fulfil its mandate in promoting international cooperation in the use of space technology for sustainable economic and social development and for the protection and management of the Earth's environment; to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of major United Nations global conferences; and to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to use space technology.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, thank you very much for your attention.

The CHAIRMAN (*interpretation from French*): Thank you Dr. Camacho and Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs for that very complete statement which has given us detailed information on evolution of events in the Office for Outer Space Affairs and its activities. And Sergio, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues for the quality of the work done in your

Office and particularly in light of the rather constrained financial circumstances that you are having to cope with which I think is even worse this year than it was in previous years, given that you have not yet received the budget. I hope that that is a situation that will be sorted out soon. Thank you again for the very complete information.

Distinguished delegates, I would like to draw your attention to the display of posters on space and forests in the corridor between this Conference Room and the Coffee Corner. This display has been set up within the context of the Symposium on the same topic, being held next week. I would like to thank the Office for International Relations of the European Space Agency, as well as the Institute for Global Mapping, and the Research of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, GEOSPACE Austria, and the Office for Outer Space Affairs for organizing the display. And I am sure that my friend from _____(?) (*not clear*) has been playing a very important role in organizing this and I would just like to underscore that and applaud him more specifically.

Distinguished delegates, I will now adjourn this meeting of the Committee.

Before doing so, however, I would like to inform delegates of our schedule of work for this afternoon.

We will reconvene promptly at 3.00 p.m. and at that time, we will continue with agenda item 5, General Exchange of Views. And we will also begin consideration of agenda item 6, Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.

Are there any questions or comments on the proposed schedule for this afternoon?

I see none.

Thank you.

This meeting is adjourned until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

The meeting adjourned at 1.09 p.m.