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Chair: Ms. Miculescu (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)

Draft resolution I on information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

1. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.
2. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

3. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 131 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.**

4. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. Her Government did not take issue with the main objective of the draft resolution, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its obligations fully in that regard in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. It believed, however, that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 e of the Charter ultimately fell to the government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

Agenda item 57: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Draft resolution II on economic and other activities (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

5. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.
6. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada,

* The delegations of Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Fiji, Lesotho, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago subsequently informed the Committee that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 144 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.**

8. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of draft resolution II on the understanding that the references in the text to the right to self-determination — which, according to resolution 1514 (XV), presupposed the existence of a people subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation — were in no way applicable to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, because they had been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, which had expelled the local population of the Islands and replaced it with its own population. The

* The delegation of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

General Assembly itself had expressly ruled out the applicability of the principle of self-determination with regard to the Malvinas Islands in 1985 when it had rejected by a large majority two proposals by the United Kingdom seeking to incorporate that principle into a draft resolution on the question.

9. All the General Assembly resolutions on the issue, in particular resolution 2065 (XX), as well as those adopted by the Special Committee, made no reference to self-determination and expressly established that, owing to the existence of a sovereignty dispute over the Islands in question, the way to put an end to that special and particular colonial situation was through a negotiated settlement of the dispute over sovereignty between the two parties involved: the United Kingdom and Argentina. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in resolution 31/49, had called upon Argentina and the United Kingdom to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation during such negotiations. The unilateral and illegal exploration and exploitation by the United Kingdom of the renewable and non-renewable natural resources of Argentina in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were in open violation of that specific United Nations pronouncement.

Agenda item 58: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (continued)

Draft resolution III on implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and international institutions (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

10. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

11. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador,

Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

12. *Draft resolution III was adopted by 101 votes to none, with 51 abstentions.**

13. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because the draft resolution had to be implemented in accordance with the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on specific Territories.

* The delegation of Sweden subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to abstain in the vote.

14. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that, while her delegation supported assistance by the specialized agencies to Non-Self-Governing Territories in humanitarian, technical and educational fields, it considered that the agency mandates must be scrupulously observed, and for that reason it had abstained in the vote.

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other items) (continued)

Draft resolution VII on dissemination of information on decolonization (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

15. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

16. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon

Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France.

17. *Draft resolution VII was adopted by 147 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.*

18. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution because it considered that the obligation placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on the scarce resources of the United Nations.

19. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that Argentina, while fully supporting the right to self-determination of colonized peoples under resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV), had voted in favour of draft resolution VII on the understanding that it would be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, all of which subsequent to resolution 2065 (XX) had defined the issue of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas explicitly as a special and particular colonial situation in that it involved a sovereignty dispute between the two parties, Argentina and the United Kingdom, which had been requested to conduct negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful solution to the problem, bearing in mind the interests of the population of the Islands.

Draft resolution VIII on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/66/23 (chap. XII))

20. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Belgium, France.

22. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 149 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.*

23. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina), said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution but wished to recall that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right of self-determination applied, meaning Territories where there was no dispute over sovereignty. That requirement was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly.

24. **Ms. Allum** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation continued to find some elements of the draft resolution unacceptable, and had therefore voted against it. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories, while fully taking into account the views of the peoples of those Territories.

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/66/20)

Panel discussion on the contribution of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

25. **The Chair**, recalling that the panel discussion had been called for by the member States of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), said that it focused on a topic of major importance in view of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) soon to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012.

26. **Mr. Prunariu** (Romania), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), drew attention to the note by the Secretariat on the contribution of the Committee to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: harnessing space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development (A/AC.105/993). COPUOS had continuously made efforts to promote capacity-building in the use of space science and technology applications in critical areas at the national, regional and international levels.

27. The current panel discussion was the fifth in a series held by the Fourth Committee since 2007 on related topics. The previous discussions had focused on space tools and solutions for climate change; space applications and food security; space for global health — space technology and pandemics; and space and emergencies. All the panel discussions to date had demonstrated the increasing need to address the major

challenges concerned in a holistic manner, and had recognized that space-based technology together with terrestrial data provided a set of tools that was of increasing importance to decision makers. The observations made at the previous panel discussions should be taken into account in the current discussion.

28. With regard to future work, space exploration and advances in space science and research were fundamental to the operational use of space technology and its applications. Such applications were of practical benefit in almost every area of human endeavour. It was necessary to look more closely at how they could contribute further to meeting such challenges as climate change, food security and global health, and how the outcomes of scientific research on human space flight could increase benefits, in particular for developing countries. Regional and interregional cooperation was becoming increasingly important for ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space, assisting States in the development of their space capabilities and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Closer coordination was also needed between COPUOS and other intergovernmental bodies involved in the United Nations global development agenda, including with respect to the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development.

29. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), speaking as a representative of the United States Department of State and accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that COPUOS played a vital role in promoting international cooperation with regard to space science and technology and their applications, which were key to promoting sustainable development. Space systems were used globally regardless of a country's level of social and economic development. Over the past 50 years, COPUOS had developed a legal framework under which the benefits of space exploration were made available to all nations. It had also worked to strengthen capacity, particularly in developing countries, in the use and applications of space technology.

30. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty) codified a number of fundamental principles, the most important of which was that the exploration and use of outer space was the province of

all mankind and that States should strive to cooperate internationally to share the benefits of such exploration and use. Subsequently, a series of other instruments had given further effect to individual provisions of the 1967 Treaty, and a series of non-binding principles on specific applications of space technology had also been adopted. The principles most relevant to the topic of sustainability were the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, which had been adopted in 1986 with a view to ensuring that data collected from remote sensing activities carried out by different countries were made available as widely as possible. Remote sensing technology was vital to an understanding of the environment, climate change and sustainability. Another element in the legal framework initiated by COPUOS was the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, adopted in 1996.

31. COPUOS had also contributed to international cooperation through the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, the purpose of which was to promote the use of such systems for sustainable development and their integration into infrastructures, particularly in developing countries. The Committee's members included those States that were current and future providers of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), other interested Member States, and 17 international organizations that used GNSS to fulfil their individual mandates.

32. Lastly, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS had established the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in order to ensure that the space environment was managed in such a way as to preserve it for future generations and to ensure that space systems, which had become crucial to global infrastructure, were protected from both intentional and unintentional interference. The Working Group would develop a set of best practices guidelines for those purposes, which would be non-binding but applicable to both governmental and non-governmental activities.

33. **Mr. Câmara** (National Institute for Space Research of Brazil), accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that global demand for food was one of the most important challenges relating to sustainable development. The

two regions of the world with the largest areas of uncultivated land that was both suitable for cultivation and close to markets were sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the proximity of those areas of land to Earth's remaining tropical forests meant that there was a clear potential conflict between the need to protect the environment and the need to produce more food.

34. In Brazil in 2003-2004, deforestation had reached such a high level that it had caused outrage around the world. A system of daily deforestation alerts had been set up, using space technology to provide real-time information about where it was taking place, which had allowed the police to target the relevant areas and make arrests; it had also enabled the media and non-governmental organizations to monitor the situation. Deforestation had subsequently fallen to its lowest level since 1988. As a result, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009, Brazil had been able to pledge that by 2020 it would reduce deforestation by 80 per cent relative to 2005, which represented a cut of 6.1 gigatons in carbon dioxide emissions. Nonetheless, recent surges of deforestation activity showed that continued vigilance was required. Space data were crucial to that effort. They also made it possible to measure other changes in land use, such as changes from food production to biofuel production.

35. Full global transparency and data democracy were needed in order to achieve sustainable development. In particular, medium-resolution Earth-observation data should be recognized as global public goods. Brazil had been the first country in the world to make its Earth-observation data, obtained from the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS), globally available and was making efforts to establish ground stations for CBERS in a number of African countries. China was also involved in efforts to ensure that CBERS would promote data democracy, and the United States and the European Union had made similar pledges with regard to their satellites. He hoped that other countries would follow suit.

36. One of the most important principles set out in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was principle 10: that environmental issues were best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens and that each individual should have appropriate access to information concerning the environment. At the Rio+20 Conference, work should

begin on drafting a new convention on the public availability of environmental information as a means of achieving global sustainable development.

37. **Mr. Ülgen** (Office of Information and Communications Technology), speaking as Co-Chair of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) and Senior Adviser on Spatial Data Infrastructure to the Chief Information Technology Officer, and accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that the Working Group had been established in 2000 as a voluntary network of geospatial information management professionals from 33 specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations. Its founding objectives had been to share data, develop joint policies, put in place best practices and track emerging technologies in the field of geographic information.

38. One of the Working Group's most recent initiatives was the development of the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure (UNSDI). Geospatial data was commonly divided into two types: core data and thematic data relevant to particular areas of interest to UNGIWG. In the past, separate databases and information management practices had been developed for different thematic areas. The idea behind UNSDI was to pool resources and build shared data services. Spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) were being developed at multiple levels, and United Nations agencies were also developing their own thematic SDIs. UNSDI was intended to be a "system of systems" that ensured interoperability among different infrastructures. A recent milestone in the UNSDI initiative had been the decision to establish the Centre of Excellence for UNSDI as part of the United Nations system-wide information and communications technology harmonization initiative.

39. The UNSDI governance structure consisted of a steering committee, a technical advisory group, and a partners' group that included private sector representatives. The system comprised specific projects led by different United Nations entities with the involvement of non-United Nations partners. The first phase of implementation focused on 24 deliverables in three categories: core deliverables, thematic geodata sets and services, and capacity-building efforts. With regard to the first category, core deliverables, the main objectives were to establish minimum technical governance requirements and to provide interoperable geospatial services, namely a spatial data warehouse

and a visualization facility. In the second category, thematic geodata sets and services, 12 United Nations entities were involved in 16 different projects relating to areas such as peacekeeping, the environment, humanitarian affairs and health. Those entities were also involved in capacity-building activities, the third category of deliverables. UNSDI was gaining more visibility both within and outside the United Nations: an increasing number of regional and international bodies were interested in collaborating in the initiative.

40. The objective of the spatial data warehouse was to ensure that the geospatial data of United Nations entities were fully accessible and reusable, in line with the principle of open access to data mentioned by previous speakers. With regard to data visualization, the aim was to put in place a shared facility that would enable United Nations entities to take advantage of the different visualization platforms currently available.

41. Work on the UNSDI initiative at agency level was ongoing, and a trust fund had been established to support it. A number of potential donors had already been identified and all Member States were invited to contribute.

42. In July 2011, the Economic and Social Council had established the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), whose inaugural meeting would take place in Seoul in October 2011. GGIM, which was a political initiative aimed at encouraging collaboration between Member States, had so far been separate from the UNGIWG/UNSDI process, which was focused on geospatial information management within the United Nations system. However, it was expected that the two would become increasingly integrated, as both Member States and United Nations entities faced similar challenges.

43. Another deliverable being worked on at the Centre of Excellence was the two-year UNSDI Gazetteer Framework project, for which technological and financial support was being provided by two Australian organizations. The Framework would make it possible to track who was using and developing each gazetteer and for what purpose. It would also enable cross-referencing of gazetteer terms between systems and would allow registered gazetteers to be supplemented with information provided by users. The major stakeholders in the project were the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the

Global Pulse initiative of the Office of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A pilot project would be launched in Indonesia focusing on the thematic areas of social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster management.

44. **Ms. Othman** (Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs), accompanying her statement with a computerized slide presentation, said that the Office had a number of operational priorities. The first was to strengthen the intergovernmental process by servicing COPUOS meetings in Vienna and supporting regional coordination mechanisms and initiatives. The second was to discharge the Secretary-General's responsibilities in the context of United Nations treaties and conventions on space law, the most important of which was maintaining the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space; the Office also carried out a programme of capacity-building in space law and space policy. The third operational priority was to enhance the use of space science and technology and their applications, particularly for sustainable development, including through capacity-building initiatives. In addition, in line with the United Nations development agenda, the Office organized workshops, fellowships and other programmes relating to global health, climate change and humanitarian assistance.

45. The fourth operational priority was to utilize space science and technology to secure global public goods. The Office was facilitating the growth of a global network of space weather instruments and was implementing the United Nations Platform of Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) programme. It also served as the executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, which was aiming to establish a "system of systems". The fifth priority was to enhance cooperation among United Nations entities in space-related activities through a special inter-agency coordination mechanism. The Office also promoted data sharing within the United Nations system, in particular to support the COPUOS position on harnessing the use of geospatial data for sustainable development at the Rio+20 Conference. Lastly, the sixth operational priority was to increase public awareness of the socio-economic benefits of space on an ongoing basis, and particularly during World Space Week each year. The Office had an active public outreach programme

and had also produced a publication, *Space Matters*, describing its work.

46. The Office for Outer Space Affairs participated in the sessions of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. At the thirty-first session, held in Geneva in March 2011, a special report on space and climate change (A/AC.105/991) had been adopted and would be used as input for a joint publication of the Office and the World Meteorological Organization on the same topic. Through the Inter-Agency Meeting, the Office would provide input to the Rio+20 process, focusing in particular on the importance of space data for sustainable development and the promotion of data sharing. In the context of climate change, the agencies that took part in the Inter-Agency Meeting were working on the establishment of a global repository of satellite-based data and were also committed to enhancing the use of space technology to address needs identified under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

47. **Ms. Pessôa** (Brazil) said that the theme of the current panel discussion was particularly important to Brazil, as the host of the Rio+20 Conference. Her Government recognized the value of geospatial data, in particular data provided by satellite systems, for the purpose of supporting sustainable development policies. The establishment of national spatial data infrastructures, together with appropriate training and education, could help support development policies in countries that would benefit from wider use of such data. In that regard, she reiterated her Government's support for universal access to geospatial data and welcomed the increased availability of space-derived data at little or no cost from sources such as the CBERS satellite.

48. Her Government wished to continue working in partnership with other developing countries to promote the peaceful uses of space technology in areas of societal benefit. States with expertise in the establishment, operation and maintenance of space-derived geospatial infrastructures and databases or in the use of space-derived geospatial data to support governmental policies should assist countries wishing to develop their own capacity and expertise in those areas.

49. The objective of the Rio+20 Conference was to renew political commitment to sustainable development. Space science and technology and their applications

provided essential tools for finding viable long-term solutions to sustainable development challenges. She also endorsed the call for a renewed commitment to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and for work to begin on a legal framework for the implementation of that principle.

General debate

50. **Mr. Prunariu** (Romania), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and introducing its report on its fifty-fourth session (A/66/20), said that the year 2011 marked the fiftieth anniversaries of the first human space flight and of the establishment of COPUOS, which had proceeded to formulate the first legal principles governing space activities then adopted in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI) A-E. The commemorative segment of the session, held to celebrate the two anniversaries, was summarized in annex I to the report, which also contained the Declaration adopted to mark the occasion. The year 2011 was also the thirtieth anniversary of the first test flight of the United States space shuttle Columbia, whose contribution to international cooperation in space was recognized by all.

51. For half a century the Committee had witnessed and been at the centre of humankind's amazing exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes, and had made efforts to harness the benefits of space science and technology in order to ensure the development of all countries. It had also been instrumental in the development of the international legal regime governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space. The Committee had aligned many of its activities with the Millennium Development Goals, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had been one of its central efforts, leading to the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems and UN-SPIDER.

52. Recent natural disasters served as a reminder of the importance of building capacities to mitigate their effects. Space tools were indispensable in such endeavours, and COPUOS had worked to increase awareness and build capacity both in disaster management and in other critical areas such as climate change, food security and global health. It was also

important to look more closely at how advanced space research and technologies could contribute to addressing specific concerns such as clean energy and drinking water, the management of natural resources, tele-education and tele-health applications, and capacity-building, and how research on human space flight, especially through the International Space Station, could be made an even stronger tool for development.

53. In the past year, COPUOS had continued its consideration of the important agenda items discussed in sections II.F to J of the report, several of which related directly or indirectly to the work carried out by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, the only United Nations-wide coordination mechanism for space-related activities. The Committee's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee had continued to work jointly on promoting national implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had also continued to develop the workplan relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space through its Working Group on the question, and the terms of reference and methods of work of its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, set out in annex II to the report, had been adopted by COPUOS. The Legal Subcommittee was making good progress in its review of national space legislation through its Working Group on the question, and it was also identifying ways of building capacity in space law, particularly in developing countries. Working with the Subcommittee, the Office for Outer Space Affairs had recently created a tool on its website for the archiving of official records relating to the *travaux préparatoires* of the treaties and principles on outer space.

54. The major space-related mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and the Americas were providing platforms for enhanced coordination and cooperation between spacefaring nations and emerging space nations, and establishing partnerships between users and providers of space-based services. The regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated to the United Nations were, with the support of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, doing commendable work. Recent events worthy of note were the holding of the International Astronautical Congress in Cape Town and the observance of World Space Week.

55. **Mr. Vidal** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the associated countries Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), said that regional and interregional cooperation was essential in order to expand the peaceful uses of outer space, help States develop space-related capacities and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that connection, he recalled the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/122.

56. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/97, stated its conviction that space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the achievement of a number of important objectives, in particular poverty eradication, and COPUOS recognized that the establishment of national spatial data infrastructures could serve the purpose of supporting development policies in a number of areas. In that context, MERCOSUR reiterated its support for universal access to geospatial data. It also supported the COPUOS recommendation that States with expertise in the establishment, operation and maintenance of space-derived geospatial infrastructures and databases or in the use of space-derived geospatial data to support governmental policies should assist those countries wishing to develop their own capacity and expertise in the use of such data. The increased availability of space-based data at little or no cost, including data provided by the Argentine Earth observation satellite SAC-C and the CBERS satellite, was a welcome development. South-South cooperation could also help build national capacities and promote the use of spatial data for sustainable development.

57. Space science and technology and their applications provided indispensable tools for sustainable development. In that regard, he drew attention to the activities of the regional centres for space science and technology education, in particular the centre for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Brazil campus of that centre was committed to promoting cooperation among MERCOSUR States, particularly in the important area of capacity-building.

58. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), noting that 2011 marked the fiftieth anniversaries of the first

human space flight and of the first session of COPUOS, said that the space age had begun as a struggle for security and prestige between the Soviet Union and the United States. Today, Russians and Americans, together with nationals of dozens of other countries, lived and worked together on the International Space Station and cooperated to promote the peaceful uses of outer space. COPUOS had enjoyed great success in bringing the benefits of space exploration to a wide range of people. Terrestrial navigation, disaster response and mitigation, global search and rescue, and weather and climate monitoring all depended on space technology and the sharing of space-derived data. COPUOS had played a vital role in establishing the framework for international cooperation on such matters. It had also carried out critical work in the development of the major space treaties that underpinned space activities and would continue to do so as the use of space evolved and expanded.

59. Since the advent of human space flight 50 years previously, more than 500 people from all six continents had flown in space. 2011 also marked the end of 30 years of United States space shuttle operations. The International Space Station was the most ambitious international engineering project in human experience. With its assembly completed, a new era of utilization for research was beginning, and the Space Station's operations were expected to last until at least 2020. In 2010, the heads of 30 space agencies had gathered in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the space achievements of all nations and underscore their ongoing commitment to cooperation in space exploration.

60. The achievements of the past 50 years should provide the impetus for another 50 years of progress towards a future free of earthbound tyranny and mistrust. COPUOS should continue in its role of stimulating international cooperation to develop the technologies needed to take humans beyond Earth orbit and on to other planets. Such cooperation would ensure that all nations, whether spacefaring or not, found their horizons broadened, their knowledge enhanced and their lives improved.

61. **Ms. Abu** (Israel) said that the Israel Space Agency was contributing to the peaceful use of outer space by promoting innovative scientific projects based on international collaboration. It had signed cooperation agreements with eight countries and would

conclude similar agreements in the near future with four others. Israel was also currently negotiating a framework agreement to join the European Space Agency.

62. Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of its first satellite in September 1988; it had technological advantages in certain niches, notably small sophisticated satellites and satellite-based technologies such as remote sensing. The Israeli space industry continued to expand its links with foreign partners and had sought to advance a number of projects that would benefit the international community at large. Israel and France, for instance, were cooperating on a project using an observation microsatellite which produced highly accurate data that could be used for the monitoring and analysis of land surface and would help optimize agriculture and aquaculture. Israel also had a special partnership with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which it had maintained even after its joint mission on the Columbia shuttle had, after producing valuable data, ended in tragedy. Israel had recently joined the NASA Lunar Science Institute and would carry out joint scientific undertakings, including the establishment of an infrastructure to facilitate virtual collaboration. Israel had also begun to work closely with Italy's space agency, with which it had cooperated successfully in the multispectral field. In 2011, Israel had signed cooperation agreements with the Russian space agency and the European Space Agency.

63. The Israeli private sector was also a significant contributor to the global space industry; its activities included providing rural communication services to remote communities in a number of countries and, in the field of space electro-optics, developing an advanced hyperspectral system. An Israeli company would in 2012 launch its fourth communications satellite, which would provide coverage to most of the Middle East and Eastern and Central Europe. Israel looked forward to expanding its space cooperation and providing access to outer space for countries without the ability to have such access independently.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.