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Chair: Mr. Motanyane (Vice-Chair) (Lesotho)
later: Mr. García González (Chair) (El Salvador)

Contents

Agenda item 50: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

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In the absence of Mr. García González (El Salvador), Mr. Motanyane (Lesotho), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 50: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/68/20; A/C.4/68/L.2 and L.3)

1. **Mr. Horikawa** (Japan), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), and introducing its report on its fifty-sixth session (A/68/20), said that June 2013 had seen the fiftieth anniversary of the first space flight undertaken by a woman, cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova. COPUOS had commemorated the event with a panel discussion on the contribution of women in advancing the common space endeavour and their broader role in scientific and socioeconomic development.

2. Space science and technology and their applications provided indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development. In the context of increasing awareness of climate change, it was essential to monitor the situation so as to devise mitigation and adaptation measures. In 2011, COPUOS had reported to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) on harnessing the use of space-derived geospatial data to support sustainable development policies (A/AC.105/993).

3. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was contributing to the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals set up under General Assembly decision 67/555. Further, in March 2013 the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) had hosted the thirty-third session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, at which a comprehensive report had been adopted on space technology for agriculture development and food security (A/AC.105/1042).

4. Advances in space science and technology research and development were fundamental prerequisites for any application designed to benefit humankind on Earth. COPUOS and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had made significant progress towards the goals of the Rio+20 Conference and the post-2015 development agenda. The role of mechanisms such as the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and its counterparts in Asia-

Pacific and the Americas enhanced partnerships between users and providers of space-based services.

5. COPUOS should continue to assess its role in view of the increasing number of countries and actors participating in space activities, with particular reference to collaboration between spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations for the purposes of global development. The three major pillars of the Committee's work focused on strengthening its role as a global platform for space science and technology cooperation, promoting greater dialogue between the Committee and regional and interregional coordination mechanisms in space activities for sustainable development, and stimulating the further advancement of space science and technology for the benefit of all humankind.

6. Within that framework, additional studies could be conducted to ascertain how cooperative efforts, such as the International Space Station, could be used to meet development objectives. Likewise, there should be further discussion of the operation of small satellites and nanosatellites, including the legal rules governing outer space.

7. Also of note was the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, which demonstrated the importance of long-term sustainability of outer space activities and developed understanding of relevant regulatory frameworks and mechanisms. The Subcommittees' joint efforts in promoting national implementation of the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines were to be commended, as was the work done on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Furthermore, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, attached to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, did vital work to address sustainable space utilization supporting sustainable development on Earth and offered valuable guidance for actors in the space arena.

8. In 2013, COPUOS had endorsed the recommendations for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat, which were the result of the work done by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Working Group on Near-Earth Objects and the corresponding Action Team under the multi-year programme of work emanating from the implementation of the recommendations made at the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration

and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). In a similar vein, the Committee had made recommendations for voluntary consideration by States on subjects such as authorization and licensing and the supervision of national space activities.

9. The Office for Outer Space Affairs played a substantive role as the executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, and progress had been made in implementing the workplan of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER). Also of note were the regional centres for space science and technology education, which had established infrastructures for advanced space science and technology training. The network of UN-SPIDER regional support offices catered for regional coordination efforts in the area of disaster risk reduction.

10. Other recent events that should be highlighted included the International Astronautical Congress, held in Beijing in September; World Space Week; and, earlier in the year, the International Day of Human Space Flight.

11. *Mr. García González (El Salvador) took the Chair.*

12. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), commended the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and COPUOS for their untiring efforts to enhance international dialogue and exchange of information on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

13. The year 2013 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first space flight by a woman, Valentina Tereshkova. He hoped that such an important milestone, coupled with the pioneering spirit and vision of such women, would inspire others to continue expanding the boundaries of what was possible in space technology and its application for the benefit of humankind.

14. Space technology and its applications as well as space-driven data had great potential to contribute to sustainable development. In that regard, ASEAN looked forward to participating actively in the debate on sustainable development in marine and coastal ecosystems at the 2014 session of COPUOS. The Association encouraged COPUOS and other stakeholders to continue their consultations on how

space technologies and data could be linked to the post-2015 development agenda.

15. There was still a wide gap between developed and developing countries in space technology. Developed countries and international organizations should increase their assistance to developing countries in that regard and should raise awareness of the benefits of space technologies and the importance of an international legal framework for space activities, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant treaties.

16. The application of space-based data, especially for early warning systems and search and rescue operations, had helped to save countless lives. ASEAN highly appreciated the work of UN-SPIDER, whose geographical coverage should be expanded, especially to the disaster-prone Asia-Pacific region.

17. In that connection, the ASEAN Subcommittee on Space Technology and Applications had focused on an effective early warning system aided by the ASEAN virtual constellation of Earth observation satellites. The UN-SPIDER regional support office agreement between the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space of Indonesia was precisely the kind of cooperation that should be encouraged in order to develop training programmes related to the application of space technology for disaster management.

18. ASEAN had hosted several relevant international conferences in 2012 and 2013, including the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and the International Conference on Integrated Space Technology Applications to Climate Change. It reiterated its concern regarding the issue of space debris, which posed a serious risk to communication satellites. Voluntary implementation of the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines should therefore be encouraged.

19. Speaking as the representative of Thailand, he added that as an active member of COPUOS since 2004, Thailand had organized a number of training modules, seminars, workshops and conferences to promote knowledge of space technology and its applications among public- and private-sector entities and academic institutions. Together with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in December 2012 it had organized the Intergovernmental Meeting on Asia-Pacific Years of

Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development. Thailand broadcast educational programmes by satellite to more than 3,000 schools, and would shortly launch a new telecommunications satellite, Thaicom 6.

20. He reiterated the position of ASEAN that activities related to the exploration of outer space should respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, equal and non-discriminatory access, and equal conditions for all States.

21. **Mr. Toro-Carnevali** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the States parties and associated States of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), said that MERCOSUR attached importance to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and to the work of COPUOS. He reiterated the commitment of MERCOSUR to the principles enshrined in the five United Nations outer space treaties, including the use and free exploration of outer space by all States for the benefit of humanity. It was, however, necessary to update and strengthen those instruments so as to give fresh impetus to the rules governing outer-space activities, intensify international cooperation and make space technology available to all.

22. The social and economic rights and well-being of peoples, which depended more and more on data generated from the peaceful uses of outer space, could only be ensured through the democratic management of outer space. Regional and interregional cooperation was essential to promote space science and technology and their applications, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries, and thus achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the Rio+20 outcome document.

23. For MERCOSUR, the biggest threat to the long-term sustainable development of space-related activities was the prospect of an arms race, something which could be avoided by means of transparency and confidence-building measures. Within the framework of the United Nations, multilateralism was the guarantee that the exploration and use of outer space would be for the benefit and in the interest of all States, irrespective of their degree of economic and scientific development.

24. It was important to ensure that outer space continued to be used solely for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the principles contained in articles III

and IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. In that connection, the Conference on Disarmament should resume its work in order to negotiate a treaty prohibiting an arms race in outer space.

25. He welcomed the report on the fifty-sixth session of COPUOS (A/68/20), which confirmed that Committee's fundamental role in ensuring that outer space was used for peaceful purposes. MERCOSUR shared the view of COPUOS that international, regional and interregional cooperation and coordination in the field of space activities were essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space and to assist States in the development of their space capabilities. Of note in that regard was the October 2012 agreement between the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the National Commission on Space Activities of the Argentine Republic to set up a new UN-SPIDER office for the Latin American region, which would focus on the areas of disaster management and emergency response.

26. It was important to recognize the role of outer space science and technology education centres in developing countries, such as the Brazil and Mexico offices of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean.

27. **Mr. Babajide** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that space activities and technologies were a driver of economic growth and innovation for the benefit of all people, helping to meet major challenges such as climate change and scarce resources and boosting industrial competitiveness, thereby contributing to job creation and socioeconomic development.

28. Key priorities for European space policy were the two flagship global navigation and Earth observation programmes Galileo and Copernicus. In October 2012, two additional operational satellites had been launched from Kourou, French Guiana, a significant milestone in the construction of Galileo. Initial satellite navigation services would be offered starting in 2014 and, by 2025,

the full constellation of 30 satellites would be in orbit. Some 6 to 7 per cent of European Union gross domestic product (GDP) relied on services provided by global navigation satellite systems; in that regard, Galileo would provide new business opportunities in a wide variety of applications in many economic sectors. In recent years, market development had been a major focus of the European Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Agency (GSA), which would assume responsibility for operating the Galileo system.

29. The European Union's Earth observation programme Copernicus was built on partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as the European Space Agency (ESA). The programme ensured a continuous flow of information on global environmental issues and security-related services, and could be instrumental in achieving important United Nations goals, especially regarding the contribution of space activities and technologies to sustainable development. Copernicus was already partly operational and additional services would become available in 2014, with the launch of the first dedicated observation satellite, Sentinel 1-A. Copernicus was cooperating with United Nations entities such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme, and was the European contribution to building the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) developed within the framework of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

30. The European Union also supported research on the mitigation and avoidance of space debris and potential impacts from solar-Earth interactions, known as space weather. The space environment was fragile and urgent action to halt the increase in space debris was necessary. Many countries were committed to the development and implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures, such as the development of an international code of conduct for outer space activities, as a means of enhancing safety and security.

31. Over the last few decades, COPUOS had laid down a firm legal basis for all forms of space activities. Of recent note was the outcome of the work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. With reference to the fifty-fifth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the final report of the Action Team on Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) contained recommendations for an international response to the NEO impact threat, in

particular the NEOShield research project. In a similar vein, the report of the Legal Subcommittee's Working Group on National Legislation Relevant to the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space provided an excellent analysis of the current status and development of national space legislation and regulatory frameworks. The European Union welcomed the decision of the Legal Subcommittee to submit that Working Group's recommendations as a separate draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly. In general, the improvement and streamlining of the organization and working methods of COPUOS were key elements in achieving significant progress towards strengthening its agenda.

32. **Mr. Alday González** (Mexico) reiterated that outer space should remain open to all States and its exploration and use should always be for peaceful purposes, in line with the principles of the Outer Space Treaty. Mexico called on all countries to apply the measures established by COPUOS to mitigate space debris, which was caused by both heavenly bodies and man-made devices, and jeopardized the sustainability of short-term space activities.

33. As Chair of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat of the Space Conference of the Americas (SCA), Mexico had organized two meetings earlier in the year, one on the use of space for human and environmental security in the Americas and the other on confidence-building in space: promoting secure and sustainable space activities for the Americas through standards of conduct. Further, since it was aware of the importance of space infrastructure, Mexico had included in its National Development Plan the development of global navigation satellite systems, an early-warning system in the event of natural disasters, and broadband services to reduce the digital divide within the country.

34. In order to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and the enhancement of space law, a workshop for heads of space agencies and commissions in Latin America and the Caribbean would be held in October 2013 to explore subjects of interest such as climate change and disaster management. The workshop would help to bridge the divide between countries participating actively in space and emerging spacefaring nations. Similarly, Mexico would continue to promote international development and cooperation through the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean.

35. Collective participation was a prerequisite for international cooperation. Mexico therefore called on all Member States to share information on disaster management and to implement the resolutions adopted on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. In addition, all Member States should accede to the outer space treaties and thereby strengthen international space law.

36. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that the number of countries relying on space programmes and applications for their economic welfare, development and national security was steadily increasing. In that regard, progress could best be made by entering into joint ventures, since international cooperation allowed better understanding of cultural nuances and greater tolerance. To that end, Israel's national civil space programme had been adopted with a focus on utilizing space to secure life on Earth. The Israel Space Agency had signed cooperation agreements with sister agencies in various countries and continued to expand links with international partners.

37. In December 2012, the Government of Israel had made the first of five budgetary allocations to implement its 2010 decision to promote the national civil space programme. Further, in January 2013, 14 national space agency delegations had attended the eighth Annual International Ilan Ramon Space Conference and discussed such topics as future space exploration, international cooperation and the space industry. Every year, the International Astronautical Federation, together with the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law, hosted the International Astronautical Congress, which in 2015 would be held in Jerusalem.

38. The last two decades had witnessed a dramatic intensification of space-related activities. Space-based assets offered a wide spectrum of critical civilian, commercial and military services. Israel had established an interministerial committee to cooperate with the European Union in drafting the proposed international code of conduct for outer space activities. It had also donated a model of its OpSat 2000 Earth observation satellite to the permanent exhibit of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna. The satellite was for civil uses in agriculture, infrastructure analysis and natural disaster management.

39. With the participation of the public and private sectors, the national civil space programme sought to make Israel one of the five leading spacefaring nations by means of international cooperation. Israel already worked closely with its partners in the United States of America and Europe in fields such as Earth monitoring and soil mapping. In that spirit, Israel invited other countries to cooperate with it in order to realize the full potential of the peaceful uses of outer space.

40. **Mr. El Shamek** (Libya) said that the peaceful uses of outer space had become a crucial issue in terms of sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as they related to food security, resource management and the prevention of natural disasters, climate change and desertification. International cooperation should be expanded for the benefit of all States, irrespective of their degree of economic and scientific development. The role of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was vital in that regard, as was the work done by international and non-governmental organizations to strengthen the exchange of information between States that were active in space and those seeking to gain such experience.

41. COPUOS played an important role in establishing criteria for space activities and laying the legal foundations in that area. International space law should be developed so as to achieve long-term security, inter alia through a code of conduct for outer space activities. Compliance with all relevant General Assembly resolutions was essential so as to enhance international cooperation. Further, the necessary measures laid down by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee should be taken to mitigate the effects of space debris, which constituted a threat to the Earth.

42. In relation to international cooperation for the purposes of national capacity-building, it was necessary to expand the training programme of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, exchange information and experience, and increase the support provided to developing countries by international agencies and developed countries through regional space science education centres.

43. Libya shared the concern of other delegations regarding the risks of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, in particular in the geostationary orbit and low-Earth orbits. Since the issue affected the whole of humanity, the cooperation of all States was

important in dealing with the problem of collisions of such objects, and binding international standards should be adopted in order to preserve life and maintain peace and security in outer space.

44. The strengthening of international cooperation to allow all States to make use of space was important in order to mitigate the risk of natural disasters and manage emergency situations. Of particular importance was the role played by UN-SPIDER and its regional support offices. An effective early warning system should be created, since it was the responsibility of all States to help the victims of disasters. He highlighted the meeting of UN-SPIDER regional support offices on the implementation of the planned 2013-2014 programme activities and the voluntary contributions that had been made for those activities.

45. The geostationary orbit was a limited resource, the use of which should be rationalized and made available to all States, irrespective of their current technical capabilities. Libya hoped to be able to benefit to a greater extent from space technologies for the purposes of sustainable development, as well as enhancing its national capacities in that regard. It had already expressed the need to comply fully with the purposes and principles of the Organization at the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee.

46. **Mr. Ashri Muda** (Malaysia) said that his country's space programme had made significant progress, as its third Earth observation satellite, RazakSAT-2, was due to be launched in 2016 and would have higher-quality image acquisition than the previously launched satellites.

47. In terms of its space infrastructure development, Malaysia had completed work on an assembly, integration and testing facility that would shortly be ready to accept satellite testing. Malaysia had also made ongoing contributions to the local and regional space communities by holding the International Symposium and Exhibition on Geoinformation 2013, the Asia Geospatial Forum and the Small Satellite Colloquium.

48. Malaysia had also been actively involved in international initiatives and scientific collaboration so as to enhance further its capacity in space exploration activities. Those initiatives included the International Space Weather Initiative and the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research,

technological development and demonstration activities, under which Malaysia's national space agency collaborated on the Growing NAVIS project on GNSS utilization. Furthermore, Malaysia was working with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency on a number of initiatives, including the Sentinel Asia project on disaster management using remote sensing, an annual Asian university competition involving parabolic flight experiments, and projects under which seeds and protein samples were sent to the International Space Station.

49. Malaysia was fully committed to enhancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space in order to address a range of social and economic challenges, including poverty eradication, environmental protection and disaster management.

50. **Mr. Munir** (Pakistan) said that COPUOS and its two Subcommittees were a central focal point for enhancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and especially for maximizing the benefits of space capabilities in the fields of the environment, health and disaster mitigation.

51. The Government of Pakistan had developed a strategy, known as "Space Vision 2040", for the effective application of space-based technologies for sustainable development. The strategy had been relevant in the aftermath of an earthquake that had struck Balochistan Province in September 2013, as Pakistan had immediately requested satellite imaging of the affected areas. With international collaboration, Pakistan was developing a space education and awareness programme, and its national space agency had recently finalized an environmental information management system for creating baseline data on different environmental and climate variables.

52. In a similar vein, satellite technology was being used for a number of agriculture, monitoring and mapping projects, in cooperation with local authorities and international development agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Pakistan's communication satellite, launched in August 2011, was meeting the demands of the national telecommunications and broadcast industries and facilitating socioeconomic development. Pakistan was collaborating with international organizations on the development of forecasting and early warning systems in relation to natural disasters.

53. Pollution caused by space debris was an enduring threat to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. It was therefore important to continue improving the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines with the aim of developing legally binding rules and to make research, best practices, technologies and early warning information available to all stakeholders.

54. Pakistan was a party to the five core United Nations outer space treaties. It believed that there was a further need to enhance training and capacity-building activities for developing countries so that emerging spacefaring nations would be able to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space in an equitable manner. Such activities should be carried out on the basis of international law and United Nations principles and guidelines. Regulatory instruments must be developed so that the benefits of outer space activities and technologies were shared by the whole of humankind. Pakistan was against the weaponization of outer space.

55. **Mr. Panin** (Russian Federation) expressed pride at the celebration in June 2013 of the fiftieth anniversary of the first space flight by a woman, Valentina Tereshkova, who was a Russian citizen. The Russian Federation supported the work of COPUOS as the main forum for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

56. The consensus reached by the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee and Committee of the Whole on a set of recommendations on legislation in that area would be very useful not only for those States that were just beginning to engage in space activities but also for current participants. The interim results of the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on proposed draft guidelines on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities also constituted a step forward. Although the issues of safe space operations and security in space as a whole were complex and indeed delicate, they needed to be resolved, a process that would require both time and the political will of States. The Russian Federation believed that such guidelines should carry political weight and create a sound basis for constructive actions at the national and international levels to enhance security, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

57. In view of the significance of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's review of national best practice in relation to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, further work should focus on reaching agreement on key aspects of addressing issues concerning the protection and security of the space environment. An appropriate focus on such issues in the regulatory system could provide a blueprint for international action to address risks and threats to outer space activities.

58. The Russian Federation had proposed that active international efforts should be made regarding the priority agenda item of COPUOS concerning ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Its bold initiative proposed the collective consideration of the legal basis for and the modalities of the hypothetical exercise of the right to self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as applied to outer space. Although certain parties might not have been able to assess the proposal on its merits or might have considered it to be in contradiction with the need to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes, the intention was the opposite: to reach agreement on a clear and common interpretation of such fundamental Charter principles as self-defence and the non-use or threat of force, together with the principles and standards of international space law. There were obvious regulatory gaps in that area that needed to be filled collectively. Otherwise, differing interpretations of those principles might potentially increase the threat in the case of incidents or conflicts of interest in outer space.

59. The Russian proposal could be discussed in objective terms at the 2014 session of COPUOS. Essentially, that proposal advocated a more rational and secure basis for organizing outer space activities. The new requirements and opportunities that would arise in that area in the future could be reflected in specific guidelines on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.