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Chair: Mr. Bowler (Malawi)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 50: University for Peace

(A/70/288; A/C.4/70/L.10)

1. **Mr. Rojas Aravena** (Rector, University for Peace), introducing the report on the work carried out for the period 2012-2015, said that 35 years after its establishment, the University was more relevant than ever, given the increasing complexity of local and international conflicts. Contemporary wars retained certain geopolitical factors of the cold war period, but were no longer fought between States. They affected superpowers and smaller countries alike, and domestic conflicts had the most victims. It was therefore necessary to re-examine the root causes of and the role of globalization in conflict. Consequently, the task of the University for Peace was to contribute to the analysis of new conflicts and, through its postgraduate education programmes, recommend ways to prevent, de-escalate and mitigate conflict. That was in keeping with the visionary idea for the founding of the University, which was to seek global support not through military force, but by creating a corps of university graduates who could help to change conflict, analyse its causes and seek sustainable peace through collaboration.

2. Through classroom teaching and online courses, as well as joint programmes with United Nations bodies and other prestigious educational institutions around the world, the University offered a variety of postgraduate courses and training for local and regional capacity-building. Its multicultural and multinational academic staff and student body had different cultural visions and methods of thinking, but all shared the goals of building peace and stability and creating a world that ensured human dignity for all. With over 1600 graduates working in more than 100 countries, promoting the foundational United Nations values of peace, development and human rights, the University had a significant impact in a world torn by conflict: 65 per cent of its alumni were women, working in the important area of women in peacekeeping; the majority of alumni were employed in the public sector, international organizations and the civil sector, with 20 per cent in the private sector.

3. Peacebuilding was a fundamental challenge for all in an increasingly interconnected and vulnerable world. Given the academic and intellectual challenges

involved in understanding the root causes of new, simultaneously international and domestic conflicts, education for peace and training in conflict-mitigation techniques were essential in improving national and international governance. Cultural, religious and many other factors must be taken into account. While the University sought to improve analysis in the main areas highlighted by the United Nations, meeting the sustainable development goals was a precondition for peace and an agreement on climate change was vital to avoid unimaginable disaster. The University's mandate was to go beyond academics, training and capacity-building for civil servants and rethinking the techniques and tools to achieve those goals.

4. However, success was impossible without resources and leadership. A permanent institution could not be built without material, human and financial resources. He thanked those Member States, foundations and philanthropists as well as academic and administrative staff who had contributed significantly to the University, and called on Member States that had not ratified the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace to do so. Political support as well as voluntary contributions were welcome, as was the establishment of scholarship funds allowing nationals of contributing States to receive training in conflict resolution and other subjects. He urged countries emerging from conflict or dealing with political polarization to allocate financial resources for postgraduate training for professionals who could then help to prevent new conflicts and avoid recurrences of past ones.

5. Substantive reform had taken place in 2014, and an external audit of Masters programmes had affirmed high academic standards while highlighting possible areas for improvement. Particular emphasis would be placed on advances in information and communications technologies and on migration, terrorism and other situations that affected large numbers of people. The University would also continue its efforts to ensure that its academic staff met the highest standards and disseminated the knowledge acquired by the University and its alumni. He assured the Committee of the University's commitment to training future generations with a view to promoting a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. He would continue to keep Member States informed, through the Committee, of progress made and challenges faced. To create a better world, there

was a need for a strong United Nations and an active and dynamic University for Peace that could address global conflicts through education for peace.

6. **Ms. Peñas Domingo** (First Lady of Costa Rica) said that as representative of Costa Rica on the Council of the University for Peace, of which she was an alumna, she welcomed the report by the Rector. All in the room were aware of the general insecurity, injustice, inequality and intolerance on the rise in many countries. The start of the century had been marked by crisis and transition in the international community. Inaction was unacceptable; the challenges faced must be addressed boldly and information that identified threats and could help to avoid crises must be followed up. Although the University was now more relevant than ever, peace could not be achieved without preparation. Peace and democracy were built through specific socialization and ideological processes. There was a need to work consciously and actively towards a culture of peace and education for peace, which were both essential in the University for Peace.

7. Furthermore, given that there could be no peace without sustainable development or in a world where hunger and poverty existed, the University must broaden its educational duties. Publicly acknowledging the University's positive influence on her personal and professional development, she said that the academic reforms and restructuring undertaken by the Rector in an effort to consolidate academic excellence were in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the University that responded to the current international context and relevant needs.

8. **Mr. Coloma** (Chile) said that the long and illustrious career of the Rector of the University for Peace gave all the more significance to the important work he was doing to give new momentum to the University. Convinced of the role of education in establishing peace, Chile supported the work of the University and had co-sponsored the resolution. He wished the Rector and the administration continued success in the noble cause of peace.

9. **Mr. Rojas Aravena** (Rector, University for Peace) said that he wished to reiterate the University's commitment to inform the General Assembly appropriately. The University had fallen behind in providing information that should be given annually, in addition to the triennial report submitted to the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.10: University for Peace

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

11. **Mr. Mendoza** (Costa Rica) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, which had been joined by Bangladesh, Brazil, Finland, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Norway and Sri Lanka. The resolution, which contained a minor drafting change in operative paragraph 8, took on special significance in the light of the landmark anniversaries of the United Nations and of the University. It reviewed the advances achieved by the University for Peace in adapting to changing needs and attaining financial stability in the period 2012-2015, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/288). The resolution also contained references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the University could help to implement by training professionals with the skills needed by countries. He reiterated the call for the Secretary-General to establish a fund for voluntary contributions to consolidate the University's financial sustainability, and urged Member States that had not signed the International Agreement for the Establishment of the University for Peace to do so. The sponsors hoped that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

12. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that as the proud host country of the University, Costa Rica had taken significant steps to contribute within its capacities to the institution's financing, notably through an allocation in the annual ministerial budget. Recalling that the University received no funding from the regular budget of the United Nations, he said that Member States' voluntary contributions were vital because they enabled students from around the world to enrol. Scholarships were another way of providing training for civil servants. While it was an understandably complex issue in the current economic climate, the hope remained that the Organization would be able to provide basic funding for the University in the near future.

13. **Ms. Peñas Domingo** (First Lady of Costa Rica) said that, as an arms-free democratic country, and host country of the University for Peace and regional human rights institutions, Costa Rica considered that a culture of peace and education for peace must be absolute priorities. Peace, like war, was not fated historically, but a product of human freedoms. Since its

establishment, the University for Peace had been governed by the principles of respect, harmony, understanding, tolerance and cooperation. She therefore urged Member States to work together to honour those principles and provide the requisite support, through scholarship programmes, voluntary contributions to implement activities promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence, or providing human resources that could help to develop new ideas on conflict resolution.

14. That would help to reinforce the loftiest values of society by building more tolerant, just communities that were united around the principles of the United Nations. Consequently, Costa Rica and the University had negotiated an additional protocol to the headquarters agreement, under which the country would offer a small but permanent annual contribution. Peace could not be achieved unless all basic human rights, including the right to development, were respected; it could be guaranteed, in the long term, only in just, pluralist, inclusive, equal, participatory and prosperous societies. She reiterated the Costa Rican President's plea to the General Assembly to work together and support the University of Peace in fulfilling its mandate and educating the leaders that the world needed.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.10, as amended, was adopted.*

Agenda item 53: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/70/20)

16. **The Chair** said that, over the past 60 years, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had built a robust and inclusive global platform for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Its strength lay in the broad membership of States representing all geographic regions of the world. Its unique role in the United Nations system was to create a legal regime on outer space and a foundation for space and technology that would benefit developing countries in particular.

Statement by the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

17. **Mr. Oussedik** (Algeria), speaking in his capacity as Chair of COPUOS and introducing the report of its fifty-eighth session (A/70/20), said that 2015 marked the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major processes closely related

to the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, such as the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan in 2015 and the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris.

18. More must be done to address challenges to humanity and sustainable development, protect the space environment and secure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Realizing the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals would require stronger space governance and supporting structures at all levels.

19. The latest COPUOS report gave a comprehensive overview of its work and that of its subsidiary bodies during its fifty-eighth session. While that session had been challenging, a spirit of open debate had prevailed, allowing COPUOS to make several decisions on its substantive work.

20. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee had made considerable strides earlier in 2015. The COPUOS bureau was grateful to the chairs of the Subcommittees and their Working Groups for their excellent leadership that year. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had established the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) and the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN) pursuant to recommendations for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat; two of the Subcommittee's dedicated expert groups had been created to consider global health and space weather under multi-year workplans.

21. The Legal Subcommittee's Working Group on the Review of International Mechanisms for Cooperation in the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space was making progress on drafting an understanding on international cooperation mechanisms for outer space that would serve as a basis for the international community's overall consideration of the fiftieth anniversary 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 (Outer Space Treaty) in 2017. The Legal Subcommittee had also agreed to add space traffic management and international law perspectives on small and very small satellite activities to its agenda.

22. The work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Working Group on the Long-term

Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was advancing, as was that of COPUOS on the broader notion of space security, including by considering the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities to identify which of its recommendations could be instrumental in ensuring the safety of space operations and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

23. Major spacefaring nations and emerging space nations must maintain relationships and dialogue on increased international cooperation and capacity-building efforts for the benefit of developing countries in order for those efforts to be successful. Meanwhile, the space agenda was becoming more complex and the nature of space activities was evolving to address those realities. In that context, the Committee should consider ways and means to strengthen the role of COPUOS and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs within the United Nations system and the global space community.

24. Given how much had changed in the space enterprise since the beginning of the century, it was appropriate for the global space community to take stock of past accomplishments and set expectations for the future. At its latest session, COPUOS had endorsed the plan of work for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50) and the creation of a Steering Committee to prepare for the 2018 session.

25. In 2015, the international community celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first spacewalk by a human — Russian cosmonaut Alexey Leonov; COPUOS had had the privilege of hearing him speak about that remarkable achievement at its latest session. In addition, on the tenth anniversary of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG), COPUOS welcomed the continued and significant progress made by ICG and the Providers' Forum; the former had become one of the most important platforms instituted by the Committee.

26. COPUOS should observe the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, one of the most important instruments for applying and implementing treaty obligations among United Nations outer space treaties. It was the fortieth anniversary of the Convention, which, along with General Assembly

resolution 1721 (XVI) B, formed the foundation for the registration of launched objects. COPUOS noted the relevance of that overall registration regime in discussions on the sustainable use of outer space and the safety of space operations.

27. Coordination at regional and interregional levels was essential for fostering joint efforts to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. COPUOS emphasized the role of regional organizations and mechanisms in providing platforms for enhanced coordination and cooperation among spacefaring countries and emerging spacefaring countries and in establishing partnerships between providers and users of space-based services. In that regard, COPUOS recognized the activities and programmes of the European Space Agency (ESA), the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) and the Space Conference of the Americas.

28. The international community was also celebrating the tenth anniversary of the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology, a coordination mechanism developed into a significant platform for regional cooperation efforts in line with COPUOS goals. Considerable progress had also been made by African countries towards defining an African Space Policy under the aegis of the African Union.

29. COPUOS expressed its appreciation to the Office of Outer Space Affairs for its outstanding support to their joint endeavours. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information Management and Emergency response (UN-SPIDER) continued to play a critical role in the Committee's work. COPUOS also welcomed the Office's continued commitment to capacity-building efforts in space law and policy.

30. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities was the central coordination mechanism for space-related activities in the United Nations family and carried out its coordination efforts under the Office's leadership. COPUOS also noted such targeted efforts under that umbrella as the March 2015 ICAO/UNOOSA AeroSPACE Symposium held in Montreal, Canada and the Office's joint April 2015 publication, with the International Telecommunication Union, on space object registration and frequency management for small and very small satellites.

31. COPUOS highlighted the key role of the Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology

Education affiliated with the United Nations in enhancing cooperative efforts. The Centres had firmly established infrastructures for advanced training in space science and technology and highly successful long-standing education programmes. Likewise, the global network of UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices bolstered regional coordination efforts in the area of disaster risk reduction.

32. COPUOS also noted with satisfaction the Office's increasingly central role in the United Nations system in managing several key prerequisites for the legal order of space activities. It was important for COPUOS as a whole to continue assessing its role and work in the constantly changing global environment given the increasing number of spacefaring and non-spacefaring countries and actors participating in space activities. The fiftieth anniversary of the first UNISPACE conference was an opportunity to consider the current status and formulate the future role of COPUOS at a time when both governmental and non-governmental actors were increasingly involved in space-exploration ventures and carrying out space activities.

33. **Mr. Bamrunghong** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association remained committed to cooperating closely with COPUOS and the Office, and commended COPUOS members for their excellent work as presented in the report of its fifty-eighth session. ASEAN was convinced that space technology and its applications offered indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions to many development challenges, and contributed to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ASEAN welcomed the continued discussion on utilizing space technology for socioeconomic development in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda.

34. Given that the Asia-Pacific region was one of the world's most disaster-prone, ASEAN recognized the value of space-based technologies for enhancing disaster-risk preparedness, response and mitigation. The invaluable data derived from such technology helped improve early warning systems and enabled the search and rescue operations to save more lives. ASEAN welcomed the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which clearly valued space-based technology.

35. The development and application of space-based technologies required significant human capital and financial investments, which had prevented many developing countries from reaping the full benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space.

36. ASEAN supported efforts to strengthen the governance framework for outer space activities, closely following the consultations on the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities initiated by the European Union. It reiterated that any discussion to determine the legal principles for outer space activities should be a product of a transparent and inclusive intergovernmental process under the auspices of the United Nations and should also be rooted in respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and equal access for all States. In particular, ASEAN stressed that outer space activities must remain exclusively peaceful. The international community must work assiduously to prevent an arms race in space.

37. ASEAN reiterated its concern regarding space debris, which seriously threatened communications and all the nations, peoples and industries that relied heavily on their use. It urged the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to continue discussing mitigation measures and encouraged Member States which had not yet done so to consider voluntarily implementing the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

38. ASEAN had taken a number of steps to foster closer regional cooperation in the field of space technology. The ASEAN Sub-Committee on Space Technology and Applications (SCOSA) had recently endorsed the creation of the ASEAN Regional Training Centre for Space Technology and Applications (ARTSA) in Thailand. The Centre's main objectives were enhancing space capacity-building among ASEAN countries, sharing space technology facilities and relevant applications, and building a platform for technology transfer, knowledge enhancement and human resources development among countries. ASEAN also hosted a number of international conferences and workshops on outer space. ASEAN was ready to work with COPUOS, Member States and all relevant stakeholders with a view to preserve outer space for peaceful uses only.

39. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that as an active member of COPUOS, Thailand had always

been committed to promoting peaceful uses of outer space with a view to improving its people's well-being. Under the patronage of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, a distance learning programme offered educational satellite broadcasts to schools, vocational colleges, universities and the general public. Moreover, a number of royal projects applied space-derived data to water and land management, improving the agricultural productivity of farmlands and the livelihood of Thai farmers.

40. Thailand attached great importance to its national space policy, as reflected in its comprehensive presentation at that year's COPUOS session. In May 2015, the Royal Thai Government had approved a five-year plan for developing and launching the Second Thailand Earth Observation System (THEOS 2) in 2016-2020, to enhance scientific and technological infrastructure and boost Thailand's economic, social and environmental capacity. THEOS 2 would provide satellite images and geographic information regarding agricultural monitoring, risk management, natural resources, infrastructure and national security in at least five languages. Furthermore, under the aegis of the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency, Thailand's Space Krenovation Park (SKP) currently served as a capability development centre for space technology, geo-informatics operations, knowledge enhancement and transfer, and space business development.

41. **Mr. González Franco** (Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and of its associated States, said that the latest report of COPUOS confirmed its role as a guarantor of the peaceful uses of outer space through its scientific, legal and technical work and its promotion of international dialogue and exchange of information. MERCOSUR recognized that it was the sovereign right of every State to participate in the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, as well as to enjoy the benefits that such use could bring. MERCOSUR was committed to respecting the principles governing the use of outer space, particularly access to outer space on a basis of equality; the recognition that outer space and celestial bodies were not subject to national appropriation of any kind; the non-militarization of outer space as the common heritage of humankind; and regional cooperation in the development of space activities, which in the MERCOSUR region meant continuing the

Space Conference of the Americas, with the support of the international group of experts and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Space Conference.

42. Since so much progress had been made in the use of space technology in many different areas, it was important to ensure that all countries, especially developing countries, had access to those advances through international and inter-regional cooperation in the form of programmes and capacity-building in scientific and technical fields. MERCOSUR reiterated its commitment to the Committee's efforts to guarantee the peaceful uses of outer space, disseminate space science and, above all, build a legal framework on outer space that took into account the specific needs of developing countries.

43. **Mr. Bylica** (Observer for the European Union) said that his delegation supported the consideration of COPUOS membership applications as a package, and supported membership for El Salvador, Israel, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates. Space was a driver for economic growth and innovation that benefited all people. Space activities and technologies helped tackle major challenges such as climate change, disaster management, health and the protection of the environment and scarce resources and boosted industrial competitiveness far beyond the space sector, contributing to job creation and socioeconomic development in almost all global economic sectors. The European Union had developed strong and unique space capacities allowing it to participate in major space endeavours.

44. Key priorities for European space policy included global navigation and earth observation, and were epitomized by the flagship Galileo and Copernicus programmes. The European Union funded the Galileo programme, a civilian-controlled global satellite navigation system providing highly accurate global positioning, and the space-based European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System (EGNOS). To date, the European Union had more than 250 EGNOS-based landing-approach facilities available at more than 110 airports. Precision farming was another area where the European Union made widespread use of EGNOS.

45. Copernicus, the long-term European Union Earth observation and monitoring programme formerly known as Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), was a user-driven programme under civil control which included the launch of dedicated earth

observation satellites and the upgrade of atmosphere, marine- and land-monitoring, climate change, emergency management and security services. The Copernicus Emergency Management Service provided early warning for floods and forest fires and reliable maps derived from satellite images to assess the impact of and respond to natural and manmade disasters all over the world.

46. Copernicus data and services were fully available on a free-of-charge basis to such users as European Union institutions, Member States' authorities, the private sector, international partners, the global scientific community, and citizens. It was also a major asset for climate and environmental policies at the local and global levels and in areas such as maritime safety and security, agriculture, disaster prevention and management, and urban and infrastructure planning.

47. Research, a key part of European Union space activities, was supported by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme to ensure that space would remain accessible and safe over the long term. To that end, the cost-effective and affordable supply of critical space technologies and components, must be ensured. It was also imperative to promote industrial capability and technology readiness as well as situational awareness capability in space in order to cope with threats such as orbital debris. International cooperation in research and innovation was among the key global commitments of the European Union and played an important role in its partnership with developing countries, which were often disproportionately affected by global challenges.

48. Currently, the proliferation of dangerous orbital debris posed significant challenges to the space environment, requiring the serious and timely involvement of member States to ensure greater safety, security and sustainability in that domain.

49. The non-legally-binding voluntary draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities proposed by the European Union in 2007 encouraged transparency and confidence-building measures that would strengthen security and ensure sustainability in the peaceful use of outer space. Three rounds of open-ended, transparent and inclusive consultations had already been conducted on that document, and many participants in the 2014 consultation had expressed their desire to move from a consultative to a negotiating phase. While the European Union-initiated discussions

of that topic at United Nations Headquarters in July 2015 had been well-attended, rich and substantial, his delegation regretted that negotiations had still not begun. He was nevertheless confident that those discussions would help the international community move forward.

50. The European Union continued to believe that responsible spacefaring nations should strive to agree on all key principles for preserving outer space for the global common good, and hoped that all nations would support such an endeavour with a shared sense of urgency and responsibility. It also hoped for wider efforts to facilitate future negotiations on the draft International Code.

51. The European Union also supported the work of the Legal Subcommittee in 2015 and welcomed the Subcommittee's new focus on space traffic management and the application of international law to small satellite activities. It also appreciated the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

52. **Mr. Alday** (Mexico) renewed his Government's call for international, regional and inter-regional cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space as well as research and the dissemination of information on the topic. The overall goal of Mexican foreign policy in the matter was to promote and enhance international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and to strengthen the relevant legal regime. Accordingly, his country advocated universal application of the provisions of the United Nations treaties on outer space, to which it was a party, with a view to promoting cooperation and greater transparency and trust in space activities. States that had not ratified or implemented the treaties should consider doing so in order to strengthen the current international legal regime.

53. Given the importance Mexico attached to preventing an arms race in outer space, it would continue to support initiatives for a fair, viable, verifiable and legally binding international instrument to preserve outer space as a common heritage of humankind. "Soft law" approaches such as the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities were not a substitute for negotiations on legally binding multilateral instruments and, as such, should be aimed at ensuring that space activities remained peaceful, in line with international law.

Mexico was concerned that in the interests of preserving the security of a few countries, precedents could be set that would allow the use of space for hostile purposes. International security was undifferentiated, and the security of one State or group of States should not adversely affect global security.

54. Outer space must remain open to all States and its exploration and use must be for peaceful purposes. COPUOS had pushed for that mandate to remain unchanged, in line with the legal principles of the Outer Space Treaty. All weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, must be prohibited and eliminated, regardless of their category or location. Mexico therefore rejected the placement of any weapons in outer space. COPUOS and its Subcommittees provided exceptional platforms for focusing world attention on the usefulness of space applications in advancing sustainable development and meeting the human challenges involved. It was important to remain willing to develop new capacities and ensure close coordination between COPUOS and relevant intergovernmental bodies.

55. **Ms. Archinard** (Switzerland) said that COPUOS was a unique platform for international cooperation on outer space. Her Government expressed its appreciation to the Office for providing support to COPUOS and for its activity throughout the entire Organization, including its efforts in connection with the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and its preparatory work on the Sustainable Development Goals. Space-based data and services now provided information irreplaceable in many areas of development, including water access, agricultural planning, climate change and disaster management. Her delegation welcomed the preparation of commemorative events for the fiftieth anniversary of the First United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE I) in 2018 with a view to strengthening the role of the Organization and its visibility in promoting peaceful uses of outer space.

56. Emerging challenges to the use of outer space included a constantly rising number of objects and debris orbiting the Earth and posing a threat to satellites, and the increasing technological capability to interfere with satellite operations. To address those challenges, the international community must strengthen the standard framework for preserving space security and stability in space and the long-term safety

and sustainability of outer space activities. Her delegation therefore welcomed the progress made by COPUOS on the draft Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Building a consensus while drawing up such guidelines was difficult, and the relevant working group must continue its efforts. Her delegation hoped that a set of guidelines would be presented to the General Assembly in 2016 as planned.

57. Switzerland believed that the space and disarmament communities must work in a coherent and coordinated manner on the cross-cutting questions of space security and the sustainability of space activities, and therefore welcomed an upcoming joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees. It also encouraged closer collaboration on matters related to outer space between the Office and UNODA, and reiterated its support for the prospective membership of six States-members to COPUOS.

58. **Mr. Forés Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that his Government appealed to the international community to prevent outer space from becoming the next setting for an arms race, since such a militarization would be a major threat to humanity. The only means of prevention was to adopt international legal norms that specifically prohibited the placement of weapons — particularly nuclear weapons — in outer space. Member States should negotiate and adopt a legal instrument regulating the peaceful uses of outer space, after constructive dialogue between COPUOS, its Legal Subcommittee and the Conference on Disarmament. As the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference must play a primary role in preventing the militarization of outer space.

59. The geostationary orbit was a limited natural resource at risk of saturation. Its exceptional potential for use in universally beneficial social programmes should not be diminished by the unbridled commercialization of outer space by some States and private actors: the scenario in which the many paid for the indiscriminate use and abuse of resources by the few — as had occurred with the environment — must be avoided with outer space. Cuba condemned the misuse of the orbit through the use of spy satellites to obtain information detrimental to other nations and reiterated its concern about the increasing number of such satellites, which collided with other space objects and created more space debris. The mitigation of space debris was vital to the future of space activities.

Equitable access to outer space must be guaranteed to all Member States, irrespective of their level of scientific or economic development, with special consideration given to the needs and interests of developing countries.

60. The definition and delimitation of outer space was becoming more imperative. The Legal Subcommittee should focus on the theoretical aspects of the topic and on gaps in space law, rather than — as some States argued — limiting itself to practical aspects, which might actually provide a platform for the possible militarization of outer space. Cuba was concerned by the attempts of certain States to promote negotiations on outer space activities outside the United Nations framework.

61. Cuba had signed a joint declaration with the Russian Federation in July 2014 on no first placement of weapons in outer space, and hoped that other States would take similar action to avoid an arms race in outer space. Cuba welcomed the submission to the Conference on Disarmament by the Russian Federation and China of a revised draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

62. Despite economic difficulties caused mainly by a cruel blockade, Cuba continued to develop space applications and research for peaceful purposes. The use of high-resolution meteorological images had contributed to weather forecasting systems, including fire detection and hurricane and flood prevention. Early warning systems for natural disasters were important to Cuba since it had considerable experience in the field, and it valued its cooperation with other countries in its region.

63. Although all States had the right to the peaceful use of outer space, that remained a pipe dream for most developing countries. International cooperation was thus all the more urgent, particularly in the areas of information exchange, capacity-building and technology transfer. COPUOS was the ideal platform for international cooperation in space technology applications in areas that included food security, water, resource management and disaster management.

64. **Mr. Al Rashedi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the peaceful uses of outer space should be extended to promote sustainable development, requiring cooperation among peoples and the use of space applications in communications, earth observation and navigation,

which were playing an increasingly important role in ensuring universal access to economic and social benefits, improving natural-resource management and dealing with natural disasters, climate change and the other pressing challenges of the day.

65. His delegation recognized the key coordinating role of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and of COPUOS and its Subcommittees, and valued the work of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Those bodies should continue to enhance the space-related capacities of all countries, both developed and developing. The peaceful exploration and use of outer space should be expanded in the long term, and international cooperation should be enhanced to promote the transfer of space technology and expertise in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

66. Space law should be strengthened to prevent an arms race in space, and States should conduct their space activities responsibly and transparently in accordance with international law, so as to build confidence and ensure security in outer space.

67. The international community should also pay due attention to the serious danger to the planet posed by debris from space missions, particularly those using nuclear power sources. His Government supported the efforts to formulate space-debris mitigation guidelines that would provide a strategy for the future.

68. The United Arab Emirates had established a National Space Agency, responsible for overseeing the space sector, promoting training and research, developing space programmes, building strategic regional and international partnerships, and participating in international space forums.

69. It had also invested in the ALIA SAT Communications Company, one of the most advanced space systems in the Arab region, providing secure services, high-quality television broadcasts, and broadband Internet. The Emirates Institution for Advanced Science and Technology had already launched the DUBAI SAT-1 and SAT-2 Earth-observation satellites, and was preparing to launch the KHALIFA SAT, domestically designed and manufactured by Emirati engineers and technicians. The Government's space programme was aimed at harnessing space technology to support work in such fields as national resource management, city planning, transport, logistics, weather and dealing with climate change. It was

committed to international cooperation, as evidenced by its application for membership in COPUOS and ratification of numerous international space agreements. Such cooperation was instrumental in promoting the use of space for peaceful purposes, including humanitarian assistance and disaster management.

70. Having already hosted numerous international space conferences, the United Arab Emirates was next due to host a High-level Forum entitled “Space as a driver for socioeconomic sustainable development” in November 2015, in cooperation with the Office, and the second International Aviation and Environment Seminar in March 2016, in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the Office.

71. **Ms. Defeis** (Holy See) said that it was of the utmost importance that the opening of outer space for scientific and peaceful research benefited all people. Satellites provided useful services in people’s daily activities and in the long-term protection and care of the planet. Satellite data gathering was fundamental for timely responses to humanitarian crises and effective disaster management. Given their universal usefulness, space technology services must be made as accessible as possible to all countries and peoples. Her delegation was well aware of the existing obstacles to universal access, including intellectual-property issues and the vast capital costs of space exploration, which required returns on investment. However, outer space was currently an enormous economic engine and hosted information and communications technologies that were potentially beneficial to all without exception. States must work together to ensure that those benefits did not become yet another cause of increasing social and economic disparity, but a shared resource that contributed to the sustainable development of the entire global community.

72. Her delegation was concerned that space technology could also be manipulated or attacked to cause chaos or even catastrophic disasters. Through its confederation of organizations and personnel, the Holy See provided emergency assistance and humanitarian aid in all parts of the world. Caritas Internationalis, the official humanitarian and development organization of the Catholic Church, consisted of a confederation of national organizations operating in over 200 States and territories, dedicated to serving peoples regardless of their race or religion. Given its permanent local presence in the world’s most disaster-prone areas, the network could and did respond rapidly and effectively

to address the consequences of disaster and violence. It was clear that any hostile action against satellite systems could severely affect emergency rescue services such as police, ambulances, and fire brigades. Her delegation hoped that the development of an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities would ensure a fairer and safer use of outer space.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.