

**Statement by Mr. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Delegate in the General Debate of the Special Political and Decolonization (4<sup>th</sup>) Committee, on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of outer Space Agenda Item 29, 19 October 2005**

On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) for introducing the Committee's report on its 48<sup>th</sup> Session.

**Mr. Chairman,**

2. Pakistan attaches great importance to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical; and Legal Subcommittees. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development adopted by UNISPACE III remains an important guide for the United Nations efforts towards enhancing the quality of human life through sharing the benefits of space science and technology.

3. Resolution 116 adopted by the General Assembly last year presents a comprehensive picture of the legal framework; and the policies, programmes and actions at various levels to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. While noting the progress achieved in further development of peaceful space exploration and applications, the Assembly also expressed concern over the possibility of an arms race in outer space as well as the issue of space debris. The Assembly also requested the COPUOS to identify and consider new areas and mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

4. We support the call by the Chairman of the Committee for continued international cooperation in identifying new areas for the application of space technologies for sustainable development.

5. Meanwhile further research and cooperation should continue in the fields of remote sensing, telecommunications, navigation systems, distance education, weather and agricultural yield forecasting, management of natural resources in particular water, mitigation of natural disasters, transport, public safety, telemedicine and telehealth, etc.

6. Advancement in these fields and the efforts to extend the benefits derived therefrom to all States will contribute to the economic, social and cultural development and promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. An important pre-requisite in that regard, however, is the maximum engagement of the developing countries in the entire process. Particular attention must be paid to sharing of experience and new technologies, non-discriminatory access to state of the art data and information at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner, and capacity building of developing countries in the adoption and use of space technology in different fields. The spin-off benefits of the space technology should be accessible to all member states particularly the developing countries.

7. Pakistan has always attached great importance to the space system based disaster management support. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004 and the earthquake in Chile earlier this year, we have witnessed the extreme devastation and human suffering caused by the recent earthquake that struck South Asia in particular my own country. An immediate satellite survey of the area of the earthquake may have provided a quicker assessment of the magnitude of devastation. This earthquake and other recent major natural disasters underline the need for a greater and more efficient role for space technology in prediction, monitoring and mitigation of natural disasters. While we cannot stop natural disasters from happening, any advancement that contributes to better preparedness and mitigation of their

effects is welcome. We appreciate in that context the draft study by the ad hoc expert group for the establishment of an international space coordination body for disaster management.

**Mr. Chairman,**

8. The increasing military activities in space are seriously affecting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and applications of outer space. The states with major space capabilities have greater responsibilities to contribute actively to the goal of preventing the militarization of the outer space. The negotiation of a comprehensive convention would contribute towards this end. Meanwhile the existing agreements should be properly implemented.

9. In our view, the task assigned by the General Assembly for recommending ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes has not received the desired attention in the work of the COPUOS. Pakistan has always maintained that the work of COPUOS is not completely irrelevant to the question of prevention of arms race in outer space. It is also evident from resolution 59/116. Though the peaceful and military uses of outer space are inseparable, yet there are separate bodies of the UN to deal with the two aspects. In that regard, the COPUOS and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) complement each other. In fulfilling its mandate, the Conference on Disarmament can significantly benefit from the expertise of COPUOS in the scientific, technical and legal aspects of the issues related to outer space and space technology. In our view, it is necessary to establish and strengthen working relationship and channels of communication between the two bodies.

10. We would appeal to States advocating a limited role for the COPUOS to cooperate with other delegations in enabling the COPUOS to effectively utilize its time on debate relating to this agenda item in order to bring about a solution acceptable to all concerned. We would also like to appeal to the scientific community to strengthen international cooperation through space missions, and other joint projects, in order to preserve outer space for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Chairman,

11. We are pleased to note the continued implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, a matter that was considered by the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that Pakistan has had the privilege of chairing.

12. In the context of regional cooperation, Pakistan organized a regional workshop on "Monitoring and Protection of the Natural Environment: Educational Needs and Experiences gained from UN / Sweden Training Courses on Remote Sensing Education" jointly sponsored by United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (SIDA) and University of Stockholm, Sweden. The Participants emphasized that more concerted efforts were needed for devising necessary mechanism for initiation and strengthening cooperation among the Asian countries to facilitate the effective use of remote sensing data and its integration with geographic information system (GIS) technology.

13. At home, Pakistan has made considerable progress in the applications of space sciences and technology in projects of national importance. These include use of satellite remote sensing data to construct **National land use digital maps** in 9 thematic layers to help assessment of national eco-system for sustainable development of agriculture and forestry and minimizing land degradation. Other projects include **development of GIS for establishing a data visualization center for the State Oil Company** to assist in real-time monitoring of the retail outlets for sales and security alerts throughout Pakistan; development of **Crime GIS and Vehicle Tracking System** for Karachi to be subsequently extended to other areas; and **Ambient Air Quality Assessment of Major Cities of Pakistan** with the objective to establish concentration levels and

behaviour of ambient airborne pollutants with temporal and spatial parameters, and to propose remedial measures. As a result of the study cleaner fuel (such as CNG) for vehicles and cleaner technology for industries are being implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

14. Let me conclude by saying that as member of the Committee Pakistan remains committed to closely following the evolution of space activities and is ready to take part in considerations on the future role and activities of the Committee including developing a long-term plan to enhance international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space