



STATEMENT BY MR. K.P.K. KUMARAN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER
OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 30: INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE AT THE FOURTH
COMMITTEE OF THE 61ST SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
OCTOBER 12. 2006

Mr. Chairman

My delegation is pleased by the progress achieved by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) at its 49th Session. The effective utilization of space systems for national development is crucial for all developing countries to make rapid and substantial progress. Conceiving specific application programmes to address the societal problems at the grass roots level is of utmost importance. Towards this goal, COPUOS has been providing the right platform for encouraging countries to take up space application programmes for the benefit of mankind. We are also pleased to note that COPUOS, under the mandate of the General Assembly, is contributing significantly to maintaining Space peaceful as well as international, thus serving the interests of all the countries. We would like to congratulate Dr. Brachet of France for successfully guiding the deliberations of the 49th session of COPUOS.

Mr Chairman,

2. We would also like to congratulate USA on the successful return to flight mission of the Space Shuttle and also on the silver jubilee of the Space Shuttle. The successful launch of its New Horizon spacecraft to Pluto is another important space effort. We also congratulate the Peoples Republic of China on its second successful Manned Mission flight during October 2005.

Mr Chairman,

3. Developing countries today face a number of challenges in terms of improving their Agriculture, Water Resources Management, eradicating illiteracy, providing better education to their people, improving Public Health Services and providing timely disaster management support. To meet these challenges we need to strengthen the capabilities of Member States, especially developing countries, to use the results of space research for economic, social and cultural development.

4. The UN Programme on Space Applications has played an important role in implementing the recommendations of the UNISPACE-III, particularly in improving the capacity building of developing countries to apply space technology to support sustainable development efforts.

Mr Chairman,

5. Maximizing the benefits of existing Space capabilities for disaster management support has been one of the important agenda items of the COPUOS. We would like to convey our appreciation of the achievement made during the 49th session of COPUOS in recommending establishment of a "United Nations Platform for Space based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response", named SPIDER. We are happy that the entity is proposed to be implemented as a Programme of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, UN-Vienna, and will function as an open network and the activities would be planned and carried out in a coordinated manner through the consolidation of a network of regional support offices.

6. India strongly supports the establishment of an Entity for Space Systems Based Disaster Management Support named as SPIDER. The Indian Delegation is of the view that the use of Space based systems to address disaster management issues, so as to benefit the affected population in a timely manner, would require proper integration of the Space and Ground based segments.

Mr Chairman,

7. In India, the space programme evolved to provide for the socio economic development of the country. This led to specific user driven application programmes through the use of remote sensing, meteorological and communications satellite systems. Let me briefly present to this committee, the significant achievements made by India in the Space field.

8. An important milestone during the year has been the launch of India's most advanced communication satellite INSAT-4A, intended mainly for meeting the demand for Direct-to-Home television broadcasting requirements. It carries 12 high power Ku-band and 12 C-band transponders. Recently, the satellite has been commissioned and has been put into regular service.

9. Space Application programmes have witnessed the advent of several newer initiatives. Over the year, a number of Tele-Education, Tele-Medicine and Village Resource Centre networks got commissioned and improved the outreach of important socio-economic initiatives in India. In the area of Tele-education,

more than 8000 EDUSAT classrooms have been created and over 200,000 students have benefited from using the Tele-education network. The system has been used for imparting training to teachers and nurses as well. Similarly, we have successfully expanded ISRO's Tele-Medicine network over the past year. It now consists of 176 hospitals of which 142 hospitals in remote and rural areas levels have been connected to 34 Super Specialty hospitals in the major cities.

Mr. Chairman,

10. India attaches high importance to the use of Space based systems for water and forest resources management. Presently, remote sensing data has been effectively put to use for a number of water based applications, which includes Irrigation Water Management, Snow & Glacier studies, Surface water bodies mapping/monitoring, Ground water prospecting and recharging. Similarly, remote sensing data is being used extensively to generate forest cover maps for monitoring forest cover changes and planning conservation measures.

11. Adding another dimension to the effective use of Space-enabled services for societal benefit has been the initiative of ISRO in creating Village Resource Centres (VRCs). VRCs are envisaged as single window delivery mechanism for a variety of space based products and services, such as Tele-education, Tele-medicine, information on natural resources for planning and development at local level, interactive advisories on agriculture, fisheries, land and water resources management, livestock management, etc. It is planned to set up at least 100 VRCs across the country by the end 2006.

12. In addition, other major Space Application programmes such as Crop Acreage and Production Estimate, forecasting of Potential Fishery Zones, and creating national inventory on wastelands were continued during the year.

Mr Chairman,

13. ISRO takes special interest in providing expertise and services for helping developing countries in the application of Space technology. The Center for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and Pacific Region, affiliated to UN and operating from India, is an initiative in this direction. The Center has carried out 22 Postgraduate programmes of nine months duration, besides organizing a number of short-term courses/workshops. So far 643 scholars from 46 countries have benefited from the educational activities of the center.

Mr Chairman,

14. A connectivity mission has been launched between India and the countries of the African Union to provide for Tele-education, Tele-medicine, e-governance, e-commerce, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services. The network consists of five regional universities, 53 learning centres, five regional

super specialty hospitals, and 53 remote hospitals in all the countries of Africa. The network will be linked to six universities and five super specialty hospitals in India. As part of this Pan-African network, a pilot project has already been implemented in Ethiopia. It is planned to subsequently link Ghana and Seychelles.

Mr Chairman,

15. India has been an active member of COPUOS since its establishment. It has participated in many global co-operative programmes such as remote sensing, space based disaster management, Tele-medicine and Tele-education. As a member of the International Charter "Space and Major disasters" it has contributed significantly to disaster response and provided timely assistance during earthquakes, floods, forest fires, etc.

16. The effective utilization of space application programmes is very important for the overall prosperity and development of a nation. With increased dependence on and use of space-based systems, it should be everyone's responsibility to maintain the outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. Recently there has been a trend towards making high resolution imageries of sensitive areas of all countries available on the internet freely and in an unrestricted manner. Keeping in mind the present security threats that every nation is facing, including from terrorists and their organizations, it is of utmost importance to quickly evolve policy guidelines to regulate the availability of such sensitive data in the public domain.

Mr Chairman,

17. The integrated and application driven space programme pursued by ISRO has benefited and enhanced the quality of life in India. We are satisfied that the UN Programme on Space Applications, while addressing matters related to capacity building for gainful utilization of Space Application Programmes in developing countries, will also play an enhanced role in keeping outer space peaceful as well as international, and thus serve the interests of present and future generations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)