Permanent Mission of
Malaysia
to the United Nations

Statement By
Honourable Mr. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, MP
Representative of Malaysia
On Item 29: International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses
Of Outer Space At The Fourth Committee of the 60th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly
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Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Mr. Adigun Abiodun of Nigeria, for his comprehensive report on the work and activities of the Committee to this session of the General Assembly. I also wish to extend our appreciation to the support and contributions of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee towards the work of COUPUOS in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all humanity.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of Thailand on behalf of ASEAN. However, I wish to highlight some issues of concern and interest to Malaysia.

It has been 24 years since the decision of the General Assembly for the United Nations to be the focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Malaysia fully supports the decision that enable the United Nations to play the central role in promoting international cooperation in this increasingly important and crucial area. Malaysia like many other countries that value the potentials of peaceful exploration and use of outer space is developing its capacity in this area within our limited means and resources. We are mindful of the potentials of outer space technology that could benefit developing countries in particular in sustainable development, tele-communications, disaster management, management of natural resources, protection of environment and many other important fields. In this connection Malaysia has been actively involved in regional cooperative endeavours through collaborative forums such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) and the ASEAN Sub-committee on Space Technology and Applications (SCOSA).

Malaysia has also expanded its cooperation beyond the region when together with Greece we co-lead the Action Team on the subject, " Improve Knowledge Sharing through the Promotion of Universal Access to Space-based Communication Services". Based on the survey that we conducted it was interesting to note that most member states regarded a satellite-based telecommunication system as the easiest to be implemented and the most cost effective

solution for the rural area. However their commercial viability and high cost of services pose as major impediments. It is clear to us that it takes more than government policies to overcome those impediments and narrow the digital divide between the developed and developing countries, hence assisting developing countries to service their rural areas more effectively. Closer international cooperation between the developed and developing countries especially in the area of transfer of technology and technical assistance would be very much desired. In this connection we support the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which have been assisting developing countries to participate in and benefit from the space activities proposed under UNISPACE III. However we are concerned with the limited amount of financial resources made available to this Programme and we would like to urge the donor community to support the Programme by increasing their voluntary contributions.

My delegation strongly feels that genuine commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space remains an important factor to bring about international cooperation and further progress in the global effort to ensure the continued well-being of humanity, as well as in the protection of the planet's environment and management of its resources.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of space debris remains a cause of major concern to Malaysia. This is compounded by the further advancement in space science and technology particularly in defence related activities especially the introduction of weapons into outer space. It is well known to all of us that the growing debris floating in orbit today not only could seriously damage or destroy spacecraft but the implication of the collision could have greater impact then what we could have imagine.

Space faring countries must be urged to give serious attention to the potential problems created by the collision of satellites and other launched space objects with space debris. It is important to remember that any weapon or space equipment, in particular those with nuclear power source, destroyed while in orbit would leave a persistent cloud of debris and the possibility of their re-entry into the atmosphere. Hence, the introduction of weapons in outer space would not only exacerbate the already increasing threat of new debris in space but would seriously undermine international efforts to ensure the continuation of peaceful uses of outer space. In this context, greater efforts must made to prevent the weaponization of outer space, in particular by drawing up an international legal agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space and to prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

The major natural calamities that have afflicted untold destruction to properties and lost of lives as well as damage to the environment in the last few years highlighted the importance and urgent need for a greater and efficient role for space technology in the prediction, monitoring and mitigation of natural disasters. The impact of Indian Ocean Tsunami that took more than 250,000 lives, and the recent earthquake in Pakistan, northern India and Afghanistan as well as other major natural disasters elsewhere could have been mitigated had the available space technology be put to use and shared in ample time among nations of the world. The lost of thousands of innocent lives, and substantial social and economic destruction could have been avoided if the early warning system originating from outer-space technology could be made reachable to potential countries particularly developing countries.

In our own experience, the Indian Ocean Tsunami has claimed 64 lives and some damage to properties in Malaysia. Although the destruction is pale in comparison with the lost of lives and destruction incurred by the hardest hit countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and others, nonetheless it served as a wake up call on the need for disaster preparedness utilizing the most advanced technology. In this regards, Malaysia is setting up its tsunami early warning system that will collaborate with the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre as well as other centers around the world. The system is expected to be operational soon. Malaysia is also initiating a total forest fire management plan utilizing the integration of remote sensing and GIS technologies to assist the Government in providing an operational system for management of forest fires. The plan is meant for early identification and addressing the management of incident of biomass burning and forest fire in the region hence preventing or minimizing the ecological and economic impacts and the health hazards on the population caused by the air pollution.

Malaysia wishes to reiterate the need for the international community to seriously strengthen international efforts and cooperation in predicting, monitoring and mitigating natural disasters in the future. We must continue to invest and seek greater applications of more efficient use of space technology for disasters management that benefit all mankind.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards to our own development of space science and technology, Malaysia in collaboration with South Korea is in its final stage of work on its second earth observation satellite, which is called RazakSAT. A launch is scheduled by the end of this year. A Mission Control Centre is being built to support its operation. The Malaysia Center for Remote Sensing (MACRES), which is now receiving data from NOAA, RadarSAT, LANDSAT and SPOT, will also act as the main receiving station for RazakSAT. Malaysia is also setting up a National Observatory that will be ready by the end of this year. It will house a robotic, remotely accessed telescope. Included under the Multimedia Super Corridor's flagship programmes are tele-health and tele-education whereby space technology can be used in facilitating their applications. Malaysia has also made significant progress in its joint programme with Russia to launch a Malaysian astronaut into space focusing on science and education.

Within the time frame of the next five years, Malaysia will continue to develop the required infrastructure to enhance its capability in space technology development. We will continue to contribute to regional initiatives for space cooperation in order to meet the goals of sustainable development. Malaysia is willing to share knowledge and cooperate with suitable partners in the region who are interested to work together in developing technology transfer, science missions and training programmes in space-related education and industries.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I wish to reiterate Malaysia's serious commitment in the work of COPUOS and its subcommittees. We are committed to continue to seek new areas where space technology could be use to bring the benefit of outer space for peace and well-being of the people on this planet earth. It is our firm conviction to actively contribute in the work of promoting the peaceful uses of outer space that motivates our interest in the chairmanship of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.