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Chair : Ms. Borland (Belize)

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In the absence of Mr. Messone (Gabon), Ms. Borland (Belize), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) A/67/20)

1. **Mr. Abd Hadi** (Malaysia) said that, as part of its 2011-2015 economic plan, his Government was planning to launch a third Earth observation satellite, RazakSAT-2, which would provide better image acquisition than its predecessor. Malaysia was poised to become the hub for satellite manufacturing in South-East Asia and, once its assembly, integration and testing facility became fully operational in late 2013, would be able to offer a range of services.

2. His Government had declared 2012 the Year of Science and Innovation and believed that Malaysia's achievement of Vision 2020 could be accelerated through the expanded use of science, technology and innovation. Malaysia's space policy and the corresponding legislation would be finalized shortly, and in December 2012 Kuala Lumpur would be hosting the 19th session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, which would focus on space applications that benefited the general public.

3. **Mr. Nakonechnyi** (Ukraine) said that, although much had been done to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), Member States should do more to use space-based systems in support of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to achieve sustainable development. Such services were also crucial for improving disaster management and response and his Government therefore encouraged Member States to provide the United Nations Platform of Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) with additional resources.

4. Peace in outer space should be maintained and a new, comprehensive convention on space law was needed to regulate all aspects of space activities, including the use of nuclear power sources in space and the threat posed by space debris. As a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Ukraine supported the promotion of regional and interregional cooperation in space affairs and the

sharing of space science and technology and disseminated the latest space-related findings.

5. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) said that his Government continued to work closely with the United Nations and other organizations to address the growing problem of space debris and to promote the sustainable use of space. Believing that pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures helped mitigate the risk of mishaps, misperceptions and miscalculations, it pursued a policy of openness that was nevertheless subject to rigorous criteria of equitability, effective verifiability and consistency with security interests.

6. Forty years had elapsed since the launching of Landsat, the longest running civilian Earth observation programme. Since 2008, Landsat's full image archive had been available on the Internet free of charge. By April 2012, a total of more than 8 million Landsat scenes had been provided to users in 186 countries. Given the growing number of space actors and spacecraft and increasing levels of space debris, the sustainability of space activities was an important topic. His delegation therefore hoped that a consensus would be reached on a set of best practice guidelines. It also looked forward to the implementation by Member States of the safety framework for the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

7. With regard to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, progress had been made in the detection and characterization of near-Earth objects. Cooperation in developing detection capabilities and information-sharing networks was of the utmost importance. Lastly, his Government welcomed the Legal Subcommittee's decision to review international mechanisms for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

8. **Mr. Ben Ashur** (Libya) said that, given the key role played by space science in promoting sustainable development, it was important to foster international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Space activities must be conducted in accordance with international space law, the codification and universal application of which contributed to international peace and security and were in the interest of all States.

9. The training programme of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs played a very useful role in capacity-building in developing countries.

Cooperation and exchanges of knowledge and experience between developed and developing countries were essential, and regional centres for space science and technology education were a useful means to that end.

10. Greater efforts should be made to reduce the risks associated with the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, as well as the risks of collision and impact, especially in the case of objects in geostationary or low-Earth orbit. The scope of the global network for near-Earth object detection, characterization and threat mitigation should therefore be expanded. All States should have access to space services and be able to use them for disaster and emergency management.

11. It was essential to define and delimit outer space. The geostationary orbit was a limited natural resource, which should be used for activities that contributed to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. It should be available to all countries, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

12. **Mr. Ejnaka** (Nigeria) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The launch over the past year of three high-resolution satellites, which would strengthen Nigeria's natural resource management and disaster reduction capabilities, reflected his Government's commitment to using space technology for socioeconomic and environmental development. The satellites would enhance food security in Nigeria through food monitoring and would also assist urban planning. Nigeria's space programme envisaged the launch in 2030 of a high-resolution satellite designed and built in Nigeria. However, his Government would continue to explore opportunities for regional and international space partnerships.

13. The growing challenges of environmental problems, climate change and natural disasters called for the development of international cooperation on space exploration and research that benefited humankind. The peaceful uses of outer space must be protected and strengthened, notably through information-sharing between countries with space programmes and developing countries engaged in space-based data programmes for socioeconomic development. In that regard, the National Space Dialogue and National Media Conference held in

Abuja in December 2011 had discussed the use of space technology to tackle environmental and economic issues and natural disasters.

14. **Mr. Kumar** (India) recalled that in October 2011, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle had placed into orbit the Indo-French joint satellite "Megha-Tropiques" and three auxiliary satellites. The Megha-Tropiques satellite would contribute to global scientific research on climate and weather systems. RISAT-1, the first Indian-built microwave remote sensing satellite, had been placed into orbit in April 2012 and India's advanced communication satellite GSAT-10 had been launched in September 2012. Work had continued on the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III, which would be capable of launching 4-ton communication satellites into a geostationary transfer orbit.

15. India's space programme continued to integrate advances in space technology and applications with its national development goals. As part of space capacity-building, India hosted the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, which had benefited more than 1,100 scholars from 52 countries. Lastly, the Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, which was carrying many international payloads, had conducted a joint experiment with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) that had established the presence of ice deposits on the Moon.

16. **Mr. Li Linlin** (China) said that, in the past year, there had been a number of encouraging developments in international space exploration: another probe had landed on Mars, the international space station had welcomed the first commercial spacecraft, China's manned spacecraft Shenzhou had docked with the Tiangong-1 orbital station for the first time and women had joined the ranks of Chinese astronauts. However, the expansion of space exploration also gave rise to environmental problems in space, such as space debris, that posed an increasingly serious threat to space activities.

17. The development of outer space activities must be sustainable, which required not only advanced technology but also, and more importantly, a commitment to international cooperation. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should play a leading role in raising awareness of the concept

of sustainable development of outer space activities and in promoting international cooperation in that area.

18. His Government believed that outer space should be used solely for peaceful purposes and was opposed to its militarization. A new international instrument needed to be negotiated as soon as possible to eliminate the security threat in outer space. China had been conducting space activities in a responsible manner, while contributing to the long-term sustainability of peaceful space activities. It had been monitoring space debris and working to mitigate that problem, for instance by taking measures to remove disused geostationary satellites from their orbits.

19. His Government had also been promoting the concept of inclusive development. For example, in response to the Human Space Technology Initiative launched by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, it had offered more countries, especially developing countries, opportunities to participate in the construction and research of the Chinese space station. Its BeiDou satellite navigation system, which was open and inclusive, would begin to provide services by the end of 2012. China was also engaged in training, capacity-building and data and technical services in the area of outer space activities, with a view to sharing its space development opportunities and results with other countries.

20. **Mr. Ruiz** (Colombia) said that access to and the exploration of outer space must benefit all countries equally, regardless of their level of scientific and economic development. It was essential to recognize the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in that regard, as well as its contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, particularly with regard to the use of space-derived geospatial data to formulate sustainable development projects. Space applications were particularly useful in such areas as natural resource management, environmental monitoring, disaster management, distance learning, telehealth and basic space science.

21. The Colombian Space Commission had been promoting knowledge of space science and technology among key sectors of Colombian society, not only through the media but also through such activities as the launching of the Colombian Earth Observation Satellite Programme and the national satellite navigation plan. Those programmes were intended to

diversify satellite technology applications in different economic sectors and to increase connectivity in different parts of the country. Colombia was also continuing to build its capacity in such areas as remote sensing, digital image processing, geographical information systems and databases and space data infrastructure. While international, regional and interregional cooperation was essential for space research and capacity-building, there was also a need for transparency and confidence-building measures in conformity with international space law. Lastly, access to the geostationary orbit must be both rational and equitable, given that it was a limited natural resource in danger of saturation.

22. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that outer space must be used rationally and for peaceful purposes, for the collective benefit of present and future generations. Space technology applications must also benefit everyone, which was why universal access to space data was so important.

23. The Argentine satellite Aquarius/SAC-D, the largest and most complex satellite built under Argentina's National Space Plan, had been launched from the United States in 2011. Its main objective was to estimate the salinity of seas and oceans in order to produce long-term climate models. That was vitally important for studying and understanding the effects of interactions between the water cycle, ocean circulation and climate change. The satellite also made large-scale measurements of soil moisture in order to assist the development of early warning systems for flooding or the outbreak and spread of disease. The satellite mission had been developed by Argentina's National Commission on Space Activities, in cooperation with NASA, Argentine science and technology bodies and the space agencies of Brazil, Canada, France and Italy.

24. International cooperation contributed to the development of space science and technology and their applications, capacity-building in interested States and the exchange of knowledge and technology among States. Regional and interregional cooperation fostered the peaceful uses of outer space and helped States build their space capacity, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

25. Argentina's National Commission on Space Activities had just concluded an agreement with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs to establish a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office for

the Latin American region in Argentina. Through capacity- and institution-building, the Regional Office would provide technical assistance to countries affected by emergencies, support for the assessment of national disaster mitigation and management capacities and training in the use of satellite technology.

26. For developing countries, access to the use of space applications was a necessity for sustainable economic, social and environmental development. International cooperation and the full application of international law in all space activities were essential to that end.

27. **Mr. Borje** (Philippines) said that space science and technology must be used peacefully, sustainably, equitably and inclusively. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space played a unique role by providing a forum for discussions among the increasingly large number of States involved in space activities that encouraged collaboration and consensus-building.

28. Accurate space-based information was vitally important in the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and should be made available in a timely manner to support emergency response. Not only was capacity-building essential to help States access and use such information efficiently, but it would allow them to become active participants who could, in turn, provide valuable data to the information loop.

29. As noted in the report in document A/67/20, the current legal regime was not adequate to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. His Government's position on the matter was that activities in outer space, much like the behaviour expected of States, must be based on the rule of law. Serious consideration must therefore be given to the need to draft binding norms and hold discussions on an international code of conduct for outer space activities. Science must keep step with the law and not be allowed to outpace it. Conversely, the law must not be based on obsolete science. Greater interaction between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee would therefore be valuable.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.