VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 7-18 FEBRUARY 2011, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALI SOLTANIEH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Vienna, 7 February 2011

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express our satisfaction for the successful Chairmanship of the 47th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS and assure you and the members of your bureau of our full support this session. The Group would also like to extend its appreciation to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Mazlan Othman, and her dedicated staff for the documentation and planning required for convening this meeting.

The Group of 77 and China would like to express its deep condolences and solidarity with the peoples of Australia, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela for the loss of lives caused by heavy rains and floods that have recently occurred in those countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Forty one Member States of the Group of 77 and China are part of COPUOS. Several of these have achieved important milestones in space activities, while others are just beginning to include space activities into their national programmes. This fact shows that all members of the Group have an increasing awareness of the potential, importance and impact that space activities have today.

This year marks the 50th anniversary the first period of sessions of COPUOS and the 50th anniversary of human spaceflight activities. The Group would like to seize this opportunity to express its high appreciation for the work that COPUOS and its two Subcommittees have carried out in promoting international cooperation on peaceful use of outer space through the elaboration of treaties governing outer space activities and offering an ideal environment to discuss matters that have great impact in the development of nations.

The Group of 77 and China is willing to engage in the discussions of this Subcommittee to support measures to enhance international cooperation in space activities so as to make benefits from space activities available to all the peoples of the world. We should structure the on-going and future activities in this area with the view to contribute with both global social - economic prosperity and sustainable development, particularly for developing countries.

At the outset, the Group of G77 and China wishes to recall the principle of exploration of outer space on a basis of equality; the principle of the non-appropriation of outer space including the moon and other celestial bodies and the peaceful use of outer space as stated in the article 3 & 4 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.

Mr. Chairman,

Several of the issues to be discussed during this session are of paramount importance to developing countries. The protection of the environment, creation and promotion of the technological capacities,

transfer of technology, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, scientific-technological research in developing countries within the framework of international cooperation are areas of interest for the Group.

Remote sensing and other aspects of space science and technology have numerous applications in the areas of water resources, oceanography and the environment. Capacity building in this area can prepare the peoples of our nations to take preventive action for environmental degradation and related hazards; improve agricultural planning and to measure and forecast drought and desertification, just to mention a few examples.

Similarly, satellite-based systems can be used for tele-education, tele-medicine, family welfare, communications and emergencies in remote areas. In this regard, training of scientists and staff in developing countries is crucial as well as the need for a free flow of scientific information and data exchange.

Transfer of technology needs to be promoted through capacity building and accessibility to technology. Space technology applications in developing countries must become truly operational and integrated into development activities to have a real significance. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China calls OOSA and Member States for greater support to enhance cooperation of both North-South and South-South to facilitate the transfer of technology among nations.

The Group of 77 and China also calls upon OOSA and Member States to make available more opportunities for greater academic linkages, long term fellowships and further collaboration with National and Regional Laboratories, UN Centres of research and other national and international institutions on space matters with institutions in developing countries.

Natural disasters are a matter of great concern to all States. The last few years have proven to be a real challenge to many countries, due to earthquakes and floods affecting several regions of the planet and taking the lives of hundreds of thousand peoples. Therefore, the Group believes that more efforts should be devoted to strengthen the strategy for the use of space technology in the area of disaster management and support.

In this regard, the Group follows the activities carried out within the framework of UN-SPIDER, including the support provided through the programme to the emergency efforts made in response to major disasters worldwide. The Group welcomes the signing of new cooperation agreements for the establishment of regional support offices in developing countries with the view to provide space based information to support relief effort. The Group notes with appreciation that the UN-SPIDER Beijing office has recently started its activities and believes that it will play an important role in the field of disaster management.

Mr. Chairman,

The geostationary orbit is a limited resource which has great potential for the implementation of a wide array of programs to benefit our countries. The Group of 77 and China is concerned by the risk of saturation that threatens the sustainability of space activities in this environment. The utilization of this orbit spectrum must be rationalized and extended to all States in conditions of equality taking into account the necessities and interests of developing countries and the geographical location of certain countries in compliance with the established principles in the normative framework and the decisions made by both the ITU and other relevant bodies of the UN system; giving priority to the contributions of space activities to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The examination of this topic should be discussed within the COPUOS framework and in the agendas of its two Subcommittees in an entirely interstate environment, through open ended working groups or intergovernmental panels.

The Group of 77 and China would like to refer to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space,

specifically in the geo-stationary orbit and low-Earth atmosphere. More consideration should be given to this issue in order to address the problem of potential collisions of nuclear powered space objects in orbit and the incidents or emergencies that may be created by an accidental reentry in the Earth's atmosphere and impact on its surface by these objects, and their consequences on health and life of people and the ecosystem.

The Group considers that increased attention should be given to these issues through adequate strategies, long term planning and regulations, including the Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Sources Applications in Outer Space.

Regarding Space Debris, the Group is of the view that the future of space activities largely depends on its mitigation. This topic should continue to be treated as a priority with the view to further increase research in the areas of technology for space debris observation, space debris environmental modeling and technologies to protect space systems from space debris and to limit the creation of additional space debris.

The Group is of the view that the implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines is of the upmost importance. Further studies and research should be carried out in order to improve them and also to keep the Guidelines up to date with new techniques and capabilities of detection and reduction of space debris, in accordance to the Resolution 62/217 of the General Assembly. Mr Chairman,

The proliferation of space debris and the increased possibilities of collisions and interference raise concerns about the long-term sustainability of space activities, particularly in the low-Earth orbit and geostationary orbit environments. The Group of G77 and China therefore welcomes the establishment of the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and looks forward to a set of outcomes that will reduce collectively the risk to space activities for all space actors and ensure that all countries are able to have equitable access to the limited natural resources of outer space.

The Group of G77 and China is of the view that this item should take into consideration the contribution of space-based-systems to sustainable development and avoid any measures that would limit access to space by nations with emerging space capabilities. The Working Group under this agenda should give full consideration to the key concerns of developing countries and avoid setting up overly high standards or thresholds for space activities in a way that may hinder the enhancement of capacity building. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the need for capacity building to ensure that the required technical expertise is made available to Member States, especially developing countries.

Events relating to space weather are of common concern. Understanding the effects of solar activity on the Earth's climate, other planets and interstellar space is of importance for space activities. International cooperation in space weather, particularly through the International Space Weather Initiative, provides Member States with the opportunity to coordinate global monitoring of space weather, to promote essential forecast capabilities and further international space research. In this respect, the G77 and China welcomes the convening of the first successful UN/ESA/NASA/JAXA Workshop on the International Space Weather Initiative and basic science in Egypt, in November 2010.

The Group is of the view that interaction between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee should be further strengthened in order to address issues of common interest of the two subcommittees.

Mr. Chairman,

We have indeed an adequate mechanism before us in COPUOS to address space related issues. We must recall that people worldwide count on the UN system to address global needs and the needs of the developing countries. In a spirit of cooperation and consensus, it is the hope of the Group that we will be able to address these issues and to come up with conclusions and recommendations which will contribute to

global prosperity through the promotion of enhanced international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Thank you.