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Forum: Civil Society and Outer Space

Where do we stand on using outer space for peaceful purposes?

8 - 9 October 2007, UN/VIC, Vienna

Organized by the Vienna CONGO office (Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations) in cooperation with

- European Space Policy Institute (ESPI)
- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
- United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA)
- Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC)
- Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)

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- Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)
- Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMeiA)
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Aim of the Forum

Being held forty years after the Outer Space Treaty entered into force, the Forum should provide as comprehensive an overview as possible of the current situation, pertaining to the use of outer space, in particular those applications responding to a large variety of societal needs.

It will grant members of the civil society community an opportunity to acquaint themselves with, and assess their potential contribution to, the application of space technology in

selected fields of the peaceful use of outer space and security and conduct of space activities.

On the basis of those considerations, the Forum will formulate recommendations pertaining to increasing general awareness of the growing beneficial use of space technology and its contribution to socio-economic development, as well as to safeguarding sustainable space security.

Date and venue

The Forum will take place 8 - 9 October 2007 at the Vienna International Centre during the International Space Week, 4 - 10 October 2007. Sessions will be held from 10am - 6pm.

Structure of the Forum

The Forum, which will last two full days, will be comprised of three chaired sessions, with a keynote speaker and panel of experts. The presentation by the keynote speakers and the statements by the panellists will be followed in each instance by an extensive Q & A session. The fourth and final session will focus on the findings and recommendations of the Forum.

Provisional agenda

Opening session

Introduction to forum and welcoming addresses:

Representative of CONGO: **Vice-President of CONGO**
United Nations representative: **Executive Head of UNOV**

(1) First session

Topic: Use of space: the rules of the road. The framework for conducting space activities.

Chair: Peter **JANKOWITSCH**, FFG, Chairman, Advisory Board of Aeronautics and Space

Keynote speaker: Gerard **BRACHET**, Chairman, COPUOS

Panellists: Frans **VON DER DUNK**, Professor, University of Leiden
René **OOSTERLINCK**, Director of Legal and External Affairs, ESA
Anatoly Ya. **KAPUSTIN**, Professor, People's Friendship University,
Russia
Kai-Uwe **SCHROGL**, ESPI
Brendan **CURRY**, Vice President, US Space Foundation

Background

As space activities developed and even proliferated, the need for a clear and accepted international framework emerged. A number of factors have to be taken into account. These include: the major shift in the geo-political environment following the end of the Cold War; the increasing number of space-faring nations; and the momentous technological breakthrough making for space architecture and capabilities that were inconceivable forty years ago relating, *inter alia*, to: the conduct of space operations, the integrity of space assets and ground segments, as well as such specific issues as non-appropriation by individual states, freedom of exploration, liability for damage caused by space objects and non-interference in the environment.

A commendable and historically crucial role has been played by the United Nations Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The roles of other coordinating bodies should also feature, viz. those played by the International Telecommunication Union, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization in their respective fields. In the course of any analysis, a summary review should be undertaken of the role played by the treaties and principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space.

(2) Second session

Topic: Relevance and benefits of space applications

Chair: K. KASTURIRANGAN, Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies, India (to be confirmed)

Keynote speaker: **Head of OOSA**

Panellists: Francesco **PISANO**, External Relations and Strategic Development, UNITAR/UNOSAT
Yann **REBOIS**, Camp mapping, CartONG
Sandra **SUDHOFF**, Remote Sensing
Yvette **STEVENS**, former Director-General, OCHA Geneva
Giovanni **RUM**, Senior Program Officer, GEO Secretariat

Background

Over the past 50 years, space applications have experienced major growth affecting the lives of millions of people world-wide. Forecasting the weather is inconceivable without satellites, and the contribution of the World Meteorological Organization, as the global coordinator of all national meteorological offices, underscores the key role that space plays in its activities. This bears direct consequences for agriculture, be it forecasting crop yields, forest management, or adversely, forest depletion, as well as safety at sea and in the air.

Earth observation satellites with low to very high resolution provide an invaluable tool for land management, coastal and urban monitoring, and the surveillance of fragile eco-

systems, not to mention treaty compliance. Disaster prevention and assessment can and should benefit from the latest advances in digital image processing and formatting.

Telecommunications encompassing, broadcasting, location, and positioning techniques are the third component equally close to the needs of civil society. The promising areas to tap into include tele-education, telemedicine and search-and-rescue operations using satellites. Furthermore, initiatives such as GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) at the European level or GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) at the international level could lend significant impetus to future global coordination efforts.

(3) Third session

Topic: Safeguarding space

Chair: Serge **PLATTARD**, Secretary General, ESPI
Keynote speaker: Patricia **LEWIS**, Director, UNIDIR

Panellists: Maureen **WILLIAMS**, Professor Dr., Chair, Space Law Committee –
International Law Association
Cynda Collins **ARESNAULT**, Director, Secure World Foundation
Rebecca **JOHNSON**, Director, The Acronym Institute for Disarmament
Diplomacy
William **MARSHALL**, Chairman, Space Generation Advisory Council
José **MONTERRAT FILHO**, Professor, Brazilian Association of Air
and Space Law
Bhupendra **JASANI**, Professor, Department of War Studies King's
College London

Background

Outer space is becoming increasingly an area of operation for a broad variety of civilian, commercial and governmental (including military) activities. In certain cases, they have a direct and critical impact on society; it is thus necessary to ensure that any such space activities are, and will continue to be, conducted in a safe and secure environment.

Without doubt, the prime challenge relates to increasing awareness of the current situation in space. Governments have to develop ways and means of providing a clear picture of the space environment: in particular to identify and track space debris that poses a threat to satellites and other space assets.

The second challenge concerns space control. Initially, it would entail monitoring space traffic and ultimately it might culminate in denying access to space or in-orbit activities. Such a task should not be left to one nation or a very limited number of nations. On the contrary, a global mechanism should be devised and duly equipped with the means to guarantee free access to space and the exercise of peaceful activities in orbit.

The third challenge entails enhancing the confidence-building measures targeted towards: (i) space debris mitigation; (ii) satellite registration measures, an area that definitely calls for a greater degree of pro-activity; and (iii) notification of activities for launchers, satellites and re-entries.

If those challenges are met, it should guarantee the safeguarding of space for decades to come.

(4) Findings and recommendations of the forum

Chair: Otto KOUDELKA, Professor (to be confirmed)
Keynote speaker: Norbert **FRISCHAUF**, Member of the Board, Space Generation Advisory Council

Following an address on the expectations of the younger members of the space community, the session would discuss and finalize a position paper that would be issued at the end of the forum summarising the main findings and recommendations. Particular emphasis would be placed on improving the exchange of information on the manifold space-related technologies and their potential contribution to the betterment of humankind.

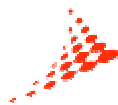
It is also conceivable that the forum might recommend the establishment of an NGO Committee on Outer Space Issues modelled along similar NGO Committees under the aegis of CONGO.

(5) Organizations to attend

Representatives of the following groups would be invited to attend:

- NGOs accredited to the United Nations and other interested international or local NGOs
- Space agencies
- Universities
- Research organisations

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