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**STATEMENT BY MR RAMJI LAL SUMAN, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT, ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE
PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (AGENDA ITEM 75) IN THE
FOURTH COMMITTEE ON OCTOBER 8, 2002**

Mr. Chairman,

India is pleased to take note of the progress achieved by the Committee at the 45th Session of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Over the past several years, COPUOS has worked well to facilitate international cooperation in matters of Outer Space. This cooperation is essential for the development of technologies and applications related to outer space.

We remain convinced that the peaceful applications of space exploration have a great potential to contribute to the progress of all countries, in particular the developing countries. We are pleased to note that the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, under the mandate of the General Assembly, is striving to keep Space peaceful, international, and serving the interests of all countries.

COPUOS has noted in its report that the beneficial applications of Space in areas like communication infrastructure, disaster management, education, agriculture, environmental protection and natural resource management have enormous relevance for human development. Also, such

applications would strengthen the goal of maintaining Outer Space for peaceful purposes. India fully concurs with this conclusion of the Committee.

COPUOS has achieved notable progress in the agenda on the Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE-III. The Scientific and Technical Sub-committee established eleven Action Teams to address UNISPACE-III Recommendations, which have been assigned the highest priority by member states. The Committee established a Working Group at its 45th Session to review the outcome of these Action Teams, and to prepare a report for submission to the General Assembly to facilitate review by the General Assembly at its 59th Session in 2004. It is satisfying to note that the Working Group has initiated its work on the Report. India supports the recommendations of the Working Group, as endorsed by the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, that there should be a separate agenda item for the 59th Session of the General Assembly in 2004 entitled "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration of Peaceful Uses of Outer Space". We hope that the Report will cover the implementation of UNISPACE-III

recommendations also by the Member States, under their national Space policies and through international cooperative ventures.

Mr. Chairman,

COPUOS also reviewed the work and the recommendations of the 39th Session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-committee, and the 41st Session of the Legal Sub-committee. India expresses its satisfaction at the work of these two Sub-committees.

We also note with appreciation the activities covered by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in spite of the budgetary constraints. The focus of the UN Programme on Space Applications - to concentrate on a few priority themes of major importance for the developing countries - is in the right direction. We fully support the priority themes and the programme to implement the same.

The deliberations on the subjects of Space-based Global Natural Disaster Management System and Space Debris during the Science & Technology Session contributed to the progress of these agenda items, which are important in the long-term perspective. Similarly, the work of the Legal Sub-committee contributed to the understanding of the concept of "Launching State".

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the achievements of the Indian Space programme in the last one-year. ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle - PSLV-C3 successfully orbited the Technology Experiment Satellite of ISRO on 22nd October 2001. In the same Mission, PSLV - C3 also launched two auxiliary satellites - Project for On-board Autonomy (PROBA) of Belgium and Bi-

spectral Infrared Remote Detection (BIRD) of German Space Agency - DLR. This Mission demonstrated India's commitment to international cooperation in the field of Space Research.

The INSAT system now comprising INSAT -2 -C, INSAT-2DT, INSAT-2E, INSAT 3B and INSAT-3C is one of the largest domestic communication satellite systems in the world. New areas like interactive education through satellite and telemedicine applications are also being given priority in addition to the operational programmes.

In this vein, INSAT - 3C was launched on 24th January 2002, augmenting the on-orbit INSAT communication satellite series. The spacecraft has enhanced the capacity of the INSAT system for communication applications like telemedicine, developmental education, broadcasting and VSAT services in India.

The PSLV-C4 launch successfully orbited the first exclusive meteorological satellite of India - METSAT on 12th September 2002. The meteorological observations of Indian Ocean Region got a fillip with the success of this geo-stationary meteorological Mission.

The constellation of the Indian Remote Sensing satellites supports operational applications in India in several fields like agriculture crop forecast, water harvesting, wasteland mapping, urban planning and environmental monitoring. Many of these applications are in operational use, and have become important tools for decision making at the Governmental level.

Mr. Chairman,

International Cooperation has been an important component of India's Space Programme, and a number of activities in this area were taken up in the last one-year.

India signed in January 2002, the "International Charter on Space and major disasters", aimed at cooperation to achieve coordinated use of Space facilities in the event of natural disasters. Under the responsibilities of the Charter, ISRO will provide Remote Sensing data from its IRS series satellites to the international community for the purpose of disaster relief.

ISRO and the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs jointly organized a Workshop on "Satellite Aided Search and Rescue" in March 2002 in Bangalore, India. The objective of the Workshop was to promote awareness of the international Cospas-Sarsat Search & Rescue System, and to establish interface with the user countries covered by the Indian Mission Control Centre.

The Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in the Asia and Pacific Region, affiliated to the UN and operating from India, continues to

make good progress. So far 340 scholars from 39 countries in the region have benefited from the educational activities of the Centre.

The India Space Research Organisation celebrated the World Space Week during 4-10 October 2001 with public outreach programmes, including special programmes for students from schools and colleges.

Mr. Chairman,

Recognising that space technology can play a vital role in national development, India has made a focused effort to develop and apply it, with a strong commitment to peaceful use and to international cooperation. In the ever expanding frontier of space and in the unfolding opportunities for new applications, greater cooperation, however, should be envisaged. It is the belief of my delegation that the United Nations, through the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, will continue to further enhance international cooperation in this vital area.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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