

**Statement by Hon'ble Mr. K. Kalavenkata Rao Member of Parliament
and Member of the Indian Delegation on Agenda Item 82:
International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at the
Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (Fourth Committee) of
the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly on October 21, 2003**

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation is pleased to see the progress achieved by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) at its 46th Session. The Committee continued its mandate of promoting international cooperation in matters relating to outer space during the session. We are pleased to note that the Committee, under the mandate of the UN General Assembly, is contributing significantly to the objective of maintaining a peaceful, international outer space that serves the interests of all countries.

During its 46th Session, the Committee achieved consensus and adopted a plan on the composition of its Bureau and subsidiary bodies. All the five posts of the Bureau will be rotated among the five regional groups, laying the basis for equitable geographical rotation. The Indian delegation welcomes this agreement which is in tune with the principle of democratic functioning of the UN and its subsidiary bodies.

The Committee reviewed the work and recommendations of the 40th session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-committee, and the 42nd session of the Legal Sub-committee. The Indian delegation expresses its satisfaction at the work of these two Sub-committees. The Committee also achieved notable progress on the Agenda of Implementation of the Recommendations of the third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, UNISPACE-III. The Working Group established by the Committee has carefully prepared the outline and timetable of the report to be submitted by the Committee to the 59th session of the UN General Assembly in 2004. The report will enable us to review the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE-III. We hope that the review by the General Assembly will provide it an opportunity to critically look at the practical achievements resulting from UNISPACE-III recommendations and their benefits, in quantifiable terms, to the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation notes with appreciation the activities covered by the UN Programme on Space Applications, in spite of budgetary constraints. The Programme is concentrating on priority themes, among which we consider the theme of Integrated Space- Based Global Natural Disaster Management System as very important. The Committee plans to hold a one-day workshop during its next session involving major communications Satellite Operators, to focus on Satellite Based Communication as a vital component during natural disasters. We fully endorse the plan of the Committee and request all Member States to encourage all the communication Satellite Operators to participate in the planned Workshop.

We are happy to note that Space-Systems based tele-medicine has been included in the agenda of the Science & Technology Sub-committee, and that the discussions under this agenda are drawing good attention and response from the Member States.

Similarly, the work of the Legal Sub-committee has highlighted the primacy of the UN Treaties on Outer Space matters. Its work in reviewing the adoption of UN Treaties by Member States deserves full support.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me briefly state the achievements of the Indian Space Programme during the last one year.

A multipurpose satellite, INSAT-3A built by the Indian Space research organization, ISRO was successfully launched on 9th April 2003 into a Geostationary Transfer Orbit. The orbit of the satellite was subsequently raised successfully, and the satellite is positioned at 93.5 degrees E orbital slot. The satellite has since been operationalised for TV broadcasting, telecommunications, search and rescue and meteorological services.

The second developmental flight of India's Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle was successfully carried out on 8th May 2003. The experimental satellite - GSAT-2 - was injected into GTO precisely. Subsequently the orbit was raised and the satellite was placed in GSO at the orbital slot of 45 degrees E.

INSAT-3E, a communication satellite, was launched on board European Ariane-V launch vehicle on 28th Sept 2003, The satellite is undergoing in-orbit testing in the GSO, and will be operationalised soon.

The Indian Space programme is oriented towards national development and towards bringing benefits of the outer space to the people. Towards this end, special emphasis is being accorded to space applications like tele-medicine, distance education, and use of Remote Sensing satellites for sustainable development of Natural Resources.

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.

ISRO hosted the 21st Meeting of Inter Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) during March 2003. ISRO and the Canadian Space Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding reaffirming bilateral cooperation in the Space field.

The Centre of Space Science and Technology Education in Asia-Pacific region, affiliated to the UN and operating from India, continues to make good progress. The Centre has so far provided specialist post- graduate and short-term courses in Space Science and Technology subjects for 506 scholars from 39 countries.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches high importance to the Space field and to Space applications. The success of National Space programmes in the developing countries is essential to take bilateral and multilateral cooperation at the international level to greater heights. India considers that the central role of the United Nations, specially of the Committee [COPUOS], is essential to further strengthen international cooperation and provide opportunities to all countries, on a fair basis, in the frontier area of Space.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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