

Statement by Sri Lanka

Agenda Item 6 - Use of digital technology and geospatial information systems to enhance resilient and sustainable development:

The increasingly important role of Space Technologies and Geospatial Information Systems, and the potential of their integrated use together with other new and emerging digital technologies, in realizing SDGs with enhanced resilience as reflected in the title of the current agenda item, is well recognized by Sri Lanka. And our national policies on development are being increasingly informed and guided by such growing recognition.

Mr Chairman, Sri Lanka strongly supports the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development 2018-2030, as a unique, needs-driven, inclusive, overarching framework for ensuring optimal harnessing of the potential of space technologies and applications in the region's quest for achieving the SDGs and their targets. And Sri Lanka is highly pleased with the achievements made in the implementation of Phase I of the Plan of Action from 2018-2022. Sri Lanka stays firmly committed in its strong support to implementing Phase II of the Plan of Action.

We strongly recognize the importance of integrating the conventional applications of space technologies and geospatial information systems with the potential of new and emerging digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, Internet of Things, and Drones etc, in optimal harnessing of their great synergetic potential. In the meantime, we also recognize the importance of engaging a broader spectrum of stakeholders, including youth, in leveraging their potential in the attainment of SDGs. In this context, Mr Chairman, my delegation strongly supports the theme 'SPACE+ for our Earth and Future', proposed by the ICC on RESAP, as a highly prudent and effective theme for the 4th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development. As for the three specific regional cooperation initiatives proposed by Indonesia, in the interests of time, let me simply and summarily express that we also strongly support all three of them.

Mr. Chairman, I am also pleased to share with this committee the contributions that Sri Lanka has been making in this process. Sri Lanka functioned as the Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee that drafted the PoA, and functioned as the Chair of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC) on RESAP during its 21st, 23rd, and the 25th sessions that intervened during formulation of the PoA and implementation of its first phase.

Sri Lanka is also currently functioning as the Vice-Chair of the informal working group on preparations for the 4th Ministerial Conference.

Finally, Mr Chairman, whilst thanking all our stakeholders for their important contributions in achieving the truly commendable progress that we have achieved here in the Asia Pacific Region under extremely challenging circumstances, please allow me to pay a special tribute to the secretariat, particularly the Director IDD, Chief of SAS and their highly motivated and dedicated team for their high standards of performance that has been a pivotal factor behind the commendable progress that we have achieved.

I thank you.

Speaker: Eng. Dr. Sanath Panawennage, Director General & CEO, Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies