



## **Statement by South Africa**

The 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer  
Space

Agenda Item 10: Space and Society

Read by Jo-Ansie van Wyk

7 June 2011

Chairperson

The South African delegation wishes to express our gratitude to address the Committee on this agenda item. The South African government places great importance on the link between space and society. It is for this reason that our government is leading the way in the application and development of space technology for the benefit of our society. In this regard, we would like to report on the following activities and achievements that our country has accomplished during the past year.

Chairperson

Space technology enables us to reach remote rural areas in our country to improve human development. Since March 2000, the South African government has established 86 tele-medicine sites across the country. At the inaugural Southern Africa Tele-medicine Conference in Cape Town in September 2010, the South African government indicated that these tele-medicine sites offer services such as tele-radiology, tele-ultrasonography, tele-pathology, tele-ophthalmology and tele-education. Apart from these national sites, South Africa has also signed tele-medicine agreements with other Africa states, including Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Chairperson

Few institutions in South Africa exemplify the positive link between space and society such as Sentech Limited (hereafter Sentech), a government-owned entity. Through the provision of telecommunications services to public, private and community radio and television broadcasters, Sentech daily touches the lives of millions of South Africans. Nowhere was this more vividly illustrated than during South Africa's hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2010 when Sentech also

performed an expanded service, that is to the international community through its provision of communications services to FIFA and broadcasters of the event.

Chairperson

With regards to space science education in South Africa, the first intake of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT) human capital development programme to train African and South African students in Satellite Systems Engineering using the Cubesat as a model is completing their studies. These students will show-case their research by producing a Cubesat-Flight Model at the forthcoming International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in October 2011.

In addition to the CPUT, the University of the Witwatersrand, with the support of the DTI, hosts the National Aerospace Centre (NAC), a national focal point for academic institutions specializing in aerospace engineering with provincial coordinators. The NAC also offers academic and financial support to deserving students in the field of aerospace and space engineering. Since its inception, the NAC has supported 57 students to successfully complete their academic programme. Some of these students are currently placed in local and international space industries.

Chairperson

With regards to space awareness, South Africa, through its Department of Science and Technology (DST), organized week-long events commemorating World Space Week in various provinces. These events culminated in the Space Open Day at Northwest University in Mafikeng, which is located in one of our less developed provinces. This particular event attracted more than 2 000 high school pupils who attended various lectures on space technology, space law and regulations, and career guidance on space-related professions. During this event, space engineering students of the CPUT/F'SATI (French-South African

Institute of Technology) launched their CanSat to enthuse the attending learners. Public and private institutions such as the South African Council for Space Affairs (SACSA), the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), the Satellite Applications Centre (SAC), the South African Weather Service and the National Research Foundation provided the learners with much-needed practical information.

Chairperson

In addition to this, the CPUT and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) co-hosted industry seminars, which brought together space engineering academics, researchers and students, government, and domestic and international industry actors. Presentations focused on, amongst others, our government's space policy, the National Space Industry Framework and the development of nano-satellites.

Chairperson

In September 2010, South Africa hosted the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) Exhibition, the largest defence exhibition on the African continent. A platform for South Africa's defence industry to identify business opportunities within our country and abroad, AAD 2010 attracted more than 300 South African and international exhibitors. One of the prominent features of AAD 2010 has been its Youth Development Programme (YDP), driven by the AAD's partners. Through this, the youth of South Africa were offered an opportunity to experience first-hand the high-technology world of aerospace.

Chairperson

In October 2010, the South African Space Association (SASA) hosted its inaugural conference. A private initiative which brings together South African space professionals, SASA also aims to improve societal awareness of the

benefits of space technology. Subsequent to SASA's inaugural conference, a student chapter of the Association was established at the University of Cape Town (UCT). In December 2010, this student chapter successfully launched two high-powered rockets which reached an altitude of 5 100 feet. Government welcomes the platform provided by SASA for public participation in space affairs.

Chairperson

In conclusion, the South African government remains committed to the application of space technology to the benefit of society and humanity as a whole. It is for this reason that we will continue with the development of space technology for the benefit of all humanity and that we will continue to support the work of COPUOS on this matter.

Thank you.