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SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES
OF OUTER SPACE

Statement by Dr. J.P. CONTZEN, Head of
the European Community Delegation

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
(Distinguished Delegates),
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by expressing the heartiest congratulations of the European Community and of this delegation to you Mr. President, upon being elected President of this Conference.

Your election bears witness to the important role which Austria plays under your leadership, in the field of international cooperation, and it will be a guarantee of the success of our work here. I should like at the same time to pay tribute to the efforts of Ambassador Jankowitsch in his role as Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The preparatory work which has been accomplished means that this Conference has been given the best possible start. In this respect I also wish to express our gratitude to professor Yash Pal, as Secretary General to this Conference. The deep conviction which inspires him and the dedication which he has shown in this long and time consuming task, for which his efforts have been unstinting, must be a source of admiration to all of us.

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Mister President,

This Conference and all the work which has led up to it are one more example of the United Nations capacity as a world wide organisation to respond in the most effective way to the needs of the international community. I anticipate the results of our discussions with the liveliest interest and I wish them every success.

The European Community is delighted to be able to take part in this Conference. Its wish in being represented here together with its Member States and the European Space Agency, was to emphasise its interest in the matters under discussion and make it clear how it uses space technology now, and how it proposes to do so in the future, to fulfil its own objectives.

Mr. President, every single one of these uses are of a peaceful nature. In a great many cases they echo the themes upon which this Conference is concentrating particular attention, two being the management of the environment and aid for development.

The activities of the European Community in the field of applying space technology, are, in common with all the scientific and technical activities which it undertakes, chosen and oriented as a function of the specific role which is played by Community research and development in the context of work of the same nature undertaken at national level by the Member States. These activities fit into the overall Community strategy, which links all the Community's scientific and technological work to its major goals, such as the encouragement of agricultural competitiveness, the encouragement of industrial competitiveness, improving the management of energy resources, improving the management of raw materials, improving living and working conditions and building up aid to developing countries. It is in the light of this long term strategic perspective that the Community's activity in the area covered by this Conference should be seen, Mr. President.

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So far as development aid is concerned I should like to stress the particular links which the European Community has forged with various developing countries, ie the Associated Countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in the framework of the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions, the Mediterranean Basin Countries in the context of certain specific agreements, as well as countries in Asia and Latin America with whom the Community collaborates at various levels.

At the scientific and technical level, and in the framework I have just outlined, the Community has basically concentrated its activities in two major areas, which are covered by this Conference, namely remote sensing from space and telecommunication.

The European Community as such makes no contribution either to developing or researching space transport systems, satellites or earth based receiver systems. Its role is much more one of using space technologies, and its objective is to explore the possibilities offered both by these technologies and, if the need arises as a result of its research work, demonstration projects and financial support for specific projects. Its aim is also to stimulate and act as catalyst for the application of these research results to the benefit of all.

In the field of telecommunications the Community concentrates on the problem of access to information by means of satellite telecommunication. Europe is rich in information sources and the Community information network known as EURONET-DIANE currently gives access to 300 different data bases. This network depends at the moment on ground based telecommunications media, and because of this it is basically limited to the Continent of Europe. Efforts have therefore been made to develop the use of satellites for this purpose, with a particular view to the possible extension of access to EURONET-DIANE to African countries. On another level the Community is currently helping with a test programme on the publication and electronic distribution of documents with the object of trying out user acceptability; this programme will include tests with satellite communication.

In the field of development aid the European Development Fund has financed a certain number of national or regional satellite telecommunications projects in Pacific States (Fiji, Tonga and Samoa on the one hand, Papua-New Guinea, Kiribati and Tuvalu on the other). The Fund also finances studies to do with the introduction of space technology in other geographical areas, particularly a Regional Study for the Member States of the African Postal and Telecommunications Union.

I should take this opportunity to mention the finance which is anticipated for a reception and visualisation station which will make it possible to obtain useful data for meteorological forecasts, aerial navigation and agriculture. This project will involve Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Mali. Finally in this field, mention should be made of the implementation of a Regional Hydrological forecasting project in the Niger Basin, carried out under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organisation, which will call for the transmission of data by satellite.

In the field of remote sensing from space the European Community has concentrated since 1973, on evaluating the possibilities offered in various sectors of direct value to it by this new tool, on developing methodologies and making the knowledge so gained more widely known. Work in this field is principally carried out by the Joint Research Centre at Ispra, in association with an wide network of national laboratories.

In the agricultural sector work is aimed at showing the value of remote sensing techniques in the fields of cartography for land use and occupancy, and the evaluation and control of what is grown (areas and yields). This work is particularly oriented towards regions which are less favoured from the agricultural point of view.

Significant results have already been obtained from information provided by NASA's LANDSAT and EXPLORER 1 (HCMM) satellites. A recent programme to simulate the imagery to be provided by France's SPOT satellite has made it possible to get a glimpse of the enormous promise held out by the second generation of satellites operating in visible and infra-red frequencies.

Again a recent study into Radar imagery, gained in the context of a programme using Canada's SAR 580 aircraft, has shown the huge potential of microwave techniques in the sphere of agriculture.

In the environment sector, work undertaken up to now using information from the NIMBUS 7 satellite has been a confirmation that remote sensing from outer space can open up new avenues in the field of identifying and keeping watch upon pollution, whether atmospheric or marine, as well as in the field of diagnosing the condition of the environment, usually known as ecological cartography. I should like to make particular mention in this respect of the Community's contribution, in the framework of the Barcelona Convention, to UNEP's MEDPOL programme, which is aimed at protecting the Mediterranean sea. This contribution is by way of using advanced remote sensing techniques for identifying and characterising small scale dumping of oil and other hydrocarbons at sea.

In the mineral exploration sector a certain number of programmes have been implemented in close collaboration with Member States laboratories. These have been particularly concerned with a certain number of non-ferrous metals (Mo, Zn, Pb, Cu, W) as well as with uranium. Geographically the work has been concentrated at the European area - Ireland, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, as well as Greenland. This last has been the subject of numerous projects. On the basis of LANDSAT and SEASAT data, new identification and correlation methods have been brought to an advanced state. Recent programmes using SPOT

simulation imagery as well as Canada's Synthetic Aperture Radar, SAR 580, have had the object of evaluating the applicability of second generation techniques in this important field.

Finally, in the framework of activities particularly directed to the needs of developing countries I should like to call your attention to a project which is intended to help third world countries to stimulate their home food production. The project involves the Niger Basin region and aims to provide information on rice production which will be passed on to Sahel countries, and on the effects of Niger flooding upon harvests. The anticipated advantages of this project are not limited to the Sahel region alone. This attempt to develop a model of the evolution of the rice harvest has great value for a large part of the developing world. As a conclusion to this brief outline of our activities, Mr. President, I should like to point out the particular importance which the Community attaches to the question of training scientists and technicians from developing countries.

The European Community at present devotes considerable effort to this question, whether by sending training staff out to the countries concerned or by organising courses, visits to Member States laboratories or to its own at the Joint Research Centre. The Community hopes to build up this activity in future with a view to organising training schemes with the countries concerned themselves which, whilst respecting specific development needs would avoid the disadvantages of a two class scientific training system, with one class for developed countries and the other for developing countries.

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Mister President, I am most grateful for having been given this opportunity to present the European Community's activities to this Conference. May I wish its work every possible success, and pledge the unstinting efforts of my delegation to this end.

Mister President,
Your excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your attention.