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Statement by South Africa
The ISF 2017- International Space Forum at Ministerial Level: The Africa Chapter
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Agenda Item: Country Statement

It is with great pleasure that the South African delegation participates in this African Chapter of the International Space Forum. We would like to make use of this opportunity to congratulate the government of Kenya, the Italian Space Agency and the IAF in preparing and successfully hosting this session of the Forum.

South Africa places great importance on the development of space science and technology as a driver for assisting in the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. South Africa was the second country to submit a country report on the SDGs and in talking to our Statistician General we are made to understand the underlying challenges of identifying the relevant data sources.

Currently South Africa is developing an AIS CubeSat, to be used for the tracking of ships for maritime domain awareness applications. If successful we will be developing a constellation of CubeSats and we invite other African countries to work with us from a capacity building and operational platform perspective. We are also building the country's next optical satellite, a 450kg Earth observation satellite, EOSat-1, which will be South Africa's contribution to the African Resource Management Constellation (ARMC) and the data will be made available for use by all African countries.

SANSA has partnered with the Square Kilometer Array initiative and the Centre for High Performance Computing, amongst others, in an effort to address the infrastructure challenge through the development of a Data Intensive Research Cloud. In this regard information generated for Earth observation can be easily archived, processed and disseminated for improved critical decision-making by government in terms of supporting food security and agriculture, water resource management, land use, urban planning and disaster management, among many others.

SANSA is host to the only Space Weather Regional Warning Centre in Africa and one of 17 Regional Warning Centres worldwide, which forms part of the International Space Environment Service (ISES). We recently underwent an audit to provide space weather information to the civilian sector in Africa and the results were positive; although the formal outcome is yet to be confirmed. Space weather is also central to the information required for the long-term sustainability of outer space.

SANSA continues to provide training on the use of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), throughout all government and research agencies, in South Africa and other African countries. In this endeavor we have partnered with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Working Group on Capacity Building and Data Democracy.

In addition, South Africa is progressing well in the establishment of the African Union Pan African University Space Science Institute. It is envisaged that the University will have satellite centers throughout the African continent and the first intake will take place fairly soon and will see approximately 100 students during its first intake.

International cooperation is the cornerstone of South Africa's Space program. In this regard, South Africa would like to underscore the importance of the African Space Policy and Strategy, which was adopted in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2016 and called for member states to mobilise domestic resources for the implementation of this policy and strategy. South Africa looks forward to working with our Continental partners, through the AfriGEOSS Initiative and the Committee on

African Space Institutes (CASI), both multilaterally and bilaterally, towards the establishment of the African Space Agency and most importantly towards the implementation of the African Space Programme.

Substantial progress has been made towards the establishment of the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation Initiative. This Initiative will assist in the sustainable development of BRICS economy and society and inject new vitality into the strategic partnership among BRICS States. There is a consensus that the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Virtual Constellation is a practical step towards high-tech cooperation between these countries that will assist in attaining the sustainable development goals and challenges pertaining to our respective economies and societies. South Africa has formally assumed the chair of BRICS.

Our international collaborations are further reflected in our effective participation and leadership in global partnerships such as the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), UNCOPUOS - where we are currently Chairing the Science & Technology Committee, the IAF, and the Committee of Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS).

Last year three significant international space symposiums were held in South Africa, the first was the International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE) brought together the Earth observations community to share trends and future focus on developing socio-economic application. The second, was the Joint Assembly of the International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA), where the focus was on the ocean environments and how this influence both the biota and climate conditions of the region.

The third event was the United Nations/South Africa Symposium on Basic Space Technology "Small Satellite Missions for Scientific and Technological Advancement" held in Stellenbosch from 11 to 15 December 2017. The event was co-organized by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Government of the Republic of South Africa and Co-sponsored by the European Space Agency. The Symposium objectives will feed into the thematic priorities identified under UNISPACE+50.

In closing allow me to reiterate the importance of the 4th Industrial Revolution for the African continent, to ensure appropriate, that is on time and on demand, access to data and processing systems through an efficient infrastructure. This will enable the immediate provision of local solutions to local problems. Inadequate infrastructure inhibits countries to fully benefit from the space applications in tackling local and large-scale challenges that extend beyond national boundaries. Collaborations aimed at developing the required infrastructure by developing countries, in partnership with developed countries, is critical.