

Global Cooperation in Space Exploration

Nov. 12, 2009 Washington D.C.

LI Hong

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to get this opportunity to exchange views with you all on this very meaningful subject. The outer space has been developing as a most exciting potential dimension for mankind in addition to the land, sea and air. The progress of the science and technology raised the curiosity and ability of human being for exploring the secrecy of the planets. In terms of universe, the achievements in space exploration represent more about the development of the earth civilization rather than that of sovereign states. Therefore, collectively working in outer space exploration is an noble aspiration and enterprise for humanity as a whole.

Nevertheless, obstacles for international space cooperation are obvious nowadays. Reasons for that vary afar, but two fundamental problems are critical. First of all, countries are accustomed to pursue the space capability as a national prestige, rather than a prestige for earth civilization. Secondly, the space activities are always connected with military strike or military supportive capability, which will unavoidably lead countries to keep a lookout at each other rather than sharing advanced technology and expertise in that regard.

To dispel the obstacles, new concept and thought for space exploration should be established. Peace, cooperation, joint development and benefit all should ever be uphold for national space policy. Countries with powerful space capability should take the lead for ensuring the peaceful exploration and sustainable development of space. Opportunity should also be given to states which are less capable at current stage. It would be more important and trustful to forge an international legal framework for such guarantee. So far, the Outer Space Treaty is the most fundamental law for space exploration. The international community has been working for more legal instruments to regularize the space activity. For example, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has been working for banning weaponization of and arms race in outer space. EU, Canada and some other countries have put forward different proposals for setting a Code of Conduct in space activities. All these efforts would sure contribute to the peaceful use of outer space and create better environment for cooperation.

As most of the technologies for space exploration and items for satellite or launching vehicle are of dual-use in nature, it should be noted that nonproliferation concern in space program is realistic and necessary. The relation between peaceful uses of space technology and nonproliferation should be properly addressed. It should be opposed for using peaceful cooperation as the cover for secret military development in space, while nonproliferation and export control should also not be

used for denying other countries' inalienable right for peaceful access to the space.

Chinese people have been diligently hard-working and enterprising in space exploration. China's achievement in this area, including the manned space missions, not only represent the Chinese Nation's outstanding contribution to human exploration and utilization of outer space, but also epitomize the great voyage of humanity in the exploration and use of outer space. The Chinese people strongly support its government standing for and abiding by the principle of peaceful use of outer space. China has been advocating international cooperation for space exploration and is ready to share its expertise and experience with other countries. The Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, which is based in Beijing, attests to China's commitment in this regard. China-Brazil Resource Observation Satellite, which is providing data to African countries via ground stations in South Africa, Egypt and Spain, is a good example for joint space program benefiting many developing countries.

Meantime, China attaches great importance to nonproliferation in international cooperation. Comprehensive export control regulation for missile related technology and items was promulgated in 2002. Its implementation and enforcement are improving from time to time. Efforts for raising the publicity and awareness of the nonproliferation regulation are tremendous. My association has witnessed and deeply involved in the process for industry nonproliferation education for years. Nowadays, Most of the Chinese space related industries has established a self-compliance system for export control. The successful breeding of nonproliferation culture in space related industry creates conducive environment for China to cooperate with the international community for space exploration.

Mr. Chairman, dear friends,

Outer space is the common property of humanity and its exploration and use concerns all humanity. Strengthening international cooperation in the outer space area to promote common development in all countries is the main path to a harmonious outer space. Chinese people and industries are ready to collaborate with more countries in space program in a sincere and responsible manner for the welfare of the mankind. I am with strong conviction that the conference here will make great contribution to the promotion of global cooperation for space exploration.

Thank you all for your attention.