

14th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON VISIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE (D4)
Innovative Concepts and Technologies (1)

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FOUR PILLARS TO ADDRESS THE FUTURE OF SPACE

Abstract

Since the dawn of the space age the United Nations has recognized not only the sheer importance for greater international collaboration in outer space, but also the enormous potential of space research technology for socioeconomic development. In light of this, the United Nations organized three global conferences on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE); 2018 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first UNISPACE conference, held in Vienna in 1968. Since then the space sector has changed drastically, and the speed at which it will continue to change will pose a significant challenge in the future. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) believes that in this world of growing interdependence and interconnectivity, the survival of humanity will depend even more on cooperation, collaboration and global governance.

UNISPACE+50, with the goal to articulate a long-term vision for Space, will chart the future role of UNOOSA, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and its subsidiary bodies. To this end, UNOOSA has defined four thematic pillars to guide the process of a three-year series (2016-2018) of High-Level Fora (HLF) "Space as a driver for socio-economic sustainable development", which will be an opportunity for the space community to collectively elaborate recommendations for the UNISPACE+50 blueprint. The first pillar addresses space economy, which is defined as the full range of activities and use of resources that create and provide value and benefits to human beings in the course of exploring, understanding and utilizing space. The second pillar, space society, refers to a society, which carries out its core functions while making the best use of space technologies and space-based services and applications. The third pillar, space accessibility, refers to all user communities and decision-makers being able, on an equal basis, to benefit from and use space technologies and space-based data. The fourth pillar, space diplomacy, is defined as cooperation among nations in using space technologies and applications to address common challenges facing humanity and to build constructive, knowledge-based partnerships. This paper will explore and discuss these four thematic pillars representing the main areas of focus for UNOOSA and the international community towards the HLF, UNISPACE+50 and beyond. The pillars will not be addressed in isolation and it will be essential for the common way forward to consider the various interlinkages and interdependencies in the holistic picture towards "UNISPACE+50", and "Space2030". www.unoosa.org/osa/en/ourwork/unispaceplus50/index.html