

1 June 2011

**STATEMENT BY TURKEY
COPUOS / COMMEMORATIVE SEGMENT**

**Mr. Chairperson,
Honorable Head of Agencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

On the behalf of the Government of Turkey, and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), it is our great pleasure and great honor to take part in this historic event and celebrate the 50th anniversary of human space flight and 50th anniversary of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to UNOOSA and all those who contributed to the success of this special event.

Fifty years ago, Yuri Gagarin opened a window into space for mankind, becoming the first humankind in the orbit around the Earth. In the last 50 years and especially with the new century, the importance attached to space by many countries has been dramatically increased and more than 50 governmental space organizations have been established. Space was a dream and after Yuri Gagarin it became a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Today space has become a new and economic field, as well as a problem solving area, which is rapidly contributing to countries' financial welfare and progress. Space technologies play a key role in accelerating

countries' development processes and increasing societies' quality of life and security.

In recent years, there has been an acceleration in space studies around the world. Space is not just a tool for better understanding of the universe but also it has become a fundamental sector where countries' development policies are implemented and new frontiers are opened for the future economic and social welfare of humanity. The effectiveness of countries' space activities usually depend on their degree of human resources development and the budget they allocate to space science and technology. Space applications play significant role in areas such as energy, water, medicine, education, agriculture, security, and they become an indispensable tool for sustainable development and progress. Actually it is becoming a "friend", helping us to address today's most challenging areas and urgent problems such as climate change, disaster management, water, food and energy related issues. Space is not far from us now on. It has been better understood, utilized and became an essential element in our ordinary life. In other words, "*Space is the meaning of civilization and important tool to protect and improve it.*"

Most of the countries, in particular space faring ones and the emerging powers devote major resources to their space activities. Today, the importance of improving and developing international cooperation in the field of space science, technology and applications as well as peaceful use of outer space has been widely acknowledged. In that context, the contributions of emerging countries along with space faring ones have proved to be instrumental in achieving sustainable solutions to our common challenges in the field of space.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates;

We are at a critical juncture in our history in terms of opportunities in space activities. You may wonder why Turkey would like to be a player in space. The answer is very short; it has the enthusiasm, the ambition, the motivation, potential endeavors and most importantly high level political will and the scientific research, technical and industrial capabilities at a high standard to develop space science and technology and to contribute international space activities.

Turkey entered the 21st century with increasing efforts towards rapid economic and technological development, social change and renewal of its infrastructure. Naturally this process places a heavy load on the current system and it affects every section of the society. Turkey needs to get involved in new areas in order to sustain its development progress and to minimize such effects. One of these new areas is space, which is a strategic choice for Turkey's future.

Space activities in Turkey were first placed on the government's agenda in the 1990s. In the 2000s, a new chapter in Turkish space activities opened owing to TUBITAK's endeavors.

The Turkish Supreme Council for Science and Technology which is a body under Prime Ministry, took a major decision on 8 September 2004 when it accepted the need to raise the percentage of R&D spending to 2% of GDP by 2013 and identified space research as a privileged area. The first National Space Research Program adopted on 10 March 2005 was prepared entirely by Turkish space stakeholders and by considering the country's specific capability, capacity, infrastructure and culture. This program

demonstrates the determination of the Republic of Turkey to pursue space activities and to invest in its people and future. The program was set to continue over 10 years. The main goal of the program is to establish a space R&D infrastructure and to create the necessary national mechanisms to maintain it.

Since then, we have mobilized our efforts both internally and externally in the area of space. Especially in the last five years, in line with the National Space Research Programme, the efforts to further space research in our country have been accelerated.

TUBITAK is coordinating the National Space Research Programme together with other space stakeholders and will be responsible for its implementation. In the first five years since the National Space Research Programme was adopted around 450 R&D projects have been proposed by Turkish organizations, costing in the region of 500 million USD.

There are two projects, at this stage, worth mentioning, namely RASAT and Göktürk-2 projects. RASAT, having a high-resolution optical imaging system and new modules developed by Turkish engineers, will be the first Earth-observation satellite to be designed and manufactured in Turkey. Göktürk-2 project, on the other hand, is the first step in the formation of facility, equipment and personnel infrastructure and in meeting the future satellite requirements locally. You could find information on these projects at our stand in the space exhibition area.

In parallel, we also give special importance to human resources development in the field of space. We have created a special Scholarship Programme in 2008 for young Turkish students who want to have their

Masters and PhD studies abroad about space technologies in critical fields for Turkey. The programme aims to meet Turkey's long-term expert and researcher needs.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Nowadays, the scientific and technological activities are more and more conducted at the global level. In this regard, every effort at national level should be met with adequate international cooperation to be more effective and meaningful. Thus we have also intensified our efforts at the international level. To this end, we have;

- acquired membership status at international organizations like GEO (Group on Earth Observation), EURISY and IAF (International Astronautical Federation), UNESCO, CEOS,
- Signed cooperation agreements with strategic organizations at national and international level, like ESA, ROSCOSMOS and APSCO (Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization)
- and further intensified our relations with our years-long partners like the United Nations. We have been actively participating in the UN-COPUOS Committee and Subcommittee meetings. Furthermore, last year we hosted United Nations/Turkey/ESA Workshop on Space Technology Applications for Socio-Economic Benefits which was a great platform for the international collaboration.

One Last note for the participants, GEO VIII Plenary meeting will be held on November 15-17, 2011 in İstanbul, Turkey. TUBITAK is the host organization for this event. We would like to welcoming you to participate in it.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates

One of the key mottos of Turkey's foreign policy is "Peace at home, peace in the world". Now we want to carry this one step further: "Peace at home, peace in the world and **peace in outer space**. We firmly believe that UN COPUOS, through its 50 years of existence, has truly contributed to this noble aim and will continue to do so in the future.

Before closing my speech, I would like to reiterate how pleased and honored we are by sharing this historic moment with you. I once again commend UN OOSA for its tireless efforts to organize this event.

Thank you for your kind attention.