

12 April 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the International Day of Human Space Flight**

Remarks delivered by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mutlaq M. Al-Qahtani, Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly

Mr. Maher Nasser, Acting Head, United Nations Department of Public Information,
Mr. Ramu Damodaran, Chief, UN Academic Impact,
Mr. Sergei Saveliev, Deputy Head of the Russian Space Agency,
Major General (retired) Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would start by thanking the United Nations Academic Impact and the Department of Public Information for organizing today's event, and for bringing together this remarkable group of individuals.

That was a beautiful musical piece we just heard from Ms. Beth Nielsen Chapman and Mr. Rocky Alvey.

And it is most fortunate that we are joined today by two space travelers, Major General retired Charles Bolden and Mr. Sregey Volkov.

Their work and experiences are an inspiration to us all, and we are privileged to welcome them to the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we celebrate a landmark day in human achievement, modern scientific progress and the unlimited boundaries of the peaceful uses of outer space.

It was today, 51 years ago, that the first human being traveled into space.

This act drove us into a new era of exploration and innovation.

In recognition of this momentous day, and the inspiration it holds for humankind, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 65/271, entitled "International Day of Human Space Flight".

On this International Day, we reaffirm that space science and technology are integral for advancing our sustainable development goals, and increasing the well-being and quality of peoples' lives.

Such technology and innovation are a break-through in our understanding of climate variability, water and energy cycles, and carbon cycles and ecosystems, just to name a few.

They serve today's generation, and will no doubt serve many generations to come.

With "Sustainable development and global prosperity" as one of my key pillars this session, I am particularly honoured to mark the first year of the International Day of Human Space Flight.

Today we also reaffirm that outer space must be maintained for peaceful purposes.

Even before adopting resolution 65/271 last year, the relevance of outer space to security, and the human benefit from the peaceful use of space, was on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The Assembly moved from merely calling upon the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate an agreement on the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer-Space (PAROS), to developing "Transparency and Confidence-building measures in outer space activities".

The Assembly annually adopts a resolution on PAROS and another on transparency in outer space activities.

Both resolutions reaffirm the common interest of all humankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all States, regardless of their degree of economic and scientific development.

The Prevention of Arms Race in Outer-Space has also been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for many years, though the inability of the Conference to adopt a program of work prevents its progress on tackling this important issue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our role, as the international community, is to ensure that the advances in space technology benefit all - those in developed and developing states alike.

I wish you well as we work to advance this common endeavor.

Thank you and happy international day!