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UN stresses need for global cooperation on using outer space



Space exhibits on show at the Vienna International Centre

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As the world marks the 50th anniversary of humankind's first flight into outer space, the United Nations today reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation in developing norms of law to ensure adherence to treaties that promote peaceful and beneficial uses of outer space.

In a [declaration](#) adopted today, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS), which is also marking 50 years since its first session in 1961, voiced its conviction that space science and technology and their applications, including satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies, provide indispensable tools for sustainable development.

They can also contribute effectively to efforts to improve people's lives, conserve natural resources and enhance disaster preparedness and mitigation.

“When I looked down on Earth from space, I saw the beauty and the wounds of our planet. The effects of climate change are very visible when you look down,” said Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu, the chair of UNCOPUOS, reflecting on his time in space as the first Romanian astronaut in space.

The Vienna-based UN Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has invited members of the public this week to celebrate the two anniversaries.

Activities will include meeting astronauts and cosmonauts, touching a rock from the moon and joining a Space Tour at the Vienna International Centre.

More than 25 States and organisations have put their national space accomplishments on display. Tomorrow, astronauts and cosmonauts will discuss the topic “Future of Humankind in Space.” On Saturday, astronauts and cosmonauts, as well as representatives of all major space agencies, will be present to answer questions from visitors.

Aleksei Leonov, a Russian cosmonaut and the first person to walk in space, reminded UNCOPUOS members that outer space belongs to all humankind.

“We have to share with the developing countries the benefits from outer space and also what we know about it. We have to work hard in all countries to make that kind of education available to everybody,” he said.

The UNCOPUOS declaration called upon States to take measures at the national, regional and global levels to engage in common efforts to use space science and technology and their applications to preserve Earth and its space environment for future generations.

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