

Mr. Chairman,

The question of the peaceful uses of outer space is one to which my country attaches a great deal of importance. The Canadian Space Agency, created earlier this year, has as one of its objectives the fostering of such peaceful uses. Creating our space agency highlights the importance we attach to a space program, more than a quarter century old, built by developing applications to serve practical needs. Canadians recognized that distance, rugged terrain and atmospheric disturbances that are common at high latitudes made the usual methods of communication and resource monitoring inefficient. In response to the challenges of our geography and environment we have developed strong capabilities in remote sensing and space telecommunications. As a result, space technologies are now integrated into the Canadian infrastructure, and are used routinely in telephone, television and data transmissions and in forest management, mineral exploration and agriculture.

Canada is presently embarking on a program to bring a new remote sensing tool to the world community. On 13 September the Canadian Government announced that it would proceed with the development of Radarsat, Canada's first remote sensing satellite. Radarsat, to be launched in 1994, will provide valuable economic and scientific information on ice conditions, crops, forests and geological formations. The satellite's ability to collect data through darkness and cloud will be particularly useful in penetrating the almost constant cloud cover of the equatorial rain forests and coastal regions. The satellite will also be used for global environmental monitoring and surveillance of natural disasters including floods, droughts, forest fires and other such phenomena. The USA which is planning to cooperate in the project, will provide a launch for Radarsat in return for data to support US Government programs.

It is clear to us that the solutions we will find to our problems through Radarsat, will also have applications in other countries. We remain committed to sharing our insights and knowledge. In particular, we have worked both bilaterally and through our activities here at the United Nations to strengthen the capabilities of developing countries to use space technologies to deal with their own unique situations. Last February, Canada organized a seminar for developing countries on the use of new technologies in remote sensing and geographical information systems to complement consideration of this year's special theme of the scientific and technical sub-committee: