

Canada's three major space programs are partnerships with other nations. Our contribution to the international space station -- the mobile servicing system -- builds on expertise gained during development of the Canadarm. The space station is a collaboration with the United States, the European Space Agency and Japan.

The other projects being developed are Radarsat, which will be the most advanced radar earth-observation satellite ever deployed, and MSAT, a mobile communications satellite for remote and rural areas. These are both co-operative efforts with the United States.

Canada has co-operated with many partners such as the U.S., France and Sweden in the development of instruments needed for space missions and by participating in joint missions. Future projects include the development of MOPITT, an instrument for the measurement of pollution in the troposphere that will be flown on a U.S. polar platform.

We are also extremely pleased with our co-operative agreement with the European Space Agency. For 15 years, Canada has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the European space program that has enabled Canadian industry to build partnerships with European space companies by participating in such important programs as Olympus, ERS-1 and ERS-2.

Other international projects of significance include the COSPAS/SARSAT search and rescue system. Originally developed by the United States, Russia, France and Canada, it now includes 24 participating countries. We would like to see as many countries as possible join the program, which is credited with having saved nearly 2,000 lives so far.

Through our national program and international partnerships, the Canadian space industry has honed its competitive edge. It has achieved an enviable level of expertise and excellence in such fields as telecommunications and robotics, as well as the space and ground segments of earth-observation satellites and related applications, and the industry has developed a dynamic export market. Some representatives of these successful companies have accompanied me to Chile and are participating in the exhibition being held during this conference.

An important focus of this conference is the use of remote sensing data from space for monitoring the environment. The Earth Summit, held less than one year ago in Rio de Janeiro, succeeded in impressing three vital facts upon us.

First, we can no longer ignore the consequences of human activity on the environment without jeopardizing the well-being of future generations.