

International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) Holds First Meeting at United Nations in Vienna

VIENNA, 6 November (UN Information Service) – The International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) met in Vienna, Austria, on 1 - 2 November, to review and discuss Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and their promising applications. These applications include safety and economic development, particularly the efficiency and safety of transport, search and rescue, geodesy, land management and sustainable development, and other activities. The ICG addressed the use of the applications to promote the enhancement of universal access to, and compatibility and interoperability of space-based navigation and positioning systems and the integration of these services into national infrastructures, particularly in developing countries. The meeting was hosted by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA).

In 2004, in its resolution 59/2, the United Nations General Assembly invited GNSS and augmentation providers to consider establishing an International Committee on GNSS (ICG) based on the recommendation of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to implement one of the major actions called for in the resolution “Vienna Declaration: Space Millennium for Human Development”, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/68. On this basis, the ICG was established in December 2005. It was agreed that participation in the work of the ICG as Members, Associate Members and Observers would be re-confirmed through OOSA.

The participants at the first ICG meeting included: China, India, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Russian Federation, United States, the Civil GPS Service Interface Committee, the Committee on Space Research, the European Space Agency, the International EUPOS Steering Committee, the IAG Reference Frame Sub-Commission for Europe, the International Federation of Surveyors, the International Association of Geodesy, the International Association of Institutes of Navigation, the International Cartographic Association, the International GNSS Service, the International Telecommunication Union, and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

The ICG adopted its Terms of Reference and work plan as developed in international meetings since 2002 and incorporating the proposals made by the open-ended ad hoc Working Group of the ICG, which met in Vienna in March, June, and October 2006. The current work plan includes: Compatibility and Interoperability, Enhancement of performance of GNSS services, Information Dissemination, Interaction with National and Regional Authorities and Relevant International Organizations, and Coordination. All participants will cooperate, as appropriate, on matters of mutual interest related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing, and value-added services. In particular, they will cooperate to the maximum extent practicable to maintain radio frequency compatibility in spectrum use between different GNSS systems in accordance with the ITU Radio Regulations. UNOOSA is currently serving as the Secretariat of the ICG.

A proposal to establish a “Providers Forum” to enhance compatibility and interoperability among current and future global and regional satellite-based systems was also noted by the ICG. The potential members of the Providers Forum could include the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Community, the European Space Agency, Japan, China and India. The potential members will advise the ICG through OOSA upon final agreement to establish the Forum.

The ICG, a forum for discussion of matters related to GNSS on a worldwide basis, will continue to meet regularly to address issues of common interest. The ICG accepted the invitation of India to host the second meeting next year.

* * * * *

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications is implemented by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and works to improve the use of space science and technology for the economic and social development of all nations, in particular developing countries. Under the Programme, the Office conducts training courses, workshops, seminars and other activities on applications and capacity building in subjects such as remote sensing, communications, satellite meteorology, search and rescue, basic space science, satellite navigation and space law.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Office is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and assisting developing countries in using space science and technology. Located in Vienna, Austria, OOSA maintains a website at <http://www.unoosa.org/>

For information contact:

Sharafat Gadimova
Programme Officer, OOSA
E-mail: sharafat.gadimova@unvienna.org