

# UN forum to explore use of outer space to improve lives, protect planet

Marking 50 years since the world first came together to discuss the peaceful uses of outer space, government leaders, policy makers, civil society representatives and space experts will gather at a United Nations forum in Vienna from Monday to explore the future course of global space cooperation for the benefit of humankind.

Dubbed [UNISPACE+50](#), to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1968 UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the event will be the first global UN space summit of the twenty-first century.

Simonetta Di Pippo, the Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which is organizing UNISPACE+50, has said that the forum's priority will be to find ways to use space "to improve lives around the world and protect the planet."

Since humankind entered the space age with the launch of Sputnik-1, the first artificial satellite, incredible progress has been made in the use of space technology. Many ideas that seemed "science fiction" just years ago are now a reality.

From helping us use GPS (Global Positioning Systems) to find our way home, or calling friends in faraway places, applications of space technology have made our lives easier and our world more connected.

Space is an invaluable tool for achieving sustainable development across the globe, and so it is important that everyone can access and enjoy the benefits that space brings to us all – *UNOOSA*  
*Director Simonetta Di Pippo*

Space tech is also helping track endangered species like rhinoceroses and keeping them safe from poachers, providing vital data to farmers and improving crop yields, and enabling humanitarian workers reach and assist millions around the world.

Both directly and indirectly, use of space technology is strengthening the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) – the global development agenda agreed by all UN Member States in 2015.

Highlighting the importance of space for all of humankind, Ms. Di Pippo urged greater global cooperation in the future of space activities.

"Space is an invaluable tool for achieving sustainable development across the globe, and so it is important that everyone can access and enjoy the benefits that space brings to us all," she said.

Also joining UNSPACE+50 will be senior UN officials, as well as former US astronaut Scott Kelly, who was appointed the UN [Champion for Space](#) in 2016. Mr. Kelly holds the record for the most cumulative number of days spent in space by an American astronaut on board the International Space Station.

Being held from 18-21 June, UNSPACE+50 will include a [symposium](#) (18-19 June) and a [high-level segment](#) (20-21 June). On 22 June, the UN [Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#) will resume its regular session.

Alongside the main events, an [exhibition](#) featuring more than 40 exhibitors will be held in the Rotunda of the Vienna International Centre from 18-23 June. The exhibition will be open to the public from 9 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. (local time) on Saturday, 23 June.

*UN News will be on location in Vienna covering UNSPACE+50 and its associated events. Follow us at @UN\_News\_Centre for news and highlights.*