

Use space technology to build a better world for all, urges UN chief

Not only has space exploration captured the world's imagination, it can also help humankind address existential challenges back on earth, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday, in his message to the UN's key forum on space affairs.

In a video message to the opening of the high-level session of [UNISPACE+50](#), the UN's main forum to discuss the peaceful uses of outer space, Mr. Guterres highlighted that despite major political differences on the ground, "countries have worked together for progress in outer space."

The collaboration has led to "great scientific and technological achievements," he continued.

"We must ensure that everyone can access and benefit" from advanced space technologies, added the UN chief.

Taking place in the Austrian capital, Vienna, UNISPACE+50 commemorates the [50th anniversary](#) of the 1968 UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which was also held in the same city.

Also addressing the opening segment, Alexander Van der Bellen, the President of Austria, underscored that space will become a crucial driver for sustainable development, and the collective mission to reach the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Space technology can play a "crucial role" in addressing the complex and diverse challenges which confront us all, he said, ranging from natural disasters to devastating impacts of climate change.

In addition, with many new actors entering the space field and breaking new ground in uses of space, humankind needs "to ensure that space resources are used for peaceful purposes only, and in a sustainable manner compatible with international law", urged the Austrian President.

Yury Fedotov, the Director General of the UN Office at Vienna, also highlighted the importance of global space cooperation and governance, to the SDGs.

"The benefits of space encompass every aspect of our lives, from agriculture and health, to disaster mitigation and humanitarian assistance," he said, noting that deliberations at the forum would strengthen the role of space as an "inclusive tool" to promote global development.

Simoneta Di Pippo, the Director of the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which is organizing UNISPACE+50, highlighted a draft resolution concerning use of space in sustainable development that will be presented to

the General Assembly for adoption in October.

“The vision and actions contained in the agreed text of the draft resolution to continue to develop the ‘Space2030’ agenda and its implementation plan will set the course for strengthening the contribution of space activities and space tools to achieving internationally agreed development goals,” she said.

The draft resolution was endorsed later in the day by the UN [Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#), which began its 61st session the same day.



UN News/Vibhu Mishra

UN Champion for Space Scott Kelly presents the UNISPACE+50 commemorative stamps to the President of Austria, Alexander Van der Bellen.

UN Champion for Space unveils commemorative UNISPACE+50 stamps

Also on Wednesday, the UN Champion for Space Scott Kelly, who as a NASA astronaut spent more than a year in space, unveiled a set of special commemorative stamps, marking UNISPACE+50.

The stamps “represent humankind’s achievements in space,” said Mr. Kelly, noting the benefits that space brings to life below.

“As United Nations Champion for Space, I am also personally honoured to feature on one of these stamps, as a representative of all human space explorers, past, present and future,” he added.

The stamps have been officially released by the [UN Postal Administration](#) and can be used to mail letters or other postage from any UN post office to any address in the world.

UN News, currently in Vienna covering UNISPACE+50, had a whimsical question for one of the UNPA representatives attending the unveiling. Did they think

the stamp could someday be used to mail letters to an address beyond the earth's orbit?

“Definitely,” was the emphatic answer.



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Composite graphic showing the UNISPACE+50 commemorative stamps.

UN News is on location in Vienna covering UNISPACE+50 and its associated events. Follow us at [@UN_News_Centre](https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre) for news and highlights.