

# **19<sup>th</sup> IADC OPENING SESSION**

## **STATEMENT OF ASI**

### **SPACE DEBRIS ACTIVITIES IN ITALY**

**L. Anselmo (CNR/CNUCE)**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to be here today, on behalf of the Italian Space Agency (ASI), for the Opening Session of the 19<sup>th</sup> Inter-Agency Space Debris Co-ordination Committee plenary meeting.

Since the last plenary meeting in June 2000, the Italian Space Agency approved, for the first time, a three-year space debris research plan (2001-2003), with a modest money allocation. This new specific budget for space debris will make possible not only the funding of modelling activities, for which there is in Italy a consolidated tradition, but also the launch of optical and radar observations, on an experimental basis. In fact, during 2001, the new MLRO 1.5 m telescope, based at the ASI's Space Geodesy Centre in Matera, will carry out some optical observations in LEO, GTO and GEO, during a test campaign needed to evaluate the requirements of an operational system. At the same time, a radar test campaign will be carried out by a Telespazio facility in Spino d'Adda, modifying existing transmitter and receiver antennae.

The last nine months have seen the launch in orbit of four new Italian satellites, three in LEO and one in GEO. Moreover, Telespazio carried out for ASI the first attempt to implement the end-of-life re-orbiting strategy recommended by IADC for GEO satellites. Unfortunately, the orbit raising of Italsat 1 failed, leaving the spacecraft in a circular orbit approximately 80 km above the geostationary altitude, but the passivation procedures were completed successfully. In the coming months, also the BeppoSAX satellite will conclude its X-ray astronomy mission in LEO equatorial orbit, with plans being elaborated for a safe end-of-life disposal (the natural re-entry is foreseen in 2004).

In conclusion, since the last plenary meeting in Colorado Springs, several activities on space debris were carried out in Italy as well as in Europe, where ESA, BNSC, CNES, DLR and ASI strengthened their co-operation and co-ordination in the field. I hope this 19<sup>th</sup> IADC in Cologne will extend such close relationship to all the space agencies and countries involved, to which I extend the warm greetings and the apologies of Claudio Portelli, Head of the ASI Delegation, that was unable to participate for serious health problems.

Special thanks go to our Acting Chairman, Detlef Alwes, and the DLR centre of Cologne, for organising the meeting and hosting us in a so beautiful and history rich town.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.