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International cooperation in using space for sustainable development: Towards a ‘Space2030’ agenda (1)

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STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING SPACE APPLICATIONS TO ACHIEVE SDGS IN DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES

Abstract

Space activities have become indispensable for our lives. Unfortunately, however, not all the inhabitants of the world have a fair access to space technologies, either directly or indirectly. Some states, the so called developing countries, are still a long way from developing a technological capacity that will serve as a boost to create a space program. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the fact that they can benefit from services derived from space activities implemented by other countries, in an international cooperation exercise aimed at improving the living conditions of their population. The United Nations Office for Peaceful Uses of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has precisely the task of promoting such cooperation through its role as capacity builder, facilitator, and bridge builder, within the broader framework of the Agenda 2030. In fact, it has been working together with its stakeholders since 2015 to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), making use of space activities. “Space accessibility” is one of the four pillars at the basis of the Space2030 agenda, a document published by UNOOSA that contains the strategic vision for the affirmation of space activities as key drivers for sustainable development. According to the Agenda, one of the main objectives would be to ensure to all countries in equal measure the socio-economic benefits from space products, such as technologies, data information and other spin-offs. However, six years after Agenda 2030 publication, to what extent are developing countries successfully using all services provided by the space sector? What is the level of awareness in the world, and particularly in these countries, about the essentiality of these services in responding to the greatest challenges of our time? After reviewing existing development programs implemented by some space institutions, this document aims at outlining a possible capacitybuilding strategy that leads to an informed and efficient exploitation of space applications in developing countries.