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GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & INTERNATIONAL TREATIES FIFTY YEARS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S
EXPERIENCE IN ANTARCTICA RELATING TO OUTER SPACE ISSUES OF TODAY AND
TOMORROW

Abstract

South Africa was an original signatory to the 1959 Antarctic Treaty System, (ATS) which was then and still is the only place on the planet that, like outer space, is 'owned by no one and by everyone.' In this paper, analysis will be drawn from the governance experiences of the 50 year old Antarctic Treaty as a comparative for the Outer Space Treaty endeavours managing outer space for the benefit of all humankind, in the arenas of sovereignty, economic activity, conservation and tourism. Both Antarctica and Outer Space are vast, new frontiers; environments not easily accessible; yet endowed with endless possibilities. Their commonality lies in the wealth of their natural resources, the certainty of new scientific discoveries, but the quantum leap of what they will add to human knowledge are absolutely critical. So is their governance. Their treaties, recognized by global consensus, agree that both territories belong to no one and to everyone. Both spaces have been recognized for over half a century as 'for the benefit of all humankind.' As time marches on, civilizations develop and human needs change, how are these universal assets are going to be protected and what about the beneficiation to the world from the Antarctic participating countries and the space faring countries? A journey to Antarctica, as into space, is a profound transformative experience. For many it brings out of the philosophical realm and into the reality the need to take care of ourselves, each other, our planet and our outer space. However enlightened the Antarctic Treaty may be, it's not infallible. It suits the world to abide by the Treaty, for now. But world imperatives change.

The enterprise of space...scientific, commercial and cultural renaissance that Outer Space can offer is upon us. The most valuable lesson Antarctica can impart to those involved with managing the Outer Space Treaty is that we are all in this together, therefore beneficiation of all resources and knowledge shared equally among nations is key. We must properly manage the pressures of economics, of sovereignty and the vicissitudes of the human race and nature itself. A strong treaty of governance, underscored by a strong global will is essential because conditions of adversity can bring out the best in humanity, a platform from which we can successfully usher in another great renaissance.