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PROGRESSIVE USE OF SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT RELIEF: THE CHALLENGES OF A LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Abstract

All countries, especially rich ones, are vulnerable to natural disasters. These can't be avoided but its effects can be minimized through an efficient disaster management policy. Regardless of the amount of natural disasters per year, the amount of affected victims always rises each year, along with the economic damage. In 2011, 244 million of victims were registered compared with 207 victims in 2010. In addition, in 2011, US366$billions, was the estimated damage registered, compared to the US$109 billions in 2010 according to the Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2011. The international community including Governments has noted the importance of use all possible assets for a better disaster management practice. To this end, remote sensing has been proven a useful technology, already applied to several natural disasters such as the Sichuan Earthquake in China in 2008, Honshu Tsunami in Japan in 2011, and Hurricane Sandy in the USA in 2012. However, the progressive use of satellite technology still faces challenges to overcome in order to be accessible to all. This paper aims to discuss the challenges of space policy and law that need to be overcome for a better practice of remote sensing data for humanitarian relief on natural disasters. Some of the challenges space policy and law faces are the need of international standards for a better distribution and coordination of data. Regarding space policy, the misperception on the usage of satellite technology from countries that see satellite technology as an intromission on sovereignty should be addressed by international awareness of this technology.