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Assuring a Safe, Secure and Sustainable Space Environment for Space Activities (4)

Author: Mr. Brian Weeden
Secure World Foundation, United States, bweeden@swfound.org

Ms. Victoria Samson
Secure World Foundation, United States, vsamson@swfound.org
Ms. Agnieszka Lukaszczyk
Secure World Foundation, Belgium, agnieszka.lukaszczyk@ec.europa.eu
Ms. Tiffany Chow
Secure World Foundation, United States, tchow@swfound.org

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ON-ORBIT SATELLITE SERVICING AND ACTIVE DEBRIS REMOVAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE PATH FORWARD

Abstract

On-orbit satellite servicing (OOS) and active debris removal (ADR) are part of an emerging category of future on-orbit activities that are critical for taking the next leap in our use of Earth orbit. The ability to repair or refuel satellites, construct new satellites in orbit, and even remove orbital debris can help drive innovative uses of space and create new possibilities. These activities also raise a host of security, legal, safety, operational, and policy challenges that need to be tackled for this future to be possible.

In 2012 and 2013, Secure World Foundation (SWF) worked with partners to hold a series of conferences, workshops, and panel discussions to explore these various multidisciplinary challenges. The events took place in the United States, Belgium, Singapore, and Brazil and involved a variety of stakeholders and international representation. This paper summarizes those events, provides an overview of key discussion points, and presents significant findings and recommendations. It concludes with steps that industry, governments, and other stakeholders can take to help ensure that future ADR and OOS activities can take place in a safe and secure manner and contribute positively to the long-term sustainable use of space.