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Author: Prof. Camilo Guzman Gomez
UNIVERSIDAD SERGIO ARBOLEDA, Colombia, camilo.guzman@usa.edu.co

THE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE GEO FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A PENDING
CHALLENGE

Abstract

After many years of applying the first-come, first-serve basis to the use of the Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO), the principle of equitable access to the GEO in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) came to be gradually imposed. The principle of equitable access seeks both to promote the access of developing countries to this scarce, and almost overloaded, natural resource and to enable access to space technology to as many countries as possible. However, on the one hand, despite the progress on the reservation of orbital slots in the GEO before the ITU, a study on the mechanisms of reservation shows that these are complicated and sometimes hinder the execution of projects in developing countries. On the other hand, the slots allocated by the ITU to some developing countries, namely to those in the Andean Community of Nations, were not exploited or had to be rented to foreign companies from developed countries.

This paper aims to study the conflict between the effective use and the equitable use of the GEO and the concrete obstacles for developing countries to access the space through the GEO. Furthermore, it seeks to determine to what extent the problem of slot reservations can significantly affect the access of developing countries to space.