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International Cooperation for the benefits of developing countries and emerging space nations (1)

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN OUTER SPACE AND BEYOND: BRINGING COUNTRIES  
AND SECTORS TOGETHER FOR COMMON GOALS

**Abstract**

International cooperation in outer space is a long-held principle established in UN Space Treaties, Declarations and Resolutions. It is becoming ever more important given the growing number of countries and companies pursuing space activities, as well as the increasing importance of space for meeting global challenges and the SDG. The recognition of the role of international cooperation continues to be a focus of attention at the UN: the first UN High-Level Forum “Space as a Driver for Socioeconomic Sustainable Development” highlighted the need to build partnerships and strengthen international cooperation in space activities, a goal then enshrined in the Dubai Declaration. UNISPACE+50 is further expected to reinforce international cooperation as central for future space activities. Cooperation can take many forms, such as by focusing on specific areas related with space “domains” (EO, telecommunications, navigation), on societal challenges (migrations, security, climate change) or on geographic areas. A recent example of geographic cooperation, centred in the Atlantic, is the AIR Center (Atlantic International Research Center), an intergovernmental initiative which adopts a holistic approach aimed at exploring in a sustainable way the Atlantic region. Focused on five thematic areas (Atmospheric Science Climate Change, Energy Systems, Ocean Science Technology, Data Science and Space Science Technology), the AIR Center covers 7 nations and 3 continents (Portugal, Brazil, Spain, Angola, Cape Verde, Nigeria and Uruguay) and is thus a good example of international cooperation among developed and emerging countries, as well as across sectors. This paper will explain the scope and history of the AIR Center and analyse its main policy documents, including its White Paper, the Conclusions of the High-Level Summit of the Azores, the Belém Declaration (signed by the EU, South Africa and Brazil) and the Florianópolis Declaration, which formally created the AIR Center. This paper will also assess how the AIR Center project responds to the international calls for more space and cross-sector cooperation, as well as how it can be successfully used to further the goals of emerging countries. This analysis will be complemented with a brief assessment of the benefits of cooperation across countries and sectors, as well as of the conditions for successful cooperation considering the different level of development and expertise of different stakeholders.