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Legal challenges to Earth observation programs with particular emphasis on developing countries (5)

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DELIBERATIONS ON THE USE OF SPACE-DERIVED GEOSPATIAL DATA IN THE UNITED
NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Abstract

The use of geospatial data obtained from sensors mounted on space-based platforms has been included in the deliberations of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) starting from its first meeting as an ad hoc Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, in 1958. A particular outcome of these discussions in the Committee and its Subcommittees was the adoption of the “Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space” in General Assembly resolution 41/65 of 3 December 1986. Discussions on this issue continue to this day in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS under the regular agenda item “Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth’s environment”. At its forty-ninth session in 2006, agreed to include on its agenda, under a three-year work plan for 2007-2009, a new item on “International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development”. The inclusion of this agenda item reflects the increasing importance of space-derived geospatial data for decision making in support of economic and sustainable development and the desire to discuss the issues this raises in an international forum. The present paper provides a summary of the most recent discussions on the use of space-derived geospatial data in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees.