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ASSESSING SPACE PROGRAM IMPACTS OF THE IGY

Abstract

Since October 2008 the IAF's Advisory Committee on History Activities, including participation by IAF, IAA and IISL personnel, has been studying the impact of the IGY on the development and emergence of national space programs and international space cooperation. The study, The International Geophysical Year - Initiating International Scientific Space Co-Operation, will be completed in 2010. This paper will present a précis of the study scope and content and a preliminary presentation of the conclusions and observations resulting from the study.

Much has been written about the scientific values, accomplishments and consequences of the IGY, with thousands of papers generated over many years assessing and reporting on the collected and integrated scientific data. To date, there has not been a concerted effort to assess the impact of the IGY as a stimulant of both national space programs and international cooperation. The ACHA IGY study indicates that there is a useful and informative story to be told concerning this aspect of the IGY impacts.

Although there were 67 participating countries in the IGY, not all of them contributed to or played a part in the rocket launching or satellite operational aspects of IGY programs. The study examines records of 39 countries, which are considered in some detail focused upon the Rockets and Satellites Program of the IGY, some pre-IGY activities, and some post IGY developments. There were nine countries found with significant space activities in process before the IGY. Twenty countries appear to have initiated or became involved in space activities for or during the IGY. At least ten countries initiated significant national space programs in the immediate wake of the IGY. Bilateral and multilateral co-operations have been identified and analyzed, and resulting international organizations for space cooperation are reviewed.

An international working group contributed research, bibliographical data, writing and critiques of the study effort as it progressed. The final publication of the study will be performed by the Bureau of the IAF.