23rd SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3) New Developments in National and International Space Policies and Programmes I (1A)

Author: Mrs. Olufunke Adebola United States, funkeeropee@yahoo.com

Prof Philippe Achilleas Institut du Droit de l'Espace et des Telecommunications (IDEST), France, philippe.achilleas@idest-paris.org

THE ROLE OF SPACE TECHNOLOGY AND ICTS IN GLOBAL ACTIVITIES ON FOOD SECURITY

Abstract

In the last few decades, there has been a growing awareness in the global community to contribute means and resources in order to avert a global food crisis. This has been further augmented by the realities of the threats posed by a changing climate on the world's populations, and the stresses that could result from food shortages, such as malnutrition, diseases, death, huge migrations, wars and other humanitarian crises. There has thus been knowledge sharing, resource provision and policy development efforts to ensure that populations at risk can prevent, adapt to and cope with the challenges of food shortages. The role of technologies, including space technologies, in these efforts is a major area of international interest. The key aspects where space capabilities are needed are in the following areas, Enhancing end user activities, early warning systems, climate adaptation, risk management, and communications.

However, it is expected that the use of these technologies will raise some legal questions. Some of these questions are The Outer Space Treaty provides that the use of outer space should be for the common use of humankind, can states be forced to provide images necessary for food security? How will it work with commercial satellites operated by private corporations, can states in turn make it obligatory for private operators in their domain to do same? Are the current space policies sufficient to guide the need for space capabilities in the area of food security? Is there an argument for broadening the scope of existing space policies to better align them with other policies and current challenges? Food security is closely related to other aspects of human security as defined by the UN Report on Security (2004) such as poverty, environmental degradation and even infectious diseases. Do current space activities recognise this by keeping the broader picture in perspective? Is there a need to create a synergy between these efforts so that similar themes are addressed together? Do current space activities on food security fit within the broader context of international development e.g. the Millennium Development Goals?

The aim of the paper will be to discuss the legal and policy questions, and proffer possible solutions that may arise from the use of space technologies and ICTs for ensuring food security.