

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

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SPACE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE AS BARRIERS TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Abstract

The most challenging problems of the planet are global— the environment and global warming and climate change, ocean management, poverty and diseases, food and energy, near earth objects and planet protection, war on terror, are examples. These problems are shared and cannot be solved by any one nation alone. Space is a global common and shared resource, and space technology potentially a valuable tool for the mitigation of these problems. Yet, when it comes to the development and utilization of space for humanitarian purposes, international policy and governance serve as barriers. This paper characterizes the barriers to applying space globally, while offering possible prescriptions for positive change.

The paper initially observes examples of global and regional space “utilities” that function fairly well as public goods and services such as the US Global Positioning System and weather satellites. The paper assesses the EU and ESA as a regional pathfinder for a global management and governance model. The International Space Station is a successful model of multinational collaboration. GEOSS and the International Space Exploration Coordination Group are examined as collaborative instruments to identify and respond to shared member needs.

Other possibilities to examine are international collaborative models in other technical endeavors such as the International Atomic Energy Commission and Environment Programs, both UN chartered organizations. Other possibilities are international technical institutions such as the CERN particle accelerator and Antarctica research stations. The joint persecution of regional wars, or peacekeeping, by allies is yet another example. A better model is business to business (B2B) activities and associated governance occurring in a globalized economy, which works fairly well. Now contrast B2B with government to government (G2G) activity, which does not work very well, primarily because of geopolitical restrictions and lack of international governance.

Finally, the paper speculates on both specific barriers and possible solutions by reporting on the emergence strategic partnering and new global markets in the space arena. It also calls attention to the growing interest in benefits of space technologies and information by a large number of nations. Furthermore, with global warming and climate change nations are beginning to understand we share a common destiny, and are one planet that we must sustain and protect. Space is, and will continue to be, a major contributor to the humanitarian mission of sustaining and protecting the planet.