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Assuring a Safe, Secure, and Sustainable Space Environment for Space Activities (4)

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Abstract

Transparency on global space activities is very important to provide a common, comprehensive, objective knowledge base to support the development of national and international policies that contribute to the security and sustainability of outer space. There are different means and approaches to achieve such transparency. This paper provides describes the approach taken by the Space Security Index (SSI) project, which was initiated in December of 2002, and is an international joint research project of several governmental, academic and civil society institutions. The SSI annual report provides background information and a fact-base of trends and developments in space security based on primary, open source research. The report also includes a brief analysis by an invited space security expert to provide a broad assessment of the trends, priorities, highlights, and dynamics that are shaping current space security discussions. The information in the Space Security Index is organized under four broad themes: condition and knowledge of the space environment, access to and use of space by various actors, security of space systems, and outer space governance. Great effort is made to ensure a complete and factually accurate description of the year's events, based on a critical appraisal of the available information and consultation with international experts. Now in its twelfth edition, the report has been distributed to policy makers and presented at academic institutions, diplomatic missions and multilateral forums. The definition of space security guiding the SSI, developed during the first year of the project, remains the same; i.e. space security means the secure and sustainable access to, and use of, space and freedom from space-based threats. The adoption and use of the same language and understanding of the key terms and methodology in discussions of space security suggests an influence of the SSI reports. This paper also briefly describes several comments about the use by key players and the value of the SSI reports.