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THREAT OF ACTIVE DEBRIS INTO THE ORBITS: LEGAL AND POLICY ISSUES AND
OPPORTUNITIES (ASIA PACIFIC)

Abstract

Asia Pacific is a hub of emerging economies who are propelling to the forefront for global attention. The regions greatest strength lies in its economic strategies and trends to pave a way into the internal market. Space activities are one major part of that trend. This automatically harbors competition and nationalism among the counties of this region. To add to the plight, these countries have a tremendous divergence of prospective regarding their space aspirations and a tendency to focus on national solutions and self reliant policies rather than on region-wide policies or multilateral approaches. In such circumstances, there is an emerging need for co-operation among the countries of the Asia Pacific region. Such collaboration will help overcome the most common hurdles in this aspect, viz., inadequate information, data access and costs involved with it, non-involvement of current end users, sustainability of transferred technologies and commercialization of space activities. Amongst the common challenges and contemporary issues faced by the countries dealing with space activities is the issues of Space debris. The insurmountable surmise of space debris has been an issue of debate and controversy for a very long time at the UNCOPUS. The deadlock still prevails over the choice to either make internationally binding agreements over the issue of debris, or to let it remain a non-binding guideline in the Asia Pacific region. The problem posed by this situation is that the rapid rise in race of space activity presages a competitive and possibly conflict prone environment which eventually might impact the policy making at United Nations on the issue of Space debris, given Debris is a potential threat to security of nations world wide. This paper studies roots of regional space competition in the Asia Pacific region, its parameters and its influence on the dialogue of debris in future. It also highlights the need for confidence building in this region to share and corroborate on the objectives of - studying and analyzing, the feasibility of establishing a committee, to examine the issue of debris technically and legally, from a holistic perspective. The overall objective is to achieve common consensus for the vital benefits of space available to their specific regions and human kind as a whole. This initiative would combat the common misconceptions around utilization of space resources and confirm that international co-operation can indeed re-structure the hierarchy of space benefits in international space law.