

29th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
International Space Exploration Policies and Programmes (2)

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BUILDING CONSENSUS: MULTINATIONAL NON-BINDING INITIATIVES ON SPACE
EXPLORATION

Abstract

The use of outer space has dramatically increased and diversified over the last decade. A combination of new and old actors, from garage-based start-ups and emergent spacefaring nations, to archetypal aerospace companies and well-established national space agencies, are exploring a variety of new applications. These activities include emerging commercial opportunities, as well as important national security and humanitarian functions. Taken together, this increase in activity is creating new challenges to existing regulatory and strategic development regimes that must be met and coordinated at the international level. To this end, the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) Study Group on "Dynamics of Space Exploration Strategies and Future Outlook" is charged with investigating the formulation of an International Space Exploration Council that would serve to align the interests of space stakeholders. This paper discusses the process through which such a council might create multinational non-binding initiatives that remain objective and unbiased, yet carry sufficient merit as to be authoritative within diverse stakeholder communities. In doing so, it provides an overview of existing national and international strategic planning architectures and proposes a path forward that combines the established apolitical practices of national science academies with the industrial protocol of systems engineering and technical assessment.