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

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GLOBAL SPACE GOVERNANCE AND THE FUTURE OF SPACE

Abstract

Since the beginning of the space age, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space has evolved in such a way as to provide the impetus for a consideration of international mechanisms and infrastructures for space cooperation and coordination mechanisms at the international, regional, interregional and national levels. The governance of space, which has been depicted as humanity's most expansive global common, has become increasingly complex due to the growing number of actors, both governmental and non-governmental, new technologies and approaches such as the public-private partnerships and private funding initiatives. The concept of global space governance refers to the international action or manner (process) of governing and regulating space-related activities and as such, encompasses a wide range of instruments, institutions and mechanisms, ranging from international and regional treaties, agreements and regulations, model national laws and regulations to a wide-range of international cooperative mechanisms utilized in space cooperation, guidelines and transparency and confidence building measures, aimed at ensuring a certain level of predictability and orderly conduct of space activities. Multilateral work to strengthen space governance has concentrated primarily on voluntary measures undertaken at the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) level, an intergovernmental body that represents the most comprehensive forum to discuss cross-cutting areas of space governance, capacity-building, resiliency of space systems, interoperability and space for sustainable development. The evolution of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space provided impetus for considering the immense potential of international mechanisms and infrastructures of space cooperation and coordination as core drivers for a more effective governance. Moreover, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has always been committed in engaging States and international organizations to increase their efforts in order to fortify their cooperation. In this context, the United Nations organized three unique global Conferences on Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space – UNISPACE. As an ambitious undertaking by COPUOS, the fiftieth anniversary of the first UNISPACE conference, UNISPACE+50, to take place in 2018, will consider the current status and chart the future role of the Committee and UNOOSA as important players in shaping the global space governance. This paper will analyse the concept of 'global space governance' and its evolution with a special focus on multilateral developments and the UNISPACE Conferences leading towards the charting of the "Future of Space: Space2030".