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SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT AND EARTH OBSERVATIONS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVED REGIONAL COOPERATION

Abstract

As noted in a position paper developed by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in advance of the 2015 World Radiocommunication Conference – and endorsed by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) – radio frequencies are of "the utmost importance" for all Earth observation (EO) activities. Given the value of specific frequency bands in the distribution of critical meteorological data, the possibility of increased radio frequency interference resulting from changes in spectrum allocations being explored nationally and internationally may have significant impacts in the ability of users to access and use EO resources to meet critical societal challenges.

Recent multi-stakeholder discussions have highlighted the limited awareness on spectrum-related issues and their impacts within the broader EO community, and the challenge of capturing the extent of reliance on potentially impacted programs and systems. Coupled with limited mechanisms for interaction between the space and meteorology community and the spectrum management community, these challenges may reduce opportunities to articulate the impacts of spectrum management decisions on critical EO-related applications and services.

Regional coordination bodies present an opportunity to better integrate spectrum management issues into ongoing efforts to improve utilization of EO resources. For example, the recently established AmeriGEOSS, in part modeled after AfriGEOSS for the African region, presents an opportunity for improved coordination on spectrum management with the GEO community in the Americas. Moreover, other regional venues, such as conferences and workshops, could be leveraged to raise awareness about these issues within the larger space community in the region. This paper will examine how existing and potential new regional mechanisms in the Latin American region could be leveraged to better articulate the connection between spectrum management and Earth observations, facilitate improved routine engagement among the relevant stakeholders, and improve policymakers' awareness of the impact of spectrum management decisions on the delivery of critical information services.