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INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE OF THE DANGERS FROM NEAR EARTH OBJECTS

Abstract

Near Earth Objects present a national danger as well as a common danger to states. Can the international community organize a coherent international governance or will individual national action by states with space capability be the only option? Will the international community be able to establish a coordinated framework for action by the states with space-capability? There are possible conflicts among individual states. Business interests in asteroid mining may conflict with public safety interests.

The current Legal Regime for Global Space Governance of NEOs includes: (1) The 1963 Test Ban Treaty. (2) The 1967 Outer Space Treaty. (3) The Liability Convention. (4) The Registration Convention. (5) The Moon Agreement. (6) The UN Charter and the UN Security Council responsibility for threats to global safety. Consequently, the UN and COPUOS have a strong legal mandate for international oversight and governance.

Current COPUOS activities relating to NEOs include: (1) The International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN), (2) The Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG), (3) The Disaster Charter and UN-SPIDER.

The major part of my paper will deal with the urgent need for international governance of NEOs. Models for action include: (1) Disaster risk reduction within the Sendai Framework. (2) UN-SPIDER umbrella of disaster management. (3) A new special group using the GNSS model of special working groups. (4) A New Special UN Committee for NEOs. (5) UN Security Council actions to meet NEO threats to the Earth, and (6) New legal authority for UN governance of NEOs.