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IAF EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
International Cooperation in Earth Observation Missions (1)

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PARTNERSHIP IN EARTH OBSERVATION: THE CASE OF REGIONAL CENTRES FOR SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, AND SPACE AGENCIES, TOWARDS DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

Abstract

Finding a common global solution to sustainable development came to the fore at the beginning of the 21st century with the world leaders agreeing to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs2015). This was followed with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs2030). The major global agenda world leaders have agreed to achieve by 2030 are SDGs [2016 – 2030], Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction [2015 – 2030], and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change [2015 – 2030]. Realisation of these goals depend on partnerships which has as major ingredients – finance, technology, capacity building, trade, and systemic issues. A coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth Observations has been identified as a way forward. Therefore, partnership/collaboration in space science and technology education for 21st Century, and development of indigenous space industries are key to achieving sustainable development of our dream.

Proffering solution to developing countries especially in Africa on the utilisation of Space Science and Technology to address the global challenges, the paper proposed the collaboration of existing Space Agencies in Africa (Nigeria, South Africa, and Algeria) with the UN-OOSA established Regional Centres for Space and Technology Education (ARCSSTE-E, CRASTE-LF) for mass capacity building in the region with the active involvement of the region Commissions (ECOWAS, SADEC, IGAD, etc.). With the rapid population growth in the Africa, employment has been a major problem leading to massive insecurity. Short courses offered by these institutions (including utilisation of E-Learning) will help build the necessary skills needed to generate data and develop applications to support the achievement of the global agendas. This will invariably lead to development of local space industries and alleviate employment problem. The paper will now place the African Space Policy in this context. The paper then recommended the resuscitation of the national data access coordination programme i.e. development of National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) campaign; development partners to channel their support through this joint partnership of – Regional Centres of Space Science and Technology Education (including collaborating relevant departments of collaborating institutions); and Region's Space Agencies/Region's Commissions. They are to develop an agreed roadmap mapped along the targets of the global agenda (i.e. SDGs, Paris Climate Change, and Sendai Framework). In conclusion, it is hoped that implementation of these recommendations will help improve the quality of life of the people in the continent.