

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

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THE REMOTE SENSING SPACE SYSTEMS ACT: INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION AND  
RENEWAL

**Abstract**

The number and sophistication of commercial remote sensing satellites have grown steadily since 2000. The Remote Sensing Space Systems Act (RSSSA) was enacted into law in Canada in 2007 in order to regulate this growing industry as per the United Nations Conventions on Outer Space. A unique feature of the RSSSA, when compared to similar legislation in other countries, is the requirement for an external review of the Act every five years. To date there were reviews conducted in 2012 and 2017.

Global Affairs Canada has initiated a substantive examination of the recommendations from the two independent reports. This paper describes the current regulatory practices in Canada, the challenges encountered thereon and further goes on to elaborate the importance of a common understanding amongst space faring nations on the regulation of such remote sensing space systems or any type of space borne system, for the sustainability of space.

The new technologies in remote sensing space systems and their attendant risks and threats, are a clarion call to space-faring countries, to better coordinate their regulatory regimes to establish responsible behaviour in space. Canada is taking a leading role in facilitating international cooperation, including bilateral and multi-lateral consultations, to broaden common understanding and persuade additional space-faring nations, to join the regulatory fold.