

Transcending Societal Issues for Space Exploration (12)
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SPACE AND SPACE EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA

Abstract

A majority of Kenyans do not know that Kenya hosts the Luigi Broglio Space Center in Malindi. A quick banter with legal professionals in Embu County reveals that many are not aware that Rwanda, Kenya and Ethiopia have recently sent satellites into space! Space law is not taught at any level in East African countries. The country is looking downward in terms of oil and gas law, ignoring the benefits of space technology and its positive effects on the economy. The use of space technology has the ability to open new frontiers in educational development and legal discourse. This calls for a restructuring of the education to reflect this advancement. The incorporation of space oriented companies is a reality in a modernizing world. Local companies need international expertise because space technology deals may require intellectual property registration. The companies may also require the hiring of international space experts and this creates a need to understand international space law and international employment contracts. The threat of space debris falling over the East African Community countries may lead to litigation ending up in the East African Court of Justice. Outer space disputes involving East African companies and other international companies are a possibility. This calls for qualified personnel to man the tribunals and courts in the legal processes. The general public will require awareness about space programs and their necessity in sustainable development. A majority of the population may be of the opinion that space is not important. Countries in the East African Community and region share diminishing resources within and beyond East Africa for example Lake Victoria and the Nile and the newly discovered oil fields. This is putting a lot of pressure in the remaining agricultural land necessitating formulation of policies about how to administer arable land and rising conflicts. There is need for public education on the uses of space advancements to map our areas to settle disputes and to protect natural habitats and heritage sites.