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KUWAIT JOINING THE GCC SPACE RACE: A ROADMAP FOR A LOCAL SPACE STRATEGY

Abstract

With the UN COPUOS announcement of Kuwait becoming a member state in the committee for deliberation in 2022, this marks the most significant milestone for the country in the space sector and the first step ever taken towards an international presence within the space industry. Kuwait is a non-space-faring country with a significant potential of becoming a key player in the field within the next few years if a well-planned strategy gets presented. Although Kuwait's educational system still excludes space sciences and astronomy, the country neither has a space agency nor a portfolio in the field, which results in many local space enthusiasts seeking knowledge overseas. The growing interest within the region is leading many Middle Eastern countries towards investing in space activities. This paper investigates three main aspects of Kuwait's potential role as an emerging space country in global space activities. First is the country's unique geopolitical location; due to the agricultural and environmental issues that the 1991 gulf war caused, Kuwait's harsh environment and radioactive sand make it an excellent spot to simulate the Martian environment. Utilizing the land would be of massive benefit to the space community. The second aspect is Kuwait's specialized technologies: progressive drilling and water purification. The third is business and development for the local and global economy by leveraging national expertise via international partnership. Equally important is creating a roadmap for local space startups to participate in the national effort to become a space-faring country. A mixed research method gets implemented in this study, and it is going to be through interviews with experts and by gaining and analyzing existing data. With the rise of the number of space programs within the GCC, Kuwait's participation would open doors for a future on Mars and add value and a unique perspective to the industry. The results that this paper presents are a roadmap for the government to build a space program and a well-structured guide for the youth to create their startups using Kuwait's resources.