36th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
Assuring a Safe, Secure and Sustainable Environment for Space Activities (4)

Author: Ms. Aisha Jagirani
Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), China

REGIONAL MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT SAFE, SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR SPACE ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Abstract

A safe, secure, and sustainable environment for space activities is inevitable in the current space age. The fast-track development of technology and the enthusiasm to explore and exploit space resources for various benefits; have also led to the development of factors that can jeopardize ongoing and future activities in outer space. On the one hand, these developments contribute to exploring new horizons of outer space but simultaneously pose significant threats to the sustainability of a conducive environment where various stakeholders can pursue their interests. Multiple initiatives have been taken at the national and international levels to address this issue; however, much more still needs to be done collectively. Since governments are the primary stakeholder and entirely responsible for space activities in terms of international law, individual efforts by governments would take longer to implement measures that can contribute to the long-term sustainability of outer space. Therefore, the role of global and regional organizations in the area has certainly become more critical.

International cooperation drives the policy objectives and strategy to advance a mechanism that collectively contributes to outer space's safety and security. Especially the regional agencies provide more significant opportunities to leverage the expertise, investments, and resources together to develop such programs. It helps to adopt multiple ways to formalize relationships that can lead to pursuing specific activities and initiatives such as joint statements, signing cooperative agreements, exchanging data, pooling financial resources, and exchanging know-how.

This paper emphasizes the regional cooperation schemes and identifies the possible legal tools for regional cooperation to support a safe, secure, and sustainable environment for space activities. The paper focuses on the Asia-Pacific region as a case study. It covers an analysis of the regional organizations, particularly the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) initiatives as the formal multilateral inter-governmental organization and the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) as a flexible and informal regional mechanism. The paper covers a comparative study of both organizations on the cooperation mechanisms and policies in space law policy and other legal and regulatory issues related to space activities and their contributions to developing relevant procedures and programs to ensure outer space's sustainability.

Keywords: Intergovernmental organization, APSCO, APRSAF, International Cooperation, Safe, Secure, and Sustainable Environment for Space Activities