



13 May 2008

Forming an NGO Committee on Outer Space (CONGO)

Aim of the NGO Committee on Outer Space

To provide a conduit between the NGOs who are interested in applications of space technology and space science and exploration, the United Nations Organization and the space community.

Rationale

The NGO Outer Space committee would:

a) be a forum

- 1 to draw attention to the potential of space technology applications to areas of interest to NGOs, including e.g. scientific research and exploration, sustainable development, resource management, human development and security.
- 2 to facilitate relations between NGOs and providers of space-based services.
- 3 to exchange experience in applying space technology to a wide range of Earth bound activities.
- 4 to inform committee members of the impact of any relevant United Nations actions on outer space related activities

b) be an actor

- 5 to encourage the formulation of policy issues that may arise from the fact that space technologies are ubiquitous in many aspects of civil society.
- 6 to build a coalition of parties with an interest in the application of space technology to world issues with a view to develop awareness in the international community. **In particular concerning private data protection**
- 7 to spearhead policy input from the committee to United Nations bodies. **(COPUOS, World Metrology Organisation ?, Climate Change Convention, Natural Disaster Prevention, Telecommunications)**

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Committee Structure

The Committee could be structured in two parts:

- 1 A stakeholder forum comprised of all NGOs with an interest in outer space related activities:
 - o The forum could be organized into thematic working groups around specific topics such as “education”, “astronomy”, “climate change”, “natural disaster **information**, prevention and relief”, “water resources management”, “telehealth and tele-epidemiology”, etc.
 - o In order to reduce costs, the outer space committee should be devised around a virtual model, i.e. operate mostly via Internet communication means. All working groups should also be run in virtual format.
 - o These thematic groups could meet at the occasion of UN conferences and could be brought together once a year for a plenary session of the committee, with an associated workshop on the role of space technology at the service of society, where initiatives and requests vis-a-vis the United Nations system could be formulated.

- 2 An executive body composed of a limited number of NGOs to carry out the following tasks:
 - o Preparing the stakeholder forum and communicating the results and positions prepared.
 - o The Space Generation Advisory Council executive office, hosted by ESPI in Vienna, could act as a Secretariat for the Committee and its executive body. Modest membership dues could be charged to compensate the office for its time and efforts.

Overall, such a Committee could fulfil a much needed coordination role that grows in the current trend of ever expanding dependence on space-based systems – the more knowledge about the benefits of space applications can be disseminated and the more the agenda, at an international level, can reflect the actual needs of user groups, the better the long-term outlook will be for all those with a stake in the success of space activities contributing to sustainable development.

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