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The United Nations and GNSS: Global in Space and Time

Abstract

Following the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in 1999, in its resolution 54/68, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Vienna Declaration: Space Millennium for Human Development. The Vienna Declaration called for action, among other matters, to improve the efficiency and security of transport, search and rescue, geodesy and other activities by promoting the enhancement of, universal access to and compatibility of, space-based navigation and positioning systems. In response to that call, in 2001 the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) established the Action Team on GNSS to carry out those actions under the chairmanship of Italy and the United States of America. The Action Team on GNSS, consisting of 38 member States and 15 intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, recommended that an international committee on GNSS (ICG) should be established. After six years of deliberations and regional workshops, the United Nations has fostered the creation of ICG to promote the benefits of space-based positioning, navigation, and timing – particularly in developing nations. The members of the ICG will be representatives of the GNSS and augmentation system providers and representatives of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, representing important international scientific development and user groups of the capabilities of GNSS. The ICG hopes to encourage compatibility and interoperability among GNSS systems, while increasing their use to support sustainable development, particularly in the developing nations.



Short biographical notes

Hans J. Haubold is an astrophysicist from the Institute for Astrophysics, Potsdam, Germany where he has been Professor of Theoretical Astrophysics since 1988. He received his diploma in solid state physics from the Technical University Chemnitz and his PhD and DSc from the Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam. Doing research in astrophysics he co-authored two books on nuclear astrophysics and formation of structure in the universe (Akademie-Verlag Berlin, 1988 and 1990) and two major review articles on the sun (Encyclopedia of Planetary Sciences, Chapman and Hall, London, UK, 1997, and Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Netherlands, 2000) and on the structure of the structure of the universe (Encyclopedia of Applied Physics, Vol. 23, Wiley-VCH, New York and Weinheim, Germany, 1998). Since 1988 he has also been with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, firstly in New York and latterly in Vienna, Austria, since 1993. His principal responsibility is with the establishment of the UN-affiliated Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. At the United Nations he spearheaded the development of education curricula in remote sensing and GIS, satellite meteorology and global climate, satellite communications, and space and atmospheric science. Since 1991 he is the principal organizer of the series of annual UN/ESA Workshops on Basic Space Science. The decadal report on these workshops titled "Developing Basic Space Science World-Wide" was published by Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, in 2004.

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