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International Cooperation – A Major Driver for Emerging Countries’ Development in the Space Business

The last day of GLEC2019, Friday 26 April, found a unanimous consensus over the significance of the conference’s topic and served as a strong encouragement for emerging countries. **Kammy Brun**, China HEAD Aerospace Group, moderator of the first panel, confirmed that 2018 was a record year for global satellite contracts and *“this is the right time for emerging countries to enter the space market”*.

During the first keynote, **Pascale Ehrenfreund**, Chair of DLR Executive Board, stressed the importance of international cooperation to allow emerging nations to draw political attention and interest to space, leading to more funding opportunities, improved facilities and relevant data. Concentrating on the human capital skills, **Kasia Clatworthy**, Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) asserted that *“to keep your engineers in your country, fulfilled and satisfied, you have to build a long-term vision and have a propellant national space programme”*. **Lon Levin**, GEOshare, realistically reminded the audience that *“space is hard and expensive”* before adding that *“when deciding which foreign country one should partner with, the primary aspect to look at is financial”*. On his side, **Ben Baseley-Walker**, Andart Global, emphasized that when it comes to emerging countries, *“space should not necessarily be inspiring and aiming at going to the Moon or Mars, but rather face Earth issues that would facilitate the lives of the citizens”*.

Legal and Policy was the focus of the second and last panel of the conference. Moderator **David Kendall**, former Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS), pointed out *“the need to deliver the right policy as a fundamental underpinning of space activities”*. In her keynote speech, **Irmgard Marboe**, University of Vienna, gave an overview on the framework of global and policy issues referring to United Nations regulations including liability of launching states and authorization and continuing supervision. **Marta Gaggero**, Centro de Investigacion y Difusion Aeronautico Espacial (CIDA-E) observed that *“space treaties adopted by the United Nations are meant to reduce existing disparities”*. Similarly, **Tanja Masson-Zwann**, International Institute of Air and Space Law (IIASL), underlined that *“emerging countries must take part in the debate in the United Nations and ratify the treaties”* to develop and prosper in the space sector.

During his keynote, **Mohammed Al Ahabbi**, IAF Vice President for Global Membership Development and Director General of the UAE Space Agency, invited all companies from emerging countries to become members of the IAF as a propeller to enter the global space community.

GLEC2019 concluded with a wrap-up session which took stock of the various sessions held throughout the week. While different points of views on what emerging countries should focus on – downstream applications, socio-economic development or space exploration – a main outcome emerged: international cooperation is key. **Jean-Yves Le Gall**, IAF President, officially closed the conference with a call to action: *“let us open the gate to emerging countries and allow them, as they fully deserve, to be part of the space arena”*.

