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When assessing the current condition of the geostationary orbit/frequency resource and prospects of its utilization one can not ignore the relatively recent trend where countries that were never members of the 'space club' are now willing to have domestic satellite telecommunications systems using their own satellites. Over the last few years alone, such projects have been successfully launched by Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Vietnam that have already deployed their domestic spacecraft and are planning to add more. Azerbaijan's domestic satellite telecommunications project is about to come off with the Azersat 1 satellite. Similar plans have been announced by Ukraine, Angola and other countries.

Certainly, in the nearest future this trend will result in the growth of the number of geostationary spacecraft. Accordingly, the orbit is going to be overloaded. In other words, the GSO frequency resource is going to become even scarcer for new satellites.

Formally, any new states that are willing to launch their own spacecraft but lack coordinated orbital slots for such satellites have to follow the routine of filing, coordinating and notifying their new satellite networks in the GSO. However, they clearly understand that on the one hand this would take too much time and require much effort. On the other hand, considering the current 'population density' in the GSO, the final conditions of frequency coordination will be quite stringent and would noticeably limit the opportunity of deploying a satellite that would be up to snuff.

In these conditions, there comes up a new opportunity that could hardly be imaginable

just several years ago, where states that are joining the 'space club' turn for assistance to 'space club' veterans that already have several coordinated orbital positions. For example, for its Kazsat-1 satellite Kazakhstan uses a Russian slot. Azerbaijan's Azersat-1 will be located in the Turkish position at 50°E. Can you imagine anybody criticizing Russia, Turkey or any other country that have available slots for offering such slots to other countries as was the case twenty years ago with the Kingdom of Tonga? (although one must admit that Tonga filed its slots for re-sale only while Russia, Turkey or similar countries filed their slots for their own telecommunications satellites).

It is noteworthy that it is not only countries that are looking for suitable orbital positions for their domestic satellite systems but also satellite operators that have only recently entered the market of satellite telecommunications services. Our international organization is just one example. In the mid-90s Intersputnik decided to procure its own space segment using its own orbit/frequency resource and filed with the ITU a number of orbital slots. Regretfully, for a number of objective reasons Intersputnik had to somehow reduce its plans. Instead of deploying a fleet of three or four satellites we had to confine ourselves to just one satellite in one orbital position. Here I mean the well-known Lockheed Martin Intersputnik project. Therefore, today Intersputnik has satellite networks filed in several orbital slots that can be offered for joint use to interested government or private satellite operators. For example, recently we have launched a project to operate a Protostar satellite at 98.5°E. Frankly speaking, when this project

was announced certain operators that were using adjacent positions became somewhat concerned. This is quite natural and understandable because competition on the Asian satellite market is getting fiercer. Here I do not want to go into greater detail technically, but I can assure you that the conditions of Intersputnik's cooperation with ProtoStar just like with all other potential partners explicitly exclude any harmful interference to any satellite networks that have ITU time priority.

This example illustrates another 'novelty' in using the GSO resource that used to be an exception just several years ago, but quite obviously may in the nearest future become much more widespread. I mean that spacecraft are placed in service in a given position before the international frequency coordination of the corresponding satellite network is completed. You will recall that under section II, Article 9 of the ITU Radio Regulations a satellite network can be brought into use after its international frequency coordination is completed. However, as I already mentioned, both today and in the nearest future new satellite networks can only be finally coordinated with very serious constraints. It is beyond

any doubt – and this was mentioned during this round table discussion – that the problem can be resolved by technologically upgrading spacecraft and terrestrial equipment. At the same time, more and more often spacecraft tend to be placed in service before the satellite network is formally brought into use provided that no harmful interference is caused to satellite networks that have ITU time priority. This procedure conforms to sections 11.44.1, 11.41 and 4.3 of the Radio Regulations. Experience shows that this can be done because quite a few satellite networks already filed use satellites with frequency plans that do not cover all frequencies filed in a given network. Formally, the entire bandwidth of such frequencies belongs to the operator having time priority, but actually this bandwidth includes 'candles' that can be used by a 'foreign' satellite that, if properly configured, will never cause interference to the 'first-priority' satellite. It may be expected that against the background of the growing scarcity of the orbit/frequency resource and the growing number of geostationary satellites such situations will occur more often.