I once had the honour to meet the first woman in Space, Valentina Tereshkova. She said something that has always stuck in my mind: "Once you have been in Space you appreciate how small and fragile the earth is.

From the height of space, I quickly found that there are established trends, emerging trends and fads, and that no trends are established everywhere. Likewise, some emerging trends are manifest in most places but seem to be missing in others. And fads, the trends of the future, may already have achieved trend status somewhere.

Here's a summary of my view from space and I would very much welcome your views! It is an important subject. Trend analysis is used for future-spotting and to inspire new thinking and developments. Trends keep us a step ahead, position us at the forefront.

Established Trends

Of course, mediation is itself an established trend - a prevailing tendency that is gaining momentum. But what are the established trends within that established trend?

* First, a clear awakening of the user - especially the repeat user. It is starting to dawn on them that mediation can help them get what they need: achieve goals, reduce risk, secure certainty, take less time, cost less, save face and preserve reputation. This is leading to a slow but steady shift from a supply-led field to a demand-led profession.
* Second, I see a trend from passive forms of mediation to assertive practices. I see more and more mediators doing proper mediation, assertive mediation, the sort of mediation that can help parties get what they need: achieve goals, reduce risk, secure certainty, take less time, cost less, save face and preserve reputation. This is leading to a slow but steady shift from a supply-led field to a demand-led profession.
* Third, mediation institutions embracing mediation more enthusiastically. A quick glance at the 2012 ICC Rules of Arbitration proves the point, and there are many other examples.

Emerging Trends

Peering down at earth from orbit:

* One can see governments regarding themselves for regulating this field. They are doing so because mediation and providers do not self-regulate coherently or adequately. Training and education are at sophisticated levels, but mediators do not self-regulate coherently, skills and experience - some of it transparent and credible, but some of it cloaked and lacking transparency. This emerging trend towards proper credentialing needs to be more sustained and established, more international and more serious and credible, in terms of government regulation.
* A trend towards more assertive forms of mediation and arbitration and a greater demand for innovative and creative solutions - rather than just practicing what was already taught.
* Collaboration across boundaries and disciplines is increasing. This is leading to a slow but steady shift from a supply-led field to a demand-led profession.
* A trend from traditional to hybrid forms of mediation and arbitration and a greater demand for innovative and creative solutions - rather than just practicing what was already taught.
* A trend from conflict to conflict resolution as a means of achieving goals.
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Fads

Fads are at a bit harder to see from space because they are less understood. A fad is more of a bandwagon that can, perhaps, even cross a trend. Among the fads I noticed were:

* There is a trend for young estudiantes institutions.
* There is a trend towards more assertive forms of mediation and arbitration and a greater demand for innovative and creative solutions - rather than just practicing what was already taught.
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Conclusion

This trip to orbit, photographing the trends, is clearly of very encouraging. Mediation is evolving, and as it does so it is gaining in strength, becoming more assertive, more credible, more respected, more trusted, and at the same time is building the foundations of a properly recognized independent profession. We need to share these ideas because, by surfacing them, we put a better future for all mediation stakeholders, as well as ourselves.