

Third International Conference on Exploration
First meeting of the High-level International Space Exploration Platform

Declaration

Foreword

Humanity's quest to explore has existed for as long as history has been recorded. This desire to go further, to explore new frontiers, to make new discoveries, is never ending. It is part of the essence of being human. Only the pace and actors have changed over time. We have gone from exploring the oceans and to finding new lands to breaking free of the Earth's atmosphere. After more than 50 years since humans ventured into space, space exploration has evolved in terms of destinations, duration, objectives, partnerships, and complexity. Sustainable space exploration is beyond the capabilities of a single country.

"Space exploration" consists of multiple missions and projects, large and small, to several destinations, including the Moon, Mars, and asteroids, which all have their own merits, and can be explored with a variety of technologies. These on-going and potential activities can have robotic and human components, in sequence or in parallel, and can also involve many established and emerging actors.

The importance of high-level structured policy dialogue

Representatives from around the world met in Lucca, Italy, on 10 November 2011, to highlight the importance of future space exploration and its direct benefit to humankind. Representatives took note of the scenarios elaborated by the International Space Exploration Coordination Group in the recent 'Global Exploration Roadmap' document. These leaders affirmed that space exploration can profit from an international high-level dialogue. In addition to advancing the state of the art in science, technology and engineering, there are unprecedented opportunities to deliver benefits to humanity on Earth while paving the way for future space exploration activities. These benefits include fuelling future discoveries; addressing global challenges in space and on Earth through the use of innovative technology; creating global partnerships by sharing challenging and peaceful goals; inspiring society and especially the younger generations through collective and individual efforts; and enabling economic expansion and new business opportunities. The international high-level policy dialogue initiated in Lucca contributes to delivering these benefits.

Next steps

Representatives at the Lucca Conference recognised the benefit from a continued, and structured high-level policy dialogue on future space exploration that can help identify potential areas for international cooperation, and took note of the European concept paper which helped prepare for the Conference. In addition, this high-level structured policy dialogue will provide inspiration to the already existing multilateral fora and bilateral technical, programmatic and scientific venues.

It is expected that further discussions will allow exchange of views that could include joint missions, research collaboration, and could lead to greater cooperation in areas such as access to space, innovation and space technologies, the utilisation of the current and possible future Low Earth Orbit (LEO) infrastructures, and future human and robotic presence beyond LEO. The participants welcomed an offer from the United States to host the next dialogue.

The government representatives in Lucca committed to begin the open structured high-level policy dialogue on space exploration at the government-level for the benefit of humankind.
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