



PRESS RELEASE

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Return of IAF space-flown flags to the Federation gathers a full audience at ILA 2012

IAF PR 07-2012, 14 September 2012 – Today, a fascinated audience saw 300 IAF flags travelled through space 444 days change hands between taikonaut Wang LIU, whom they accompanied aboard Shenzhou-9's space exploration in June this year, Ping WU, Deputy Director General of the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), and IAF President Berndt Feuerbacher at the 2012 ILA Berlin Air Show.

Recounted by Prof. Dr Feuerbacher, attendees first relived the outer space adventures of the flags – conceived to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Federation and the only object on Earth to have travelled aboard spacecraft belonging to all nations with an active human spaceflight programme. Congratulations on the successful flags' travels were also expressed by Prof. Jean-Jacques Dordain, IAF Vice-President and Director General of the European Space Agency. The Chinese delegation took the podium next. After an opening speech by Ms Ping WU, taikonaut Wang LIU explained: "Whilst in space, we showed one of the IAF flags to the whole world. The flags appreciated the peace and beauty of Earth from afar and will be a precious gift for all IAF members around the world." He thereby evoked the next and final reappearance and stop of the flags: during a ceremony at the upcoming International Astronautical Congress (1-5 October 2012, Naples, Italy) when they will be presented to IAF member organisations.

A video, specially prepared by CMSA for the ceremony, thrilled attendees with spectacular images of the launch and automatic and manual dockings between Chinese space station Tiangong-1 and Shenzhou-9. The appearance of the IAF flag, the fourth 'star' next to the three taikonauts onboard Tiangong-1, was met with excited applause by the audience.

"This innovative activity will have a profound impact on the international space exchange and cooperation. We believe and wish that the IAF flag will fly forever in the minds of the peace-loving people of the world space community," wished Jinyu GONG, Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Society of Astronautics who was also on stage.

More information on the IAF ceremony: <http://www.iafastro.org/index.html?title=ILAIAFceremony>.

Video of the space travel of the IAF flags:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCTDQ1A9KpM&feature=youtu.be>

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About the International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

Founded in 1951, the International Astronautical Federation is the world's leading space advocacy body with 227 members in 59 countries including all leading space agencies, companies, societies, associations and institutes worldwide.

Following its theme "A space-faring world cooperating for the benefit of humanity", the Federation advances knowledge about space, fostering the development and application of space assets by advancing global cooperation.

As organiser of the annual International Astronautical Congress (IAC), and other meetings on specific subjects, the IAF actively encourages the development of astronautics for peaceful purposes and supports the dissemination of scientific and technical information related to space.