



# PRESS RELEASE

- For immediate release -

Contact: Juliane McCarty

T: +33 1 45 67 55 97

E: [juliane.mccarty@iafastro.org](mailto:juliane.mccarty@iafastro.org)

## Media Invitation: Space Update Lectures Return to IAF Spring Meeting

***IAF PR 01-2012, 5 March 2012 – The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is pleased to welcome back the Space Update lectures to its annual Spring Meeting, following a hiatus last year to accommodate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Esteemed guest speakers will showcase the recent achievements of China’s space programme and the latest discoveries from ESA’s Herschel Space Observatory and NASA’s Messenger mission to Mercury.***

Each year, the IAF Secretariat holds a Spring Meeting in Paris, during which the Federation’s committee meetings take place and the scientific papers that will be presented at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) are selected. The Space Update lectures is another highlight of the Spring Meeting, as scientists and decision-makers from space agencies present the latest findings from some of the most exciting space missions.

This year’s Space Update will feature three presentations:

**Alvaro Gimenez, ESA’s Director of Science and Robotic Exploration: “Recent results from the Herschel Mission”**

Herschel is the largest infrared telescope ever launched into space. Since it launched in May 2009, Herschel has provided a wealth of information about star formation and the chemical composition of planetary bodies. For example, scientists announced last October that Herschel had discovered cold water vapour enveloping a dusty disk around a young star for the first time.

**Ralph L. McNutt, Jr., Project Scientist for NASA’s Messenger mission: “A New View of Mercury: Results from MESSENGER’s First Year in Orbit”**

Messenger was launched in August 2004 and entered orbit around Mercury in March 2011. It is the first spacecraft to orbit our Solar System’s innermost planet, providing intriguing insights into this rocky world. Early observations have already shown that, despite its close proximity to the Sun, the planet is probably home to large ice fields that are found inside deep craters. Planetary scientists now eagerly await more revelations from the Messenger mission.

**Dr Li Ming, Vice President of the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST): “China’s first space rendezvous and docking mission overview”**

On 2 November, 2011, the unmanned Chinese Shenzhou 8 spacecraft successfully docked with the space module Tiangong-1. Dr Li Ming from CAST – a unit of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), which is responsible for executing the nation’s space programme – will explain why this is an important step forward for China’s future space plans.

**Registration deadline:** 12 March, 2012

**Venue:** Room 2 on the ground floor of UNESCO Headquarters, 125 Avenue de Suffren, Paris

**Date & Time:** 18:00-19:30 on 13 March, 2012

For further information and press registration, please contact:

Juliane McCarty

juliane.mccarty@iafastro.org

Phone: +33 (0) 1 45 67 42 60

---

### **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 organizer 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.