



PRESS RELEASE

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An Experts' View on Mars Sample Return at IAC 2016

A special plenary on the realization of Mars Sample Return through human and robotic collaboration will be held on **Thursday 29 September 2016**, from **08:30 – 09:30** during the 67th IAC in Guadalajara.

Mars sample return has been a priority of the international science community for years. A scenario requiring international partnerships and multiple robotic missions has been advanced by leading space agencies, however the cost is high. With NASA's Journey to Mars and plans for human missions to the lunar vicinity, it is time to consider whether Mars Sample Return can be realized by collaboration between human and robotic missions. Could astronauts retrieve a Mars sample canister which is brought to the lunar vicinity robotically and return it to Earth? Human missions to the lunar vicinity will enable mastery of the challenges of future Mars missions and create exciting scientific opportunities for the decades to come.

This panel will be moderated by **Ms. Cheryl Reed**, Program Manager, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) and will see the participation of many high-level speakers.

Dr. Ellen Stofan, Chief Scientist, NASA, **Mr. David Parker**, Director of Human Spaceflight and Robotic Exploration, ESA, **Mr. Charles Whetsel**, Manager of Mars Program Formulation Office, NASA JPL, **Mr. Masaki Fujimoto**, Director, Department of Solar Systems Sciences, JAXA, and **Dr. Jean-Pierre Bibring**, Astrophysicist, will lead the discussion on how to finally realize a Mars Sample Return mission.

Members of the press are invited to save the date, and register to ensure that they receive accreditation. Please send confirmation of your registration to abed.aldaas@iafastro.org so that we can ensure that you are properly accredited.

