



Will Space Exploration lead us to a Global Space Agency?

The Global Space Exploration Conference (GLEX 2017) has officially opened its doors on Monday 6 June 2017 with a welcome address by **Li Yuanchao**, Vice-President of People's Republic of China who also read a participative letter from **Xi Jinping**, President of People's Republic of China stating that "China is ready to strengthen cooperation with the international community for a better future to humankind". **Lei Fanpei**, President of the Chinese Society of Astronautics (CSA) and **Jean-Yves Le Gall**, President of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), welcomed over a thousand delegates from 51 countries.

This Chinese call to cooperation has been the main focus of the Heads of Agency Plenary where the idea of a global space agency has been analysed; **Roberto Battiston**, President of the Italian Space Agency (ASI) praised this dream of a global space agency and the great impact it would have on mankind; he also added that this could be achieved by "the ultimate endeavor in front of us: sending men to Mars". However, **Pascale Ehrenfreund**, Chair of the Executive Board of German Aerospace Center (DLR), defended "the role that national space agencies have in fostering national businesses".

Afterwards, delegates attended the International Platform for Diversity and Equality in Astronautics (IDEA) Diversity luncheon, moderated by IAF President, **Jean-Yves Le Gall**. **Yang Baohua**, Vice President of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), presented the impressive results of China's space development contribution to 3G (Gender – Geography – Generation). The audience discussed, among many other topics, the role of female space leaders, the characteristics of the first astronauts' crew landing on Mars, the work of space nations and emerging space countries to foster diversity.

Delegates then attended a Plenary organised by the Chinese Host focusing on the key role played by China in space cooperation with **Cheng'E-4** mission and ESA, DLR and NSO have been awarded by CNSA for their commitment and support to the mission which was a great success. Finally, **Jan Woerner**, Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA) expressed the wish to invite the global space community to join a cooperative Moon Village concept.

Both Global Networking Forum (GNF) and Technical Sessions received a huge interest from the delegates and left us with the reassuring conviction that global partnerships is vital in order to ensure the successful inclusion of all countries in space exploration.

Follow the conversation online #GLEX2017.

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