



## INTERNATIONAL ASTRONAUTICAL FEDERATION

### NEWS ITEM 09/23/2013

#### PLENARY 1 – Heads of Space Agencies

##### Space agency leaders agree on need to cooperate

The leaders of the world's top space agencies agreed at the 64<sup>th</sup> International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in Beijing, China, today (Monday, 23 September 2013) that cooperation is a key to the success of large-scale space projects.

The United States, Russia, China, Japan, Europe and Canada all provided an overview of their current programmes as well as an insight into future plans and potential international cooperation opportunities.

Speaking before an audience of around 2,000 delegates, Ma Xingrui, the Administrator of China National Space Administration (CNSA), said that in the past 12 months China had launched 15 different space missions, including the Shenzhou 10 crewed flight.

He stated that the Chinese government continued to see space development as an important part of the country's long term future.

Mr Ma said final preparations were now underway to launch the country's first Moon rover by the end of this year. Chang'e 3 will be China's most ambitious lunar mission yet and, if successful, it will mark the first time China lands a spacecraft on another celestial body.

The mission, the second phase of China's lunar programme, will also see a rover deployed on the surface, a move which forms part of China's long term plans to send astronauts on a lunar landing mission.

Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator, urged delegates to seriously consider the growing need for international cooperation on missions that would reach deeper into space. He said NASA remained committed to the International Space Station (ISS) until at least 2020, and was focussed on deep space exploration and developing private enterprise.

Mr Bolden said one of the biggest challenges faced by NASA was "inspiring the nation" so that ultimately the US Congress would approve the ambitious space programme budget.

In Europe, Poland has become ESA's newest Member State and Jean-Jacques Dordain, Director General of ESA, likened cooperation among the 20 member countries as a routine part of daily work. "It is not always easy but it is very successful," he said.

A key decision taken by ESA in the past year is to provide the Service Module for the NASA's Orion spacecraft, which Mr Dordain described as a "break-through" in cooperation. "This is the first time we are contributing to a space transportation system for NASA," he said.

Mr Dordain said an ESA priority was the deliver competitiveness in launchers and stressed that it was important to achieve a balance between success and innovation.

Sergei Savelev, Deputy Head of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), said his country would gradually replace the Glonass satellite navigation system of 29 spacecraft with a new generation of spacecraft with longer orbital life cycles.

Construction of a new Russian launch site at Vostochny in eastern Siberia, near the Chinese border, is on-going with a first launch planned in 2018. The new cosmodrome will enable Russia to launch most missions from its own soil and at the same time is designed to reduce Russia's dependency on the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

Listing a number of collaborative ventures with Europe, including future missions to Mars and possibly Jupiter, Mr Savelev said international cooperation would remain a priority for Russia.

Walter Natynczyk, the recently appointed President of the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), told delegates that the Canadian Government had committed to developing the next generation Radarsat constellation.

He said Canada was proud that its astronaut Chris Hadfield had been the first Canadian commander of the International Space Station (ISS), saying that for the public at large he had brought space into homes and made it real for everyone.

Mr Natynczyk said "transformation" was the current Canadian buzz word after the Government decided to "refresh our programme and set new priorities".

S Ramakrishnan, Director of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), described the past year as an exciting one for the Indian space programme with the launch of four satellites, including the first Indian navigation spacecraft in July.

He said the country was planning to launch a Mars orbiter mission in October with arrival at the red planet scheduled for September next year and that ensuring the PSLV was fully operational would also be a key challenge.

Naoki Okumura, President of the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), said a Japanese astronaut would become the first Asian commander of the ISS during a six month mission starting in November.

Asked about key challenges faced by the agencies in the coming 12 months, Mr Okumura said JAXA would be focussing on development of a new launcher that is planned for a first mission in 2020.

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