



Singapore Space & Technology Think Tank About the Council

Dr. Kartik Sheth (Chair)

Former NASA Associate Chief Scientist; Founder and CEO, Empowered Earth Alliance, Former White House Executive Office of the President

Dr. Kartik Sheth is a globally recognized astrophysicist and strategic leader with a proven track record in driving innovation within space science and technology. He has held pivotal roles at NASA Headquarters, serving most recently as NASA's Associate Chief Scientist where he helped develop policy and strategy for science and technology across the Agency. A world-renowned astrophysicist, his research focuses on galaxy formation and evolution.

Dr. Sheth's illustrious career spans government, academia, nonprofits, and the White House. He served as Program Examiner at the Office of Management and Budget, shaping national R&D priorities and managing an \$8.5B budget for the DOE Office of Science. He also worked as Assistant Director for Research Infrastructures and Science Equity at the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy where he spearheaded initiatives aimed at advancing critical and emerging technologies, advanced manufacturing, clean energy generation in areas such as fusion and space solar power, radiation biology research, and the maintenance and growth of research and human capital infrastructure.

At NASA, Dr. Sheth was a Program Scientist and oversaw the launch and operations of flagship missions like James Webb and Spitzer, and development of a microeconomics framework for valuation of societal benefits from Earth observations. Dr. Sheth is the founder of Empowered Earth Alliance, promoting local self-reliance and problem-solving. In 2023, he was inducted as a Fellow of the American Physical Society. He holds multiple degrees in physics and astronomy and has authored over 180 scientific papers with 25,000+ citations.

His leadership in the Singapore Space & Technology Think Tank underscores his dedication to advancing the space industry across Asia and connecting the fast-growing space ecosystem in the region to the rest of the world.

Candace Johnson

Founder/Co-Founder SES, Loral-Teleport Europe; Chair Advisory Board and Partner Seraphim Space; Founding Vice Chair and Board Member NorthStar Earth & Space

Candace Johnson is a world-renowned space infrastructure, network and innovation entrepreneur and investor. She is Founder/Co-Founder of one of the world's largest satellite systems, SES (Société Européenne des Satellites), Europe's first private satellite communications network Loral-Teleport Europe, the world's first Internet based online service Europe Online, Oceania Women's Network Satellite (OWNSAT), a founding investor in the Kacific Satellite System. Ms. Johnson is also Founding President of the VATM, the Association of Private Telecom Operators in Germany and Founding President of the Global Telecom Women's Network (GTWN). Currently, Candace is Chair of the Advisory Board and Partner of Seraphim Space Fund, Founding Vice Chair of NorthStar Earth and Space, and Non-Executive Director of VUSION, the world's leading IOT/Electronic Shelf Labelling group. Ms. Johnson is a member of the Executive Board of the ICC, International Chamber of Commerce, Member Saudi Space Agency Advisory Council, Vice President of Institut EuroplA, the European Institute of Artificial Intelligence. She was also Vice-Chair of the B 20 Task Force on Technology, Innovation and R&D for 2023.

Known for her pioneering work in the European and global space ecosystem, she has been decorated by the Luxembourg Government with the Commander of the Order of Merit and the Officer of the Oak Leaf Crown as well as being decorated by the German Government with the Officer of the Federal Order of Merit.

She is President Emeritus of EBAN after having completed a four-year presidency of EBAN, (European Business Angels Network), during which she was honoured to help found ABAN (African Business Angels Network) amongst other initiatives. In 2020, she was Co-Chair of the Women in Business Task Force for the G20 in Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Johnson has received numerous Lifetime Achievement Awards from such prestigious organisations as the World Communication Awards, Women in Aerospace, The International Alliance of Women and the Global Telecom Women's Network (GTWN). Ms. Johnson has an honorary doctorate from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Masters with honours from the Sorbonne and Stanford and an undergraduate degree from Vassar College.

Across her celebrated space career, she has played a vital role in establishing strategic partnerships across continents, promoting satellite technology as a solution to digital connectivity challenges, and championing the development of space business ecosystems.

Dr. Raha Hakimdavar

Professor and Senior Advisor to the Dean, Georgetown University; Founder and CEO, Zyon Space

Dr. Raha Hakimdavar is an accomplished hydrologist, science policy expert, and space science leader with extensive experience spanning government, academia, and industry. She currently serves as a Research Professor at the Earth Commons and as a Senior Advisor to the Deans at Georgetown University in Qatar and Earth Commons, where she directs strategy and programs centered on environmental security, climate action, and sustainability research and education. Her active research initiatives focus on water scarcity in Greece, water and food security in the Middle East, and flood risk mitigation and natural capital markets in Indonesia.

Her previous roles include Director of Space Sciences at Ball Aerospace, where she fostered collaborations with NASA, NOAA, and international space agencies, advancing scientific initiatives and partnerships. She has also held leadership positions at the USDA Forest Service and was a Presidential Management Fellow at NASA Goddard, contributing to the development of UN Environment's SDG 6 methodology and a U.S. government-wide water security framework used operationally by the U.S. Air Force. Her work on watershed health assessments and resilience investments has directly influenced federal policies and environmental strategies.

As the founder and CEO of Zyon Space, Dr. Hakimdavar supports emerging space agencies in the Global South by leveraging Earth observation technologies for climate and environmental resilience. She holds a B.S. in civil engineering from California State Polytechnic University and both an M.S. and Ph.D. in hydrology from Columbia University. Recognized for her contributions to sustainability and innovation, she was a Fulbright Fellow in Water Management and received the 2018 KLM Sustainability and Innovation award.

Hidetaka Aoki

Co-founder and director at Space Port Japan; co-founder of SPACETIDE Foundation; Space Evangelist; VC

As a Space Evangelist, Mr. Aoki is a decades-long champion of the Japanese space ecosystem, working to promote its space business and create a robust private-sector-led space industry with his expertise in both the space business and space technology.

After receiving a master's degree in aerospace engineering and a pilot's license in the U.S., he worked at Mitsubishi Electric, where he developed Japan's first spacecraft, Kounotori, and SLIM which is Japan's first lunar lander and won a number of awards.

As the Co-founder and director of Space Port Japan, a Japanese hub to gather talents and resources of space industries and space port industries in Asia, he is credited with deepening Japan's reputation as a key space innovation hub in Asia and promoting the spaceport business. He also co-founded SPACETIDE Foundation, Japan's first industry-wide platform for accelerating NewSpace activities.

He has also served with JAXA and several government committees in his expansive space career. As an experienced investor, he has supported a deep bench strength of space startups for over 10 years.

Recognized for his strategic vision, Mr. Aoki continues to promote technology innovation and operational excellence within Japan's space sector, emphasizing the importance of sustainable and responsible space endeavors.

Jason Bender

Space Lead Partner; Deloitte Australia & Asia Pacific; Experienced entrepreneur and Corporate Innovation Expert

A leader of Deloitte's Space agenda to accelerate the growth and scale of the Space Industry, with a focus economic growth and jobs. His team conceived the global Gravity Challenge, connecting downstream demand with space-tech supply capability delivering commercial outcomes for both the corporate organisations and innovators. Now in its eight year, it has seen over 1200 global teams participate from over 20 countries, to solve more than 50 challenges - resulting in over 30 commercial contracts for the space innovators.

A design and technology focussed executive with 30 years of experience in innovation and business development across dynamic tech sectors. He delivers strategic insights to diverse space ecosystem stakeholders including high growth potential tech companies, defence/space primes, universities, government (industry development, regulator and space data consumer and service provider), defence and downstream users of geospatial data such as mining & energy resources, utilities, agriculture and insurance.

He drives collaboration between government and private-sector space businesses to accelerate growth of the space ecosystem across the Asia Pacific region, connecting the dots across the entire space value chain.

As an experienced entrepreneur who has founded, scaled, and exited 5 businesses across Australia and Europe, he brings a strong entrepreneurial mindset, critical in helping to accelerate the growth of space business ecosystems and driving strong commercial outcomes across space-for-space and space-for-Earth segments.