



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Space for the Planet, Space for People: IAF Spring Meetings 2026 Set the Global Space Agenda

Paris, France – 27 March 2026 – More than 500 participants gathered in person and joined virtually in Paris from 24 to 26 March for the **International Astronautical Federation (IAF) Spring Meetings 2026**. Attendees included IAF Bureau members, members of IAF administrative and technical committees, distinguished International Programme Committee (IPC) members, international astronauts, and VIP guests, coming together to chart the path for global space collaboration.

The IAF opened its Spring Meetings 2026 with **IDEA Day**, a flagship platform dedicated to advancing inclusion across the global space community. The day began with the IAF IDEA “3G+” Diversity Breakfast Panel Discussion, *“The Power of Thinking Differently: Diversity as a Catalyst for Space Breakthroughs,”* uniting experts from academia, industry, and international space agencies. Moderated by IAF VP for Diversity Initiatives and Chair of the IAF IDEA Committee, Nikol Koleva, the discussion highlighted how diversity of thought, experience, and perspective fuels innovation and technological progress. As Koleva noted, “Innovation begins where uniformity ends,” reaffirming the Federation’s commitment to its “3G+” framework - Geography, Generation, and Gender - as a cornerstone of inclusive advancement.

The programme continued with the IAF IDEA “3G+” Diversity Luncheon, featuring welcome remarks by IAF President Gabriella Arrigo and a keynote address, *“The Power of Uncommon Paths,”* delivered by AstroAccess Director of Development Sheila Xu. The session explored how non-linear careers, cross-disciplinary experiences, and diverse perspectives shape leadership and resilience in the space sector. An interactive “Reflection Board” invited participants to share pivotal moments from their professional journeys. The luncheon concluded with a Diversity Survey Certificate Ceremony.

Attention now turns to the **77th International Astronautical Congress (IAC 2026)**, scheduled for 5–9 October in Antalya, Türkiye.

This year’s abstract submissions have set a historic milestone: 8,325 abstracts from 108 countries, surpassing previous records, including IAC 2024 in Milan (nearly 7,000 abstracts from 103 countries) and IAC 2025 in Sydney (around 6,400 submissions from 106 countries).

As part of the IAF Spring Meetings agenda, the IAF International Programme Committee (IPC) convened to review and select abstracts for the upcoming Congress. The selection process remains highly competitive and rigorous, with final results expected to be announced by mid-April 2026.

The call for Special Sessions attracted 74 proposals from across the global space community. The IAF IPC Steering Group conducted a thorough review, selecting 18 sessions aligned with the IAC 2026 theme, *“The World Needs More Space,”* reflecting the sector’s most pressing priorities.



For the IAC 2026 Plenary Programme, 36 proposals were submitted. The IAF Bureau approved 7 plenaries and 3 highlight lectures, ensuring a focused and impactful programme addressing the most critical developments in space, including industry, exploration, environment, emerging space countries, and new generation perspectives.

The **IAF Global Networking Forum (GNF)** kicked off with a forward-looking discussion on the growing importance of dynamic space operations and the need for green, affordable in-space propulsion. Arif Karabeyoğlu, IPC Co-Chair of IAC 2026, highlighted advances by Turkish companies, paving the way for Türkiye's first lunar mission in 2027.

Heriberto Saldivar, Head of Strategy at the European Space Agency (ESA), presented ESA Strategy 2040, following the successful outcome of the ESA Council at Ministerial Level (CM25), which secured the budget required to implement its long-term roadmap.

Discussions on IAC 2027 theme, “One Space. Shared Future,” featured contributions from the European Space Foundation (ESF), highlighting the importance of inclusive policies and global social responsibility amid rising geopolitical tensions.

“Africa’s Space Odyssey – A Rising Force in the Global Space Arena” emphasized the continent’s growing capabilities ahead of the **IAF Global Space Conference on Climate Change (GLOC 2026)** taking place on 2-4 June 2026 in Kigali, Rwanda. Gabriella Arrigo (IAF President), Asanda Ntisana (SANSa), Tidiane Ouattara (AfSA), and Henriette Cyuzuzo (RSA) shared insights into Africa’s rapid progress in industrial, technological, and governance capacities in space. Arrigo emphasized that the global space ecosystem is thriving, and that GLOC 2026 will provide a key platform to assess progress and shape the international climate change agenda.

The IAF GNF session “Astronauts – Global Ambassadors of Space and Peace” celebrated international astronauts as powerful advocates of the IAF’s mission, connecting @ll space people for a sustainable future. Speakers Reinhold Ewald, Alper Gezeravcı, Michael López-Alegría, and Julie Payette highlighted the unique role astronauts can play in advocating for peace, especially in today’s challenging geopolitical context.

Looking ahead, the 2026 IAF calendar offers a series of landmark events. **GLOC 2026** will address the contribution of space sector in global challenge of climate change. **IAC 2026** promises to bring the global space community in the inspiring setting of the Turkish Riviera.

All of this unfolds during a milestone year for the IAF – its **75th anniversary** – celebrating decades of building bridges worldwide to foster international cooperation in space and beyond. As IAF President Gabriella Arrigo highlighted: “**As we celebrate this milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to inspiring the next generation, fostering peace, and ensuring space remains accessible to all**”.