

IAF Committee Briefs

July 2021

IAF SPACE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

SpaceOps 2021- Virtual Edition!

The 16th International Conference on Space Operations reached a far bigger audience that would not normally attend the physical conference due to finances or time availability. ... The virtual conference was free of charge, making access and participation for delegates easy.

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) hosted the very first Space Operations conference virtually (May 3-5, 2021) since the inception of the Space Ops conference in 1990. This international forum has always been an exciting conference for space operations experts, offering discussions on state-of-the-art operations principles, methods, and tools. In addition, delegates in the space industry are also given an opportunity to foster managerial and technical interchange on all aspects of space mission operations, including areas such as robotics, human, earth-orbiting, and deep space aspects of space operations.

The conference theme “Beyond Boundaries to Human Endeavors” motivated to host this virtual conference, highlighting that there should not be limited by physical boundaries to engage on a matter which relates to space and our future.

The local organizing committee has been working very hard behind the scenes to present an engaging and interesting program during the conference; from the opening ceremony, technical and industry presentations, plenary sessions, closing, and awards ceremony. There were many positive reactions after the conference given the fact that it was a first for the series of the SpaceOps conferences. Everyone congratulated SANSA for the excellent organization of SpaceOps 2021.

However, there was a feeling that e.g. networking “face-to-face” cannot be replaced by a virtual format. But the classical way of organizing conference will certainly augmented by the possibly to follow at least some conference events from remote.

Action plan for the year

The Space Operations Committee is in the process of gathering information how different organizations have changed their structures and plans to react to Covid-19 constraints.

Time (UTC)	Monday 3 May 2021	Tuesday 4 May 2021	Wednesday 5 May 2021	Thursday 6 May 2021
12:00 - 12:30	Opening Ceremony	Plenary 2 Commercial Ground Stations: New Space & Traditional Space	Plenary 4 Space Situational awareness: Protecting our assets in Space	Students & Young Professionals Programme (SYP)
12:30 - 13:00	Plenary 1 Space Operations during COVID-19 pandemic	Coffee break	Coffee break	
13:00 - 13:05		Technical Sessions	Industry Presentation	
13:05 - 13:30	Technical Sessions			
13:30 - 13:33		Coffee break	Coffee break	
13:33 - 14:00	Technical Sessions	Industry Presentation	Exhibition	
14:00 - 14:30				
14:30 - 15:00	Technical Sessions	Industry Presentation	Exhibition	
15:00 - 15:30				
15:30 - 16:00	Technical Sessions	Industry Presentation	Exhibition	
16:00 - 16:10				Coffee break
16:10 - 16:30	Technical Sessions	Industry Presentation	Exhibition	
16:30 - 16:50				Plenary 3 Human Spaceflight operations: Space Stations the Moon and Mars
16:50 - 17:00	Day 1 Closing session	Day 2 Closing session		
17:00 - 17:30	Technical Tour: South African Space Industry Showcase	Social Tour: Virtual Game drive (Safari) tour		

