THE FUTURE OF MOON AND MARS EXPLORATION AT GLEX 2021

16 June 2021 - St. Petersburg, Russia. An intensive day at the IAF Global Space Exploration Conference – GLEX 2021 started with a Highlight Lecture by **Xiaojun WANG**, President of the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT), on space transportation for future Human Mars Exploration missions, on Tianwen-1's successful three-months Mars remote sensing mission, and on the initial operation of the Zhurong rover named after "**the god of fire in traditional Chinese culture**".

The conversation then switched to the Moon with **Alain BORIES**, Senior Vice President for Business Development and Political Affairs at OHB, declaring "**the 2020s the decade of the Moon**". Indeed, **Salem AL MARRI**, Assistant Director General for Science and Technology from MBRSC, announced "**UAE plans to send a rover to the Moon surface by 2024/25**". "**The Moon is a resource platform for many other missions**" confirmed **Andreas Lindenthal**, Head of Business Operations Space Systems, Head of Spacecraft Equipment, Head of Space Systems Germany, Airbus Defence and Space GmbH. As highlighted by IAF President, **Pascale EHRENFREUND**, moderating the IAF GNF Panel – Explore as one, featuring 3 NASA Associate Administrators, "**NASA knows from experience, that the way to achieve a grand goal like returning/bringing humans to the Moon in preparation for future Mars endeavors is going to take the best and brightest across the globe**".

With a view on future missions to the Moon and Mars, **Christophe BONNAL**, Senior Expert of Launch Systems at the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES), during his technical keynote, presented plans for "**human spaceflight capabilities at the Guiana space center**".

Yanhua WU, Vice Administrator of the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and **Sergey SAVELIEV**, Deputy Director General for International Cooperation at ROSCOSMOS, presented a detailed roadmap for the development of their "**three-phase strategy for the International Lunar Research Station (IRLS): in 2021-2025, the lunar reconnaissance with six missions; in 2026-2035, technology demonstrations, cargo delivery and sample return; and from 2036 and beyond, the crew landing and utilization phase**". It was also announced that already several international partners have expressed interest in contributing and participating in IRLS. During the IAF/ASE Astronauts panel, Astronaut **Mike Baker** predicted that, in the near future, astronauts will be "**people understanding how to build a habitat on other planets, including plumbers and carpenters**".

For more information
media@iafastro.org