

A short note on Space Exploration and Innovation

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EDITORIAL

Exploring the Universe has been a human desire since the dawn of humanity. Human curiosity has fueled a desire to explore and discover new worlds, push the boundaries of what is known, and learn more about science and technology. Since the first space launch, states and space agencies have been involved in space exploration. The first space launch paved the way for the first human space journey, which in turn paved the way for the first moonwalk. Joint human and robotic missions, near-Earth asteroids, Mars, and destinations beyond our solar system are now the emphasis. Space exploration and the innovation it implies are critical drivers for expanding space science and technology into new sectors.

They generate new prospects for resolving global concerns by triggering new alliances and developing capabilities. Young people are also encouraged to seek education and jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as a result of space exploration (the STEM disciplines). Though the exact form of future gains from space exploration is difficult to predict, present patterns indicate that major benefits could be discovered in fields such as new materials, health and medicine, transportation, and computer technology. As the benefits of space exploration and innovation become more widely recognised, more countries and non-governmental organisations are becoming interested in participating in these activities.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space supported seven thematic goals in 2016 as part of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Use of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50), the first of which was global partnership in space exploration and innovation. As a framework for moving the matter forward, the Committee formed an action team. The Action Team on Exploration and Innovation, which included 22 states and seven permanent observer organisations, produced a report with a number of recommendations (A/AC.105/1168).

The report, according to the Action Team Co-Chairs, "represented the first time the United Nations had examined, in a comprehensive way, human and robotic exploration beyond low-Earth orbit, and provided a basis for further consideration of how the United Nations system may contribute to a new era in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space," and "provided a basis for further consideration of how the United Nations system may contribute to a new era in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space."

The Committee added "Space exploration and innovation" to its agenda in 2018 based on the Action Team's recommendation (A/73/20, para. 364).

States share information on, among other things, research and development activities, astronaut programmes, a space exploration innovation hub centre, the planned establishment of a Mars scientific city, and activities related to the International Space Station and the China Space Station under this agenda item, which was first considered at the Committee session in 2019. The United Nations/Jordan Workshop: Global Partnership in Space Exploration and Innovation was again held in Amman in 2019, expanding on the work of the Action Team on Exploration and Innovation. This was the first workshop of its sort, with strategic and capacity-building components.

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