

INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations Expert Meeting on the International Space Station Humanitarian Benefits

**United Nations Office at Vienna, Vienna International Centre
Vienna, Austria, 11-12 June 2012**

1. Introduction

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs is organizing the above Expert Meeting on the International Space Station Humanitarian Benefits, as part of the Human Space Technology Initiative (HSTI) which was launched in 2010 within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

The Expert Meeting will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 11 to 12 June, in close cooperation with the ISS Partner agencies and will bring together United Nations organizations and experts from various professions in the world with the purpose of providing an opportunity for the participants to discuss ways to employ the potential of the ISS for the benefit of humanity, particularly in the fields of education, Earth observation and disaster response, and health.

2. Background and Objectives

HSTI was launched in 2010 by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs with the objective of promoting international cooperation in human spaceflight and space exploration-related activities.

This new initiative builds on the relevant recommendations related to human spaceflight and exploration contained in the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) held in July 1999. UNISPACE III recognized that large human space exploration missions exceed the capacity of a single country and cooperation should be privileged in this area, and thus, recommended the development of future space science programmes, in particular through international cooperation. The Conference also encouraged access to the ISS from countries that had never participated in that endeavour. It further advocated the world-wide dissemination of information about research activities onboard the ISS.

The ISS is the largest development ever attempted in space. Fully operational with a permanent crew of six, the ISS is an unprecedented facility for science and technology research (material science and life science), astronomy, Earth observation, and educational outreach. The microgravity environment of the ISS provides unique opportunities to deepen the understanding of space science and technology as well as space medicine. As a unique symbol of international collaboration, the ISS could be regarded as one of the greatest resources for humankind to explore space. Being the largest permanently crewed research facility in space, it has the inherent potential to benefit human kind in many ways.

As part of HSTI, the first Outreach Seminar on the International Space Station was held in Vienna, Austria, on 8 February 2011. Seventeen Member States participated in the seminar along with the ISS partners: the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), the European Space Agency (ESA), the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States of America, and the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos). This seminar established that HSTI could be a meaningful mechanism for creating awareness about the potential of the ISS and the research conducted on the ISS among countries, regions, and potential users that have up to this point not been involved with such activities, thereby contributing to capacity building in microgravity science and technology education.

The first Expert Meeting on Human Space Technology was also held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from 14 to 18 November 2011. It was attended by 125 professionals from 23 countries working in governmental institutions, universities and other academic entities as well as the private sector. It focused on facilitating the discussion on the benefits of human space technology, capacity-building and microgravity research in general and on identifying potential opportunities for developing countries to cooperate in human space technology activities and to take part in space science research. The discussion resulted in ten recommendations being formulated, addressed to governments, institutions and HSTI, and endorsed by the participants.

The planned Expert Meeting will further discuss how to facilitate HSTI activities to promote human space technology and its applications to benefit the world, specifically focusing on utilization of the ISS for education, Earth observation and disaster response, and health, with the following primary objectives:

- For ISS Partners to enable the benefits of ISS research, technology development, and education to reach more people and countries;
- For United Nations organizations to identify ISS humanitarian benefits that can contribute to their goals or activities;
- To leverage United Nations organizations' expertise to identify specific opportunities for extending ISS benefits for humanity; and
- To leverage United Nations organizations' network and current activities to reach United Nations Member States

3. Preliminary Programme

A two-day Expert Meeting will be organized in presentation sessions complemented by discussion rounds on following topics:

- Overview of the ISS Programme, microgravity and research facilities
- Introduction of a model for extending ISS benefits to the world
- Introduction of United Nations organizations with related missions
- The ISS as a platform for education
- Extending educational activities globally
- ISS benefits to human health
- Extending health benefits globally
- The ISS and imagery and data for disaster response.

At the conclusion of the two-day Expert Meeting, representatives from the ISS Partners and United Nations organizations as well as experts from around the world can evaluate whether synergies exist and future activities should be considered between the ISS Partners and United Nations organizations.

The expected outcome would be an identification of connections between existing ISS activities and the needs of United Nations organizations with benefit to humanity.

4. Expected Participants

The Expert Meeting is planned for participation by representatives of the ISS Partner Agencies and UN organizations as well as from various professions including experts and professionals in the areas of education, Earth observation and disaster response, and health from the following groups: international, regional, and national institutions, governmental institutions, research and academic institutions, multi-lateral and bi-lateral development agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

5. Language of the Expert Meeting and Presentations by Participants

The working language of the Expert Meeting will be English. Selected participants who are funded by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs may be required to prepare a presentation of approximately 10 to 20 minutes on topics relevant to the Expert Meeting objectives and the programme.

6. Dates and Location of the Expert Meeting

The Expert Meeting will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 11 to 12 June 2012. The venue of the Meeting will be the United Nations Office at Vienna, Vienna International Centre. All selected and invited participants will receive information with details on room and board and other local arrangements.

7. Financial Support

Within the limited financial resources available, a number of selected qualified applicants, who have expressed the need for financial support, will be offered financial support to attend the Expert Meeting. This financial support will defray the cost of travel (a round trip ticket – the most economic fare – between the airport of international departure in their home country and Vienna, Austria) and/or room and board expenses for the duration of the Expert Meeting. Funded participants will receive detailed information upon notification of their selection.

8. Deadline for Submission of Applications

The completed application form, properly endorsed by the applicant's government/institution, should be mailed to:

Office for Outer Space Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
Vienna International Centre
P.O. BOX 500
A-1400 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Fax: (+43-1) 26060-5830
E-mail: unpsa@unoosa.org

and should reach the Office **no later than 6 April 2012.**

To accelerate processing of the application, **the applicant should also email it to unpsa@unoosa.org or fax an advanced copy** directly to the Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna, **fax: (+43-1) 26060-5830**. Only complete applications, with all the requested information and signatures, will be considered.

Online application for the Expert Meeting is also available. We encourage all candidates to apply for the Expert Meeting online, as it helps to streamline processing of applications. The online application form can be accessed at:

<http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/act2012/hsti-vienna/index.html>

9. Life and Health Insurance

Life/major health insurance **is the responsibility of each participant or his/her institution or Government**. The organizer will neither assume any responsibility for life and major health insurance nor for any other expenses related to medical treatment or accidental events.

10. Points of Contact

For information regarding the programme of the Expert Meeting, please contact **Ms. Mika OCHIAI**, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

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For information regarding the submission of nominations for attendance and funding, please contact **Mr. Kurian MANIYANIPURATHU**, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

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11. Additional Information

Updated information on HSTI and the Expert Meeting is available at:

<http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/hsti/index.html>