

Agenda Item 15 - Space Exploration and Innovation
Statement by Kevin Conole
June 26, 2024

Thank you, Chair. Space exploration continues to evolve in today's rapidly changing environment. We are in a new age, where an increasing number of nations across the globe go to the cosmos both to explore farther and gain a better understanding of the universe. Nations see the benefits of going to space – they see the scientific advancements, how their national capabilities can grow, and how space serves as a catalyst to inspire new generations to dream big. Simply put, space is the place, and we are in a golden era.

This golden era of space exploration calls for improved consultation and increased collaboration. To this end, we appreciate this committee and the more than 100 countries and observers coming together to share information. The United States appreciates Romania's leadership in proposing the Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation. If approved at the end of this session, this Action Team will be charged with developing recommendations that will improve information sharing while enhancing transparency and building cooperation among Moon-faring entities.

Chair, 43 countries have now signed the Artemis Accords, which establish a common framework to guide civil space exploration cooperation. The Accords reaffirm our commitment to act in compliance with and implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and other applicable international agreements. At the heart of the Accords are two truths. The first is that space presents challenges that no nation, no matter how determined, can solve alone. Therefore, we do not go alone. We go together. The second truth is

that space is an engine for partnership. Space unites nations like few other things can. Space builds new partnerships and deepens old ones. Despite our differences on Earth, it is easy to find common ground in the stars. As NASA Administrator Nelson likes to say, “diplomacy is good for discovery—and discovery is also good for diplomacy.”

Chair, we are embarking on a historic effort of human space exploration. In low-Earth orbit, NASA is leveraging human spaceflight with commercial and international partners to enable exploration and catalyzing economic development and the advancement of scientific knowledge and new technologies that improve our lives. The James Webb Space Telescope is giving humanity views of our universe that we have never seen before. From the formation of new stars to devouring black holes, this telescope is revealing the universe.

The Artemis Campaign demonstrates our ability to push the boundaries of human achievement. It’s a message to the world. We choose to go back to the Moon – and on to Mars – and we are doing it together. Chair, the successful Artemis I mission set the stage for Artemis II, which will send humans around the Moon and is comprised of a woman and men from NASA and the Canadian Space Agency. Artemis III will return humanity to lunar surface for the first time in more than 50 years while exploring a region near the Moon’s South Pole.

Built upon agreements with the European Space Agency, the Canadian Space Agency, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, and the United Arab Emirates, NASA’s lunar Gateway will be a key component of our exploration architecture and will help make sustainable lunar operations more productive. Together, with international and commercial partners, we will use the Gateway

and the lunar surface to conduct scientific research, develop and demonstrate technology, and train crews to operate further from Earth for longer periods of time.

By working together up there, we not only benefit life down here--but model what life on Earth can be: Nations working together in the spirit of partnership, in the cause of discovery, and in the name of peace.

Thank you, Chair.