

25th SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)  
National policies and regional cooperation (4)

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AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT ACTIVITIES

**Abstract**

Human Spaceflight activities are being conducted for the benefit of Mankind; however, they currently involve only a limited number of space-faring nations.

Human Spaceflight should be a global endeavour involving as many countries as possible, as indicated in the IAA Human Spaceflight Study Group Report presented at the IAA Head of Space Agencies Summit in November 2010. As stated by most of the Heads of space agencies, today's human spaceflight challenge is to find the appropriate way to involve emerging space countries in new cooperation programs.

Africa is the continent where mankind initiated its steps toward the exploration of the Earth. It is therefore logical that future Human Spaceflight Exploration activities beyond the Earth should involve African nations. As widely observed, many nations currently contributing to human spaceflight programs do not have their own access to space transportation, demonstrating that this activity is also within the reach of African countries.

This paper will present specific projects involving African countries in Human Spaceflight. The rationale for embarking in human spaceflight activity for a developing country will be presented such as access to enabling technologies, life science spin-off benefits, medical and biological research boost, building scientific, technical and educational capacities with particular emphasis on medicine, biology and nutrition expertise. National pride and the stimulation of future generations are key driving factors. The goal is to counteract the brain drain by developing new partnerships between Africa and space faring countries; the enlargement of international cooperation is a powerful symbol of hope for the 21st century.