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THE STATUS OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SPACE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE IN 2014

Abstract

The Human Space Technology Initiative (HSTI) was launched in 2010 within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The Initiative aims to involve more countries in activities related to human spaceflight and space exploration and to increase the benefits from the outcome of such activities through international cooperation in order to make space exploration a truly international effort. The activities of HSTI are based on three pillars, namely: International Cooperation - promote international cooperation in human spaceflight and space exploration-related activities; Outreach - create awareness among countries of the benefits of utilizing human space technology and its applications; and Capacity-Building - build capacity in microgravity education and research.

International Cooperation: HSTI has been working with the International Space Station (ISS) partners in order to extend the benefits of the ISS to more people on Earth. In 2014, HSTI organized the United Nations Expert Meeting on the ISS Benefits for Health, which focused on facilitating a dialogue between the ISS partner agencies and the World Health Organization (WHO) to identify potential areas of collaboration where the needs and requirements of the health sector can benefit from space applications and technologies. HSTI is also working with the China Manned Space Agency in order to collaborate in the utilization of the China's Space Station to benefit the world.

Outreach: HSTI organized the United Nations/China Workshop on Human Space Technology in Beijing, China, from 16 to 20 September 2013. The Workshop was a further extension of the United Nations/Malaysia Expert Meeting on Human Space Technology which was held in 2011. In cooperation with the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), the Workshop discussed how to bring non-space faring and emerging countries onto the international stage of human space exploration.

Capacity-Building: HSTI has conducted its capacity-building activities with the support of Member States of the United Nations. Its "Zero-Gravity Instrument Project" (ZGIP) aims to provide students and teachers, particularly in developing countries, the opportunity to study gravitational effects on samples such as plant seeds in a simulated microgravity condition. A fixed number of microgravity-simulating instruments, called Clinostats, have been distributed to selected schools and institutions worldwide.

HSTI will continue to be an advocate to raise the awareness of Member States and the general public about the importance of human space exploration and its societal benefits. This paper reports the latest developments of the HSTI activities and perspective beyond 2014.