

Lunar Exploration (2)
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"THE ILD: A FRAMEWORK FOR A RULES-BASED ORDER FOR THE EMERGING SPACE
RESOURCES-BASED ECONOMY"

Abstract

The International Lunar Decade (ILD) is proposed as a framework for international cooperation in lunar exploration and development from 2021-2030. ILD is inspired by the International Geophysical Year (IGY - 1957-8) when 66 countries and tens of thousands of scientists cooperated to understand planet Earth as a whole. Satellites were launched by the USSR, and the U.S. marking the dawn of the space age. Discovery of the Van Allen belts and knowledge and capabilities across many fields gained thru IGY led to the technologies that undergird the modern economy that depend on satellites for global communications, positioning and navigation, and Earth observation. IGY fostered international cooperation that has enabled global challenges like climate change to be understood and strategies framed to enable global action to mitigate climate change and other emerging global threats. As with IGY the ILD global initiative will be coordinated by a small secretariat established by the UN. Countries, international organizations such as COSPAR, NGOs, universities, cities and regions, and private firms will propose and manage projects with knowledge coordination thru the ILD secretariat and knowledge sharing thru numerous mechanisms many with a legacy to IGY. In the coming decades the ILD as a framework for development of a rules-based order can have an impact comparable to the future creating transformational impact of IGY. A rules-based order is necessary for sustainable development. A rules-based order enables effective conflict resolution. Poor conflict resolution leads to the development of weapons, fielding of militaries, hostilities and war – the most wasteful, costly and destructive human activity. ILD is intended to open opportunities for small and developing countries to take part in creating the space-resources economy building upon the lunar exploration activities initiated by the U.S. and larger spacefaring powers including Russia, China, ESA, India, Japan, and others that are already actively involved in lunar exploration. A rules-based order enables shared infrastructures and international financing mechanisms that enable infrastructure financing and the cooperation that enables knowledge sharing and that can accelerate adoption of innovations. The ILD enables the rules-based order in outer space that opens the possibility for sustainable development for centuries to come while strengthening the international cooperation necessary to avert global catastrophe in the decade ahead. ILD provides a framework to enable a rules-based order necessary for success in meeting UN Space 2030 goals. The specific goal of ILD is to achieve sustainable presence on the Moon by 2030.