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SOCIAL USE OF THE ISS WITH LARGE-SCALE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Abstract

This report introduces an unprecedented scale of citizen-participated project named "TOHOKU Reconstruction Space Mission 2021". Primary purpose of this project was to express gratitude for the support received from all over the world after Great East Japan Earthquake (March 11, 2011) that caused historic damage to Japan. The most effective way to send a message to the world was to use the International Space Station as a broadcaster and appoint an astronaut as an announcer. Astronaut Naoko Yamazaki had called for participation in the areas affected by the disaster. As a result, tens of thousands of civilians participated and became "Member of the Space Mission". The One Earth Foundation raised funds from the government and the private sectors and carried out technical works with the cooperation of JAXA. Numerous imageries of 10 years reconstruction efforts were printed on a thin silk cloth, and sewn together by elementary school students to make a "Reconstruction Space Banner" with a length of 7 meters. This was launched to the ISS and exhibited in Japanese Experiment Module "Kibo". In addition, "Words of gratitude to the world" had been collected and Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi read this in front of the Space Banner deployed in the ISS/Kibo. The video had been sent to the world on March 11, 2021, through internet (available on YouTube). Furthermore, for continuing reconstruction in the future, people in affected areas had defined various "Reconstruction Memorabilia". These memorabilia had been launched to the ISS, stowed for a month, and returned to each area. In many cases, seeds of flowers or vegetables were selected as memorabilia, and children participated in preparatory work to go to space, such as collecting flower seeds. In this way, space memorabilia such as rice, onions, buckwheat, sunflowers, lilies, and cherry blossoms were born. Fukushima Prefecture made "Space SAKE" from yeast that flew in this mission. (Effects of space flight are unknown. You have no choice but to drink and check!) Participants realized that they became members of the space project and got a unique perspective on our planet. They will surely aim to play an active role in the future of the earth. This project not only contributes to the reconstruction from disaster but is also attracting attention as an example of a new approach of space utilization with citizen participation and asks the world about the social value of the ISS.