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Author: Mr. Kofoworola Faleti
SpaceWatch Global, Nigeria

Mr. Mustapha Iderawumi
Nigeria

INVESTIGATING THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND LEGAL REASONS BEHIND CHOICES OF
AFRICAN NATIONS TOWARDS ARTEMIS OR ILRS

Abstract

The Artemis Accords and the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) are shaping up to be at the forefront of the Lunar Race between the United States and a partnership between China and Russia. Both lunar programs have become separate subjects of diplomatic collaborations as other countries interested in harnessing lunar resources line up behind either the Artemis Accords or the ILRS to maximise their respective lunar exploitation abilities.

African countries, absent in the first space race edition, are now keenly interested in lunar resources and at least 5 countries of the 20-something African countries with an active space program, have joined either the Artemis Accords or the ILRS. South Africa and Egypt have both signed for the ILRS while Nigeria, Rwanda, and Angola have gone with the US-led Artemis Accords.

As a result, this paper will look to explore the social, political and legal motivations behind what side of the world the 5 African countries have chosen to pitch their lunar tent. In doing so, the paper will analyse trends in the countries' activities in the space industry, including space project partners, alignment with mission objectives of either program, and any other phenomenon that may explain the motivations of the African countries with respect to either the Artemis Accords or the International Lunar Research Station.

Analysing these five nations will help identify commonalities among them based on their choice between Artemis and ILRS. By extrapolating these findings, we can better understand other countries' potential involvement in lunar programs, particularly those with similarities to the five nations under examination. This analysis will serve as a foundational tool for further estimating Africa's engagement in space exploration.