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Space science plays key role in achieving sustainable development – UN



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United Nations officials today highlighted the contribution of human space science and technology in achieving sustainable development, and called on countries to work together in this area to foster international partnerships and innovations.

“Through the years, space science and technology have helped us confront very down-to-earth problems, producing solutions that are transforming our approach to climate change, food

security, global health, humanitarian assistance and more,” [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said in a [message](#) marking the [International Day of Human Space Flight](#).

The Day, which is only in its second year of observance, commemorates the first human space flight on 12 April 1961, when Russian astronaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to go to space.

“With the involvement of a growing number of countries, the exploration of outer space is now a truly global undertaking,” Mr. Ban said, adding that discoveries made through space science can benefit all on Earth if they are used for peaceful purposes.

To commemorate the Day, astronauts, space scientists and creative writers met at UN Headquarters in New York and held a series of panels attended by young people to discuss ways in which space exploration can help address issues on Earth.

Speakers included NASA Administrator Charles Bolden; the head of the Cosmonaut Training Centre in Moscow, Russia, Sergey Krikalev; and senior astrophysicist at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, United States, Mario Livio.

“Space and technology are integral for advancing our sustainable development goals and increasing the well-being and quality of people’s lives,” the President of the General Assembly, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, said in his remarks to the panellists, delivered on his behalf by his Chief of Staff, Mutlaq Al-Qahtani.

He also stressed that the innovations and breakthroughs provided by space exploration can help promote understanding of climate variability, water, energy and carbon cycles, and ecosystems, among other issues.

The event, which was organized by the UN Academic Impact (UNAI), also featured a musical performance by Beth Nielsen Chapman, who played songs intended to familiarize students with the wonders of space research.

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