



60 YEARS of Human Spaceflight



UNITED NATIONS
Office for Outer Space Affairs



International Day of Human Spaceflight

It was on 12 April 1961 that Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen, carried out the first human space flight, an historic event paving the way for space exploration for the benefit of all humanity.

In 2011, the General Assembly, recognising the 50th anniversary of the first ever human spaceflight, declared **12 April as the International Day of Human Space Flight.**

The resolution, A/RES/65/271 of 7 April 2011, called it a day "to **celebrate** each year at the international level **the beginning of the space era for mankind**, reaffirming the important contribution of space science and technology in achieving sustainable development goals and increasing the well-being of States and peoples, as well as ensuring the realization of their aspiration to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes."



International Day of Human Spaceflight

In 2021, the international space community celebrated the 60th anniversary of Gagarin's historic flight and the 10th edition of the International Day of Human Spaceflight.

To commemorate these historic occasions, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs collected reflections of past, current and future astronauts about the meaning of human spaceflight and where humanity might see itself in decades to come.

Twenty-nine outstanding individuals representing dozens of countries had come together to share their messages with the world.



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Brazil

- Marcos PONTES

Canada

- Jeremy HANSEN
- Jenni SIDEY-GIBBON

China

- WANG Yapin
- YANG Liwei

France

- Jean-François CLERVOY

Germany

- Thomas REITER
- Ulrich WALTER

India

- Rakesh SHARMA

Israel

- Ilan RAMON

Italy

- Samantha CRISTOFORETTI

Japan

- DOI Takao
- WAKATA Koichi

Kazakhstan

- Talgat MUSABAYEV

Malaysia

- Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor
AL MASRIE BIN SHEIKH
MUSTAPHA

Republic of Korea

- Yi SO-YEON

Romania

- Dumitru-Dorin PRUNARIU

Russian Federation

- Konstantin BORISOV
- Alexander GORBUNOV
- Anna KIKINA
- Sergei MIKAEV
- Sergei REVIN
- Alexey ZUBRITSKY

Ukraine

- Leonid KADENYUK

United Arab Emirates

- Hazza Al MANSOORI

United States of America

- Kayla BARRON
- Drew MORGAN
- Suni WILLIAMS
- Reid WISEMAN



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Office for Outer Space Affairs

“

Gagarin's first words from space –
I feel well – made us understand that humans
could truly go beyond our Earth, an
achievement that humanity dreamt of for
millennia and that was finally ours.

**That day, people all over the world marveled
at how far our species had come.**

”

Simonetta Di Pippo

Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs

“

It is my immense pleasure to take part in the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the International Day of Human Space Flight. Since time immemorial, **we have always looked up to the sky for inspiration.** The first space flight transformed space exploration by pushing the envelope to investigate ever further into the vast reaches of the universe.

Human space flight and exploration has in turn provided answers to some fundamental questions about the origins of the Earth and humanity's place in the universe. **I am hopeful** that, over the next 60 years, together, **we will make even more incredible discoveries as we push the limits of space and of our minds.**

As the first Emirati astronaut, I believe the future of the space industry is bright, as we are witnessing a quantum leap in space travel, with multiple entities contributing massively to spaceflight capabilities alongside government space agencies. I sincerely believe the future will be a collaborative space, and such solidarity is what will further enhance the **use of space for peace, hope, and a better tomorrow.**

”

Hazza AL MANSOORI
First UAE astronaut, MBRSC





“

Being in space makes me realise how tiny and small the Earth is surrounded by millions of galaxies, how insignificant we truly are. My focus since coming back to Earth is on bigger issues like war, climate change, women sufferings, education for children and many more.

The objective of sending a Malaysian to Space is to **inspire our future generation** to become doctors, scientists and engineers, promoting STEM and inspiring them. Proud to be part of the celebration of 60 years of human space flight. May it bring **peace and collaboration on making Earth a better place for humankind.**

”

Dato' Dr. Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor
AL MASRIE BIN SHEIKH MUSTAPHA
First Malaysian astronaut



“

I've always pursued opportunities to work on **mission-driven teams in challenging environments.**

When I discovered the parallels between working on a submarine and in space, and met the incredible team at NASA, **I knew I wanted to be a part of it if I could.**

”

Kayla BARRON

NASA astronaut





“

The main inspiration for me is the motivation to develop yourself as a professional to the level sufficient for long-term space expeditions.

The required level of knowledge, stamina, psychology, skills one has to develop brings you to a profession where you **learn something new every day**. And every day you are becoming one step closer, stronger and more capable of working and living in space.

This path inspires me greatly, and the understanding that, one day, you will spend days, weeks and months flying weightlessly inside the space station, **observing the most exciting scenery of our planet that one can imagine**.

”

Konstantin BORISOV

Roscosmos test-cosmonaut



“

Yuri Gagarin first words in space “I feel well” and “the view is beautiful” fostered the future of space exploration. From high above, we see Earth as a natural spaceship. We should manage it as such, by **saving resources and recycling waste** so we can go further.

Gagarin opened the doors of one of the most exciting human adventures. **Space exploration is a noble quest**, contributing to increase knowledge and thereby humankind wellbeing and wisdom, allowing us to travel far into the future on board Spaceship Earth.

”

Jean-François CLERVOY

*French engineer and former
CNES, ESA and NASA astronaut*



“

During my first spaceflight I recorded a message of well-wishes for Yuri's Night and the International Day of Human Spaceflight and I thought of the many people who would be celebrating all over the world.

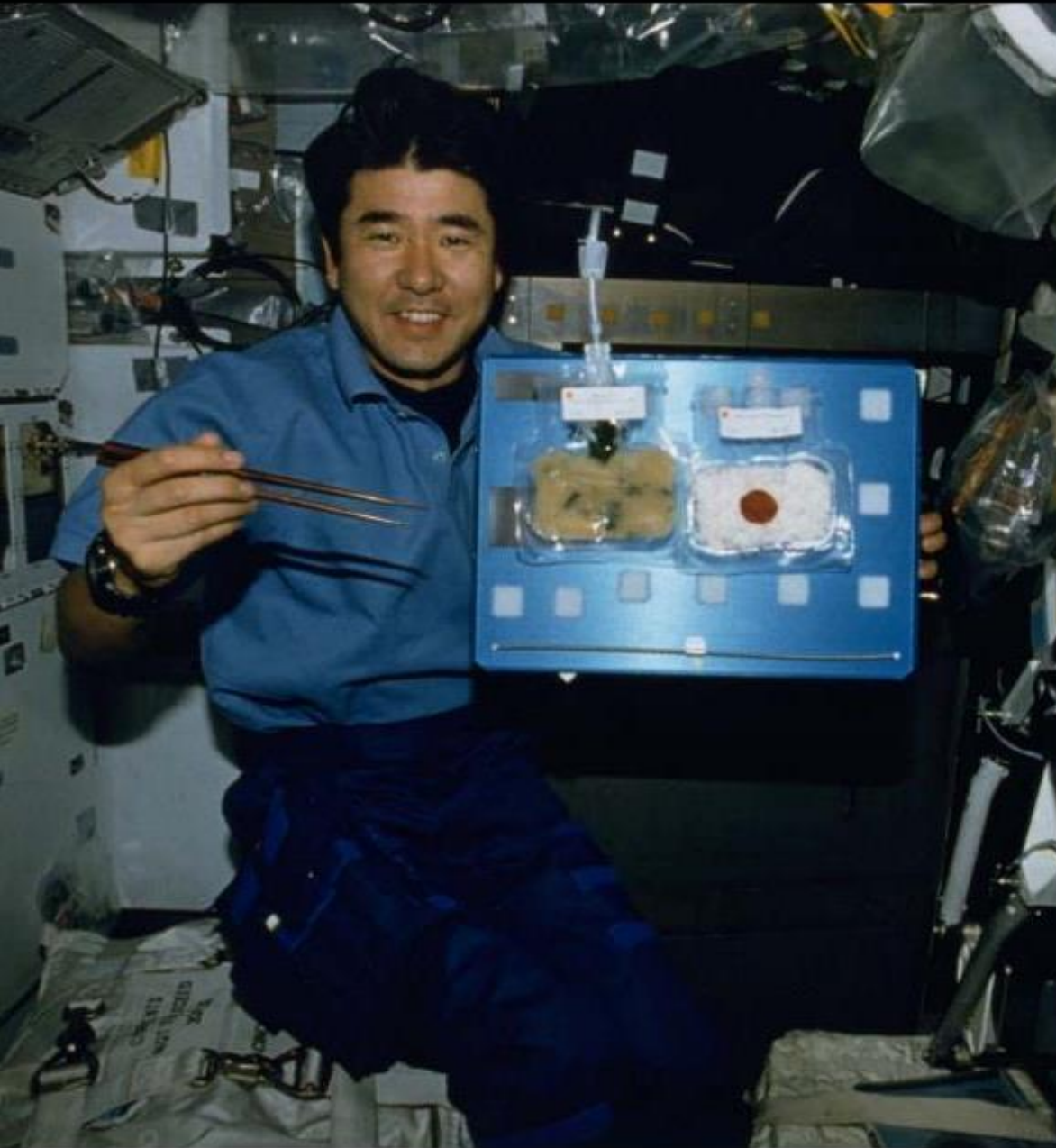
Space exploration truly speaks the the most noble part of the human spirit!

”

Samantha CRISTOFORETTI

ESA astronaut





“

Congratulations on the 60th Anniversary of Human Spaceflight! **Space is the future of the human race.**

We will expand into space and build societies there just like our ancestors did when they expanded over the Earth after leaving the forests in Africa five million years ago!

”

DOI Takao

JAXA Astronaut and former Chief of UNOOSA Space Applications Section



“

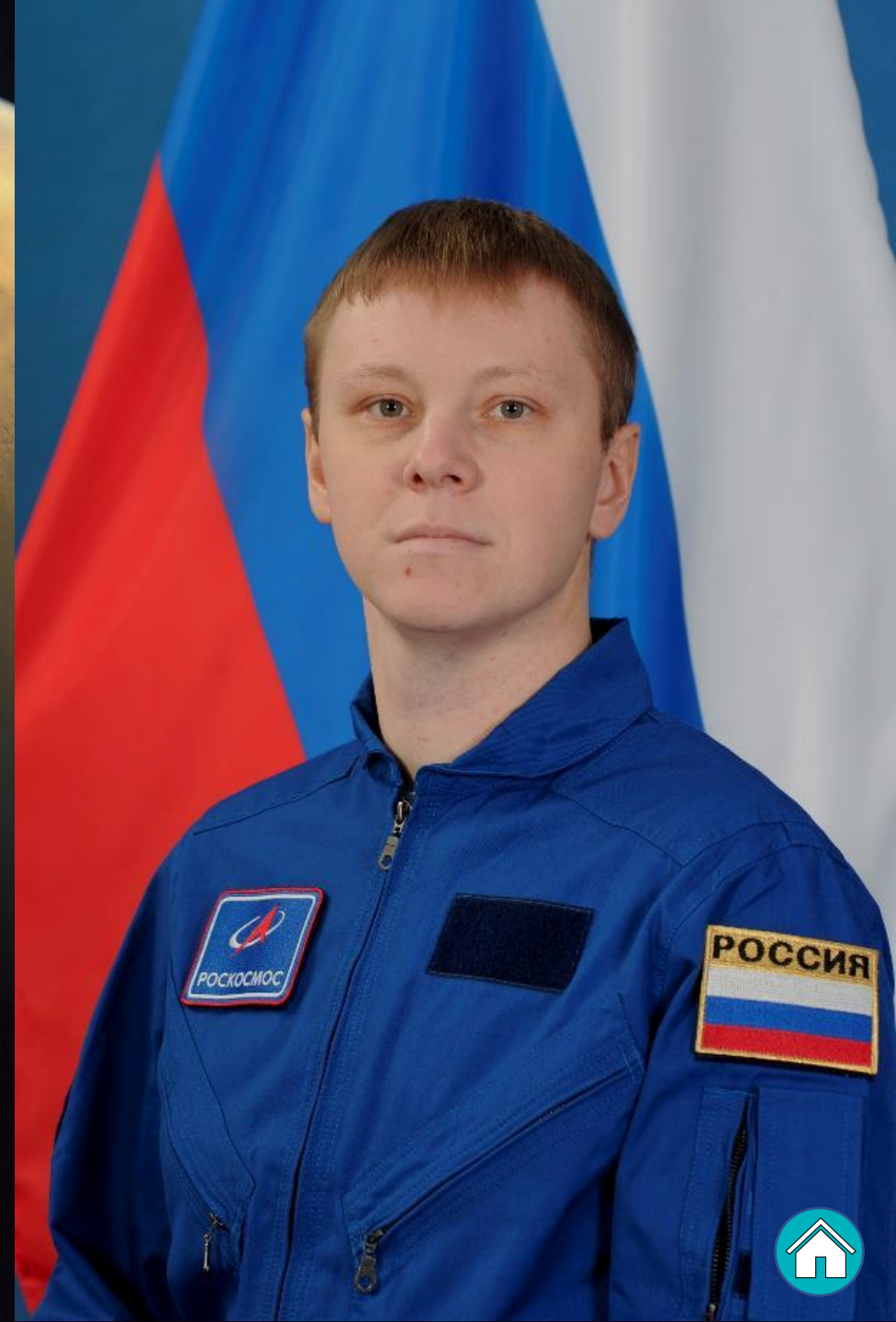
In the next 60 years of human spaceflight, **many space stations** will orbit the Earth, including private ones.

Production of semiconductors and other materials will be organized in space factories. **International crews** will conduct scientific research at stations **on the Moon and Mars.**

”

Alexander GORBUNOV

Roscosmos test cosmonaut





“

At a young age, I looked at photographs of Neil Armstrong standing on the Moon, and **I wanted to see what it would be like to leave this planet**, to look at it from beyond.

”

Jeremy HANSEN

Canadian Space Agency astronaut



“

Space is not an endless void as it may seem to some at first glance.

It is **full of unique information**, some of which we are not even aware of but nevertheless are in a great need of.

New knowledge will generate new questions, and this process is endless.

”

Leonid KADENYUK

*First astronaut of independent
Ukraine to fly to space*





“

Dear young people, if you have chosen to follow a path in the space industry; if you are really inspired by this work and enjoy it; if you really feel part of a powerful, non-stop machine; in this case, you chose well!

Each one of you has a very important role to play in the development of space! Much success to you all!

”

Anna KIKINA

Roscosmos test-cosmonaut



“

Forget what you ever knew about space, if you want to become an astronaut you have to **dedicate your whole self**, speak with **one voice** with the people who will train you, devote all your time to **learning new disciplines**, take care of your **health** like never before, and **wait for your chance** at the long-awaited flight into space.

”

Sergei MIKAEV

Roscosmos test cosmonaut





“

Seeing Earth from space gives us perspective on the “big picture” and the problems humanity faces equally, **without geopolitical boundaries.**

The **International Space Station** is an example of **how we can work together** to achieve the impossible and solve the toughest problems.

”

Drew MORGAN
NASA astronaut



“

I went into space as one person and returned another. **There is nothing more touching than the view of our Earth from space.** This blue planet impresses with its vibrant warmth and light.

Being in orbit, you cannot help but feel like an earthling, because from space you cannot see state borders. **When I returned to the ground, I walked around and watched my step so as not to crush even an ant.**

”

Talgat MUSABAYEV

Pilot and Astronaut of Kazakhstan



“

It is a pleasure for me to participate in the celebration of 60 years of human space flight. The remarkable day the first man was sent to outer space changed its exploration forever and opened a **great window of opportunity** for humankind to seek and conquest the unknown.

As a former astronaut, I hope that, in **the next 60 years**, humankind makes history again sending many men and women alike to deep space, **reaching new frontiers, fostering science and technology and supporting youth** worldwide to pursue STEM careers through equal opportunities.

”

Marcos PONTES

*Former astronaut, Minister of Science,
Technology and Innovation of Brazil*





“

Yuri Gagarin opened the way for humanity to the cosmos. On 12 April 1961, **he first saw the planet as a unitary whole, in its entirety**. He was no longer just a Soviet citizen ahead in the space race between global superpowers, but **became** a symbol of planet Earth, **a messenger of humanity** that needs strong, positive symbols to understand the globality of Earth's problems and the need to address them together.

Gagarin became a citizen of the entire Earth, and his image is forever imprinted in any human spaceflight activity, regardless of who performs it and of political relations between states.

”

Dumitru-Dorin PRUNARIU
First Romanian cosmonaut



“

From our vantage point up here in space, while we are orbiting Earth; we look at all of you before us and see a **borderless world of peace and splendour.**

Our heartfelt prayer is that humanity in its entirety will imagine the world as it appears to us, without borders; and will **aspire to live together in peace.**

”

Ilan RAMON

First Israeli astronaut





“

60 years of spaceflight have helped to create remarkably overwhelming and inspiring views of our **planet**, to advance our **knowledge**, and to improve our **day-to day life**.

Earth looks so beautiful from above, and we can only hope that reality down here will match this harmonic, manifold and peaceful appearance in a not too far future.

When we look down on spaceship Earth it becomes inevitable that the real **big challenges can only be solved, if we all pull together.**

”

Thomas REITER

ESA astronaut



“

When you see Earth from the International Space Station, you realise that **there is a family on Earth; friends, people living and a unique ecosystem.** And, when you look in the opposite direction, beyond the Earth, you see stars that are infinitely distant. And, if there is life on other planets, that too is infinitely distant.

Then you also realise that our civilisation on Earth is both unique and alone. Alone in the infinity of the cosmos. That's why **we have to protect our planet and its unique ecosystem.**

”

Sergei REVIN

Roscosmos cosmonaut



“

From space, I saw forests being burnt and toxic effluents discharge into oceans.

I dream of a future when the **sustainable exploration and use** of space will be done for the greater good of humankind, not by Americans, Russians, Chinese, or Indians but **by and for the people of Earth.**

”

Rakesh SHARMA

First Indian in space





“

I wanted to become an astronaut because it provides an **incredible challenge**.

It aligns with my interest in the advancement and **application of science for the benefit of society**.

”

Jenni SIDEY-GIBBON

Canadian Space Agency astronaut



“

Our beautiful planet, Earth, is the greatest gift for us.

I believe that we have an obligation to share it fairly with everyone, to preserve it to the best of our ability, and to hand it over to the next generation in as good a condition as when received.

”

Yi SO-YEON

*First astronaut from the
Republic of Korea*



“

It is my pleasure to join the celebration the 60th anniversary of the International Day of Human Space Flight. This year also marks 21 years of continuous human presence on the International Space Station.

The history of space exploration has shown us **what humanity can accomplish by working together** with a truly global perspective, acquiring new knowledge and technology that benefit all of us on Earth, as well as extending the human frontier in space.

With the rise of the global pandemic, we recognize more than ever that humanity is a collective unit. The **united effort in space sets an example for how we can live together on our precious home planet** since we all are crew members of this Spaceship Earth.

”

WAKATA Koichi

*JAXA Senior Advisor and
astronaut*





“

It is a **privilege to have lived on earth when humanity first left it** and to have participated in spaceflight.

And there is already **someone among us today whose footprint will remain on the Martian soil.**

I am excited about the day when this will happen.

”

Ulrich WALTER

*Professor of astronautics and
former German astronaut*



“

When I am in space,
I look back,
and I see our earth,
unique, lonely and fabulous
in the endless dark.
I look around,
and I see the universe,
unique, deep and marvellous
with tiny starry spark.
From the 'known' to the
'unknown',
we explore.
Up to space,
to fill the gap.
When I'm in space,
I try many ways
to show our children
the magical scenes

WANG Yapin

China Manned Space Agency astronaut

Up above the world so high.
They are wondering about the
sights we find,
which fill their minds with
wonder.
From the “wondering” to the
“wonder”,
we discover.
Up to space,
to fill the gap.
When I come to the Astronautical
Congress,
we share the space experience,
celebrate the spirit of every
explorer,
and promote the community
spirit in the space sector.



From astronaut to
taikonaut,
from atmospheric pollution
to space junk,
We connect,
Up to space,
to fill the gap.

As the explorer,
to be the pioneer,
we train, we try, we fly,
for our shared future.
Spaceship by
spaceship,
Shoulder by shoulder.

”





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We've come a long way since the first human space flight, and we've really only just begun.

We have a lot to look forward to in the next 60 years. We'll be back on the Moon – this time to stay. Missions to Mars are on the horizon as well.

”

Suni WILLIAMS

NASA astronaut





“

A favorite part of spending 165 days off-planet was the **global cooperation that makes the International Space Station a success every day**. It couldn't be possible without international partners. These world-wide collaborations are critical as we press to the Moon and Mars...

...Teary goodbye to family, excitement at lift-off, oddness and joy of weightlessness, science, spacewalks, camaraderie, re-entering Earth's atmosphere, ball of fire, brutal weight of gravity, teary return to family. **The view of Earth... always unbelievable beauty.**

”

Reid WISEMAN

NASA astronaut



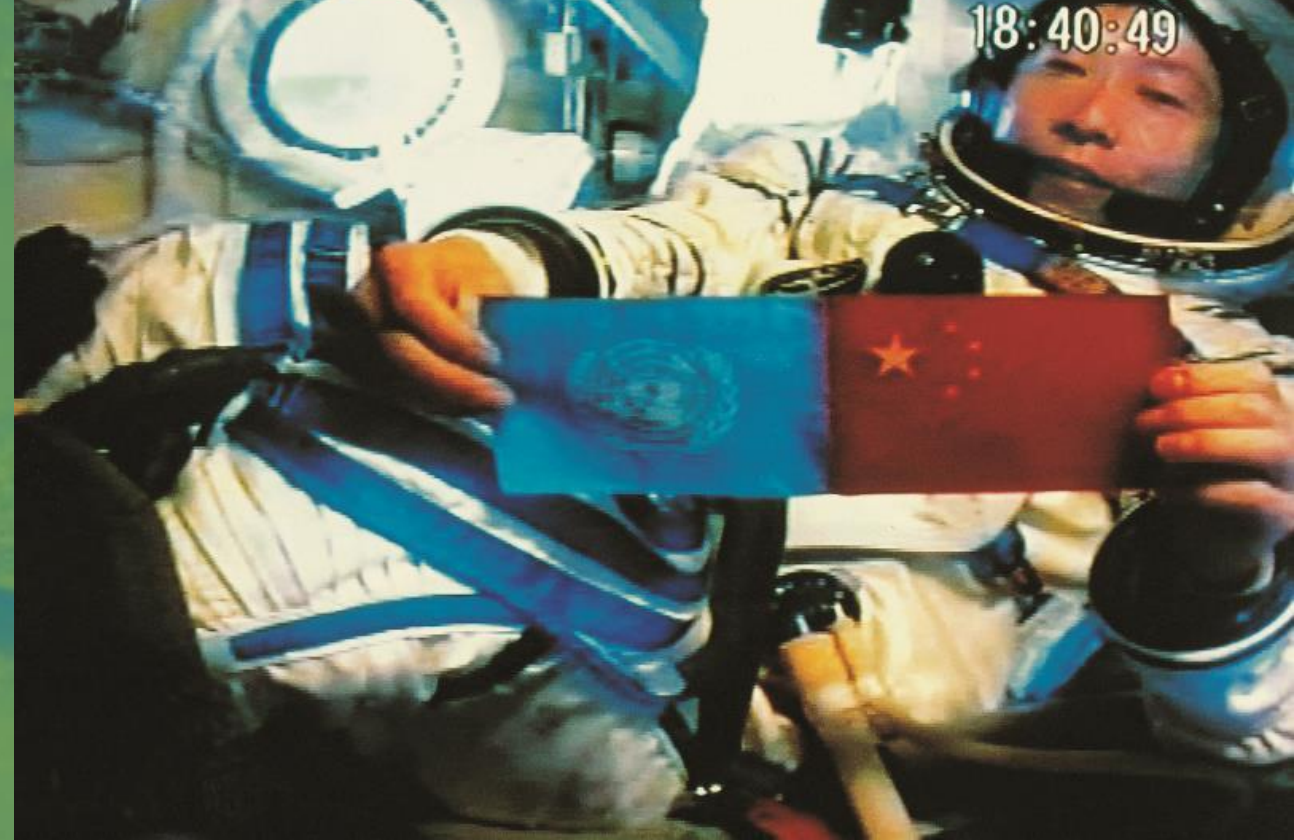
“

Human space flight is a noble cause for humankind to explore the unknown. 60 years ago, with extraordinary courage and strong will, Gagarin flew into space and opened up this infinite exploration. As China's first astronaut in space, I was fortunate to experience the incredible moments when the Chinese nation realized its long-held dream of flying in space.

Facing the vast universe alone in space, I felt the **insignificance of the individual**, the **inclusiveness** of the earth, and the **great power** of humankind to explore the unknown together. Back on earth, the great joy of my compatriots for the success of the maiden flight gave me a profound, rational and comprehensive understanding of this noble venture.

YANG Liwei

China's First astronaut in space, Deputy Chief Designer of China Manned Space Program



In the future, China Manned Space will continue adhering to the tenet of “peaceful use of outer space to benefit all mankind”, seeking common development through **cooperation**, and marching towards the far-reaching starry space **together with all people around the world!**

”





“

I suppose that, at the current pace of space technology development, in 60 years there will be several **inhabited stations on** the surface of **the Moon**, perhaps even a **space city**, as well as an inhabited **station on** the surface of **Mars**.

The **orbital constellation will increase several times**, both manned and unmanned. Unmanned ships will be able to reach other star clusters and possibly find habitable worlds.

”

Alexey ZUBRITSKY

Roscosmos test-cosmonaut

