Space is a global pursuit, say experts

Declaration of co-operation between countries in focusing on human survival

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The need for co-operation had never been greater, and there were "great opportunities" to confront the problems facing humankind.

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Responding to a delegate who suggested a manned Mars mission could be done significantly more cheaply if the crew were reduced from the suggested six, Suppessa said it was important to consider what he termed "missing stones" - current unaccounted problems.

These included the survival of the crew, because with current technology it would take eight months to get to Mars, and a similar time to get back. But the longest that astronauts had stayed in space until now, in the International Space Station, was just six months.

"At the moment, this amount of time (to Mars) is not acceptable," he said.

Another "missing stone" was how to protect astronauts from cosmic rays once they left the protection of Earth's atmosphere, he said.

Security for humankind. Such security was not military-related, but was for planetary defense from threats such as droughts and floods, cosmic threats in the form of space weather, and possible asteroid collisions, he explained.

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