

The International Space Authority and its Role in Lunar Exploration

Lewis Pinault, University of Hawaii, USA

In July 1999 the author presented recommendations for the establishment of an International Space Authority to the Space Generation Forum of the Third Conference on The Peaceful Uses and Exploration of Outer Space. These recommendations were among the final 10 that were selected for incorporation into the official Conference report. Since that time, the author has worked with Conference attendees and faculty of the International Space University to expand and develop the ideas presented, focusing specifically on issues of governance for space settlements on the Moon and Mars.

The International Space Authority is proposed to 1) mediate priorities for competing interests in space exploration and development; 2) provide for equitable use and access to the resources and knowledge benefits gained from these activities; and 3) provide a vehicle for pooling centralised funds and resources for united efforts in these areas.

This paper will specifically address how the International Space Authority can fulfil regulatory functions mandated by the Moon Treaty, in a way that is likely to both greatly broaden accession to the Treaty by current space powers, and strongly validate its role and importance for non-space powers. In essence, this involves a controlled but real role for the private sector in lunar exploration and development, but in the context of equitable regulations and agreements for managing competing priorities.

This paper will develop in some detail how the Moon itself is a natural priority for space exploration and development, requiring and benefiting from the structure and activities of the International Space Authority. The Moon, it will be argued, is of more importance to the immediate future needs and interests of the world as a whole, and provides a far more workable platform for global involvement and benefits, including practicable private-sector investment, than any other large-scale efforts in space, be it Mars or Earth-orbiting stations.