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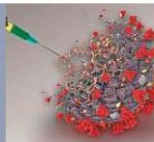
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## Nasa chief hails UAE's peaceful space programme

Nelson highlights nation's efforts to keep safety paramount

**ABU DHABI**

**BY SAMIAH ZAMAN**  
Senior Reporter

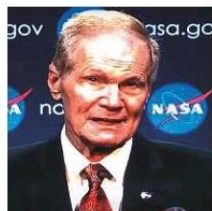
Nasa chief Bill Nelson has dubbed the UAE a leader in the peaceful and safe exploration of outer space, and expressed his eagerness to include the first Emirati astronaut as a long-term crew member to the International Space Station (ISS) next year.

Speaking in a video address at the Abu Dhabi Space Debate, Nelson explained that the US developed a law in 2010 to chart out the future direction of Nasa, with one path focused on space exploration, and another creating a commercial programme for the private space sector.

"We have launched 22 astronauts to the ISS as part of this commercial crew programme. Our next launch — Crew 6 — will include the UAE's first long-duration crew member to the ISS. Sultan Al Neyadi will join the crew. This is an exciting time for commercial space, and we look forward to Al Neyadi's mission," Nelson told the Abu Dhabi conference.

Al Neyadi will become the second Emirati astronaut to go to space after Hazza Al Mansouri travelled to the ISS aboard a Russian spacecraft.

Al Neyadi's mission is expected to extend for six months and will be carried out by Nasa and Axiom Space. Mohammad



**Our next launch — Crew 6 — will include the UAE's first long-duration crew member to the ISS. Sultan Al Neyadi will join the crew. This is an exciting time for commercial space, and we look forward to Al Neyadi's mission."**

**Bill Nelson**  
Nasa Chief

Bin Rashid Space Centre has signed a strategic spaceflight cooperation with the two.

Nelson's remarks highlighted the timeliness of the forum in light of its work on the Artemis missions, which aim to explore more of the lunar surface in a bid to eventually send the first astronauts to Mars.

Nasa has already launched the Space Launch System for its Artemis I mission, which Nelson called the "most powerful rocket ever", carrying the Orion Spacecraft. The Orion

has made its first trip past the moon, and Nelson said this lunar mission will be followed by the Emirates Lunar Mission, which aims to land the Rashid Rover on the moon.

Salem Al Qubaisi, director general of the UAE Space Agency, echoed the call for international collaboration during a panel session. "With bilateral or multilateral cooperation, you don't need to reinvent the wheel. The good thing about the space sector is that it is inclusive. You can cooperate and still serve the national interest."

**Major strides**

The UAE is currently one of only six countries globally to launch a successful Mars orbiter. In total, it has launched 19 orbital satellites till date, with more than 10 new spacecraft under development.

Nelson was joined on the panel by Christian Hauglie-Hanssen, director general of the Norwegian Space Agency, Richard Conde, president of the Portugal Space Agency, Dr Joel Marciano Jr, director general of the Philippine Space Agency, Dr Aleksandra Bukala, director of the Polish Space Agency's department of strategy and international cooperation, and Dr Mohammad Al Aseeri, chief executive officer of the Bahraini National Space Science Agency.

The Abu Dhabi Space Debate aims to enhance communication between space nations and private sector players in the space industry. Its organisation represents the UAE's growing space capabilities.

**COLLABORATION**

**UAE to set up global climate observatory with France**

**ABU DHABI**

**BY SAMIAH ZAMAN**  
Senior Reporter

The UAE has signed two major cooperation agreements on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Space Debate, with one establishing a new global centre with France to address climate change and another enhancing space cooperation with the Philippines.

The Space for Climate Observatory, established under a charter between the UAE Space Agency and French space agency, the Centre National d'Etudes spatiales (CNES), will bring together entities involved in Earth observation, and increase the efficiency of applications for sustainable and successful climate action at the local and global levels. In doing so, it will support global climate action, and develop the capacity to study, track, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The charter for the new observatory was signed by Ibrahim Al Qassim, deputy director general of the UAE Space Agency, and Lionel Suchet, chief operating officer at CNES.

In addition to organising climate action exchange of tools and experiences, the centre will regulate access to actors in the space sector in order to promote cooperation between space agencies.

The UAE houses more than 50 global and emerging space companies, institutions and facilities, as well as five research centers for space sciences, and three universities with dedicated space programme. At present, more than 3,000 workers, engineers and experts are actively involved in the country's space sector.

"The launch of the Space for Climate Observatory comes as part of the UAE's endeavour to find effective solutions to climate challenges," Al Qassim said.

"Space is a good place to contribute to the challenges related to climate change, which is a long-term process and it is good to have a set of extremely accurate data over a long period that contributes to providing scientific centres with information to help them cope with the problems caused by climate change," Suchet observed.