

PRESS RELEASE

UN-declared World Space Week celebrates its 15th anniversary

Houston, 15 September 2014 – World Space Week 2014 marks the 15th anniversary of the declaration of this special week by the United Nations in 1999. Starting with only a handful of events in the early days, World Space Week has now grown into the largest public space event on Earth. Last year over 1,400 events were organized in 80 countries on all continents, including Antarctica, and popularity is still growing.

World Space Week is held every year from 4 to 10 October. These dates commemorate the launch of Sputnik I on 4 October 1957, and the entering into force of the UN Outer Space Treaty on 10 October 1967. The objective of World Space Week as declared in 1999 is to “increase awareness among decision makers and civil society of the benefits of the peaceful uses of space science and technology for sustainable development”. It is to be a “yearly celebration at the international level of the contribution that space science and technology can make to the betterment of the human condition”.

Every year World Space Week has a different theme, highlighting a specific angle of space science. With its newest theme “Space: Guiding Your Way” World Space Week will focus on the benefits of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) in 2014. The GPS system has changed the way in which we navigate our planet. GPS navigation systems help us locate planes, ships, cars, trains and people, but also helps us improve agriculture and disaster management. During this decade we see new additions to the American GPS system, with European Galileo, Russian Glonass and Chinese Beidou satellite systems entering into service. This development will rapidly increase the accuracy and scope of positioning and timing applications over the next years. With this theme, World Space Week hopes to improve knowledge of this clear benefit of space technology for the betterment of humankind.

World Space Week events are held all over the world, in schools, universities, science centers, planetariums, museums, companies and many other places. These are organized by local volunteers, supported by a large network of global, national and local coordinators. Anyone is free to organize a World Space Week event and add it to our calendar. You can see the full calendar of planned events on the World Space Week website: www.worldspaceweek.org

World Space Week is facilitated by the World Space Week Association (WSWA), a registered charity, run completely by volunteers. WSWA has permanent observer status at the United Nations Committee On the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, where the results of global World Space Week celebrations are shared with all member states and organizations.

Notes for editors:

- Please contact WSWA Executive Director Remco Timmermans for more information: rtimmermans@worldspaceweek.org
- You may find images and logos at www.worldspaceweek.org, under ‘media’
- All information about World Space Week, its directors and board members, as well as history of themes and other support information, can be found at www.worldspaceweek.org
- You can follow World Space Week on Twitter (@WorldSpaceWeek) and Facebook