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International space cooperation NASA presents its space exploration programme at CNES Head Office

Tuesday 26 April, three top NASA officials were at CNES's Head Office in Paris, where they gave an interactive presentation on the U.S. space agency's Journey to Mars programme. The presentation set out the milestones on the path to launching crewed and robotic missions to the Red Planet, which will involve proving the new technologies required and federating the international space community around these goals.

The Journey to Mars is an increasingly recurring theme within the wider space community and space agencies, as well as for the public, fuelled by the many announcements about long-duration missions to the Red Planet. NASA Administrator Charles Bolden regularly communicates on this topic and three of the agency's top officials have been tasked with explaining to Europe's space agencies how it envisions the next phase of this journey and the stepping stones to get there.

The three officials from NASA were therefore at CNES today to give a presentation to Head Office employees in the Salle de l'Espace: Chief Scientist Dr Ellen R. Stofan, Chief Technologist Dr David Miller and Steve Jurczyk, Associate Administrator of the Space Technology Mission Directorate, charted the steps that will be required to reach the agency's stated goal of getting to Mars, which will call for maturing advanced technologies through a multinational partnership.

Dr Stofan underlined the science value and opportunities offered by the Journey to Mars, now seen as the post-ISS phase of space exploration. She also outlined possible short-term steps on the ISS, geared to helping NASA and key European agencies converge their crewed space exploration plans. Through these presentations, which its team will also be giving to ESA and DLR, NASA is looking above all to reach out to its partners and identify potential areas for cooperation.

After the presentation, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "Crewed and robotic space exploration is now a global endeavour that has caught the public's attention. Through these top-level presentations, NASA, our most longstanding partner, is looking to reach out to and inform key stakeholders on the course it is charting in order to identify future ideas and avenues for cooperation with the space community and partners like CNES."

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