



SMALL
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INTERNATIONAL
FORUM

INTERVIEW



#SSSIF2024
keynote speaker

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SSSIF INTERVIEWER

Andrés Martínez, Technology Readiness Manager and Program Executive, Earth Independent Operations (EIO) for Mars, NASA Mars Campaign Office, Moon to Mars Program. Andrés, thank you for being with us.

ANDRES MARTINEZ

It's a pleasure. Hello and happy new year..

SSSIF

Happy New Year Andres. We are looking forward to hearing from you in Malaga in a few weeks' time. What do you expect from this year's congress, whose main theme is "Lunar and Cislunar Missions: Exploration and Business"?

ANDRES

I am delighted, it is really an honour for me to be invited back. I have been present since this International Forum began. This is, I think, my fifth participation and once again I have been asked to give a keynote speech, and also to participate in panels (both as a panel leader and also as a participant in a panel during my stay in Málaga). I have also been asked to visit universities and I will be there all week. Yes, this year I am going to share with you the latest news, the latest events we have had and also, I always like to start my talk with the video of what we are going to do this year

SSSIF

But, first of all, I wanted to ask you what you are in charge of in your daily work at NASA. It is really surprising and given your specialization and experience, what relevance do you consider that this 5th edition of the SSSIF Congress has or can have in the international satellite framework? You were in previous editions and therefore, your perspective is of great interest to us.

ANDRES

Yes, my position at NASA changed a lot last year and this time 6 months ago it changed again. I am part of the Mars mission campaign office, the programme from the Moon to Mars and back to the Moon. We completed the first mission, ARTEMIS 1, and now we are already preparing for the second mission to Mars, where the spacecraft already has a crew. And we are also preparing and looking forward to Artemis 3, which is going to be when humans return to the moon. So, my focus is going to be on succeeding, which we need very much. It's a very ambitious programme and that's why we have invited the international community. Spain is in, and it has a very important role in the international community. It seems to me that almost 30 countries have already signed the ARTEMIS Agreement and all together, as a team, we are going to achieve this great new human event of returning to the moon. For us within the Mars campaign office, we are using this as an opportunity to test many technologies that we need to go to Mars. Now under my new position I'm in charge of the preparation of all that technology and also other areas that are a little bit more focused.



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SSSIF You will be one of the main keynote speakers on the first day of SSSIF. Could you briefly summarize your intervention at the event?

ANDRES I'm going to tell you all about what are we planning to do on the moon, what are we planning to do when we go to Mars, and how is the preparation of this technology going.

SSSIF But why is it so important to go back to the moon and explore it, and to be able to get to Mars in a manned way? And also, I wanted to ask you, what do you consider to be the main technological challenges facing the space sector in general and the small satellite segment in particular?

ANDRES We see the moon as our test platform. It's important to test all the technologies, to learn to live on another planet, that's what we see as our test platform and that's why it's very, very important to us.

Maybe you've already read a little bit about this new programme, but it's not about going back to the moon for a few hours or two days and then coming back. It's about learning to live on the moon, learning to live on another planet, that's why it's so important. The missions to Mars are going to be almost 3 years. To get to Mars is already almost a year and then there we are going to spend almost 100 days exploring the planet, and then another year to come back. We know that there are so many challenges and so many technologies that we still have to develop AND test, that do work, that do meet the requirements. That's why the moon gives us that platform to do those tests.

SSSIF This is what long-term exploration of the moon and space looks like, and obviously, NASA rightly maintains that it is in everyone's interest. Do small businesses play a key role still in the new approach to space exploration?

ANDRES Yes. Here at NASA, we invest heavily to support companies, small businesses and invest heavily to support the Academia and the universities. And when I say that we invest, I'm talking about millions and millions of dollars. In addition, we have a programme that is directly for small companies called Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR). It's a fund of almost a thousand million dollars. Today we had the first launch of a programme where we have chosen 14 small companies. This is going to be the first mission where they are carrying several payloads, and they will arrive this February. This is a formula for success that they have in the United States, from a very young age we encourage not only university students, but also children to dream that working at NASA can be achievable for them.



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How nice. And finally, Andres, we have talked a bit about your intervention in the SSSIF... I would like you to give me in the context of what the Forum is in general, since you have seen its birth. As you have participated in all the previous editions, what do you think of this year? What importance do you give to the SSSIF?

ANDRES

For me, my number one priority is the importance of living with this community. Throughout these 6 years, because one year was not done because of the pandemic, I have made friendships that I feel are very close. As for the military, I have become very good friends with the generals, so for me it is very important that there is representation from the Army. I think it's very important to live with this community. I'm glad to see the growth they've had. I remember when the guys first sat down, I thought, these guys are teenagers, and yes, 12 of them were teenagers. So, I think it's very important for this community to also see that NASA gives them importance. Because as we tell everybody, what we do we do for the benefit of humanity. So, we really want everyone to see that what we say is true. We present ourselves at these events so that everyone knows that for us it is very important that they continue with the growth they are having, because they are setting a very good example in Spain. In fact, when I go to other countries, I tell them what I see there, and I tell them that it is something they should do in their countries as well.

SSSIF

Andres Martinez, Technology Readiness Manager and Program Executive, Earth Independent Operations (EIO) for Mars, NASA Mars Campaign Office, Moon to Mars Program at NASA. Thank you for being with us these minutes. We look forward to hearing from you in Malaga in a few weeks. Thank you very much.

ANDRES

Thank you very much, it has been a pleasure.