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SPACEOPS SPREADS WINGS IN ITS ARAB WORLD DEBUT

Global space meet concludes biggest edition

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

The 17th edition of the International Conference on Space Operations (SpaceOps 2023), the largest ever edition in the history of the event, hosted by the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai and the International Committee on Technical Interchange for Space Mission Operations and Ground Data Systems, concluded with a closing ceremony at the Dubai World Trade Centre yesterday.

SpaceOps 2023, held for the first time ever in the Arab world, witnessed more than 1,100 participants from over 70 countries, attend the five-day event featuring plenary sessions, informative lectures, in-depth technical sessions, and interactive workshops.

More than 100 sessions were held under the theme of the conference, 'Invest in space to serve Earth and beyond', with more than 550 papers and abstracts submitted from over 50 countries.

In addition to the attendees, SpaceOps 2023 also saw the participation of seven space agencies from around the world, which includes Nasa, European Space Agency (ESA), Korea Aerospace Research Institute (Kari), South African National Space Agency (Sansa), French Space Agency (CNES), Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI) and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

A total of 30 space exhibitors from around the world, also had their stands at the event's exhibition showcasing the latest innovation and services in the space sector.

'Pushing boundaries'

Salem Humaid Al Marri, Director-General, MBRSC, said: "We are proud to have hosted the largest ever SpaceOps in history and the first ever edition in the Arab world, here in Dubai. By bringing together the brightest minds in the space industry to discuss the latest developments and innovations, we were able to explore new frontiers and push the boundaries of space exploration and technology."

He added: "As we look forward to the future, we are committed to continuing to inspire and encourage the next genera-

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30
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tion of scientists, engineers, and space explorers. Through events like SpaceOps2023, we aim to create a platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing that will help us to unlock the full potential of space and achieve our shared goal of exploring and understanding the surrounding universe."

Handover ceremony

Adnan Al Rais, Local Organising Committee Chair, SpaceOps 2023, said: "As we come to the end of SpaceOps 2023, I am confident that the conversations we've had and the connections we've made will shape the future of the space industry. We leave with a renewed sense of purpose and excitement for what lies ahead. I encourage everyone to carry forward the conversations we've initiated here, and to continue exploring new frontiers in space exploration. Together, we can unlock the potential of space technology for the betterment of humanity."

At the closing ceremony, Al Rais and the team from MBRSC

handed over the SpaceOps flag to Gerard Gallet and Hubert Fraysse from CNES, the host of the next SpaceOps Workshop.

The 2023 SpaceOps Awards were also handed out during the closing ceremony, recognising and honouring outstanding teams and individuals who made exceptional contributions to space operations through their achievements on a specific mission or over a lifetime, or provided distinguished service to the SpaceOps organisation and conferences.

Furthermore, the Best Papers Awards for SpaceOps 2023 were announced during the event, with the top 30 research papers making its way into the post conference book.

Best papers

Saeed Al Mansouri, Technical Programme Committee Chair, presented Mohammad Irfan Rashed with the 'Best Students Paper Award' for his paper on 'Mission and operations planning for small-satellite constellations using autonomous systems'.

The final day of the event began with a plenary session on 'Planetary Defence' with experts from Nasa, JAXA, DLR and ESA among panelists.

Additionally, a special session on 'To-orbit transportation, in-orbit support and on-Earth recovery of space payloads' was held with experts from ESA, Space Commerce Matters, Redwire, Thales Alenia Space, Exploration Company, ALTEC and Sierra Space being part of the panel.

The panellists discussed the emerging LEO marketplace, with its new operational challenges, from the commercial and institutional prospective and the solutions offered by new space transportation vehicles.

The final day also involved oral presentation of abstracts and papers that emphasise unique and innovative practices, technologies, and experiences from which others in the space operations community will benefit. With the theme 'Invest in space to serve Earth and beyond', the five-day international forum provided valuable opportunity for delegates to explore all aspects of space mission operations, including specialised areas such as robotics, human, earth-orbiting, and deep space operations.