

China to open space station to scientists worldwide

China will open its space station to scientists worldwide after the station is completed around 2022, according to a Chinese space expert.

Wei Chuanfeng, a researcher at the Institute of Manned Space System Engineering under the China Academy of Space Technology, said the China Manned Space Engineering Office has drafted a strategic framework with United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs to offer opportunities on the application of Chinese space station to members of United Nations.

Wei made the remarks on Thursday at the 2017 Global Space Exploration Conference, which was held in Beijing.

Under the framework, China will open its experimental resources on the Chinese space station to serve payloads from other countries. UN members, especially developing countries, could conduct scientific and technological experiment on Chinese space station, Wei said.

China's first astronaut Yang Liwei, who is also deputy director of China Manned Space Engineering Office, said the nation would launch the first core module of the space station in 2019, followed by two experiment modules. The space station will enable astronauts to stay in space for up to six months.

At the conference, the designers behind the Chinese space station proposed possible technical approaches that could help scientists from other countries utilize and perform experiments on the space station. China will also help astronauts and payloads specialists from developing countries to enter into space, Wei said.

The Chinese space station will be composed of three modules, including a core module and two experiment modules. The space station will have three docking sites, enabling the dock and berth of the "Shenzhou" manned spacecraft, the "Tianzhou" cargo spacecraft and other vehicles, according to Wei.