

# On International Day, UN celebrates historic event that opened doors to outer space

12 April 2017 – The United Nations today commemorated the International Day of Human Space Flight to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the first human space flight, which ushered in the beginning of the space era for mankind.

“The International Day is an opportunity for us to recognize how much humanity has achieved thanks to international cooperation in space and the benefits space technology and applications has brought us for making the world a better place,” said the UN Champion for Space, Scott Kelly in a message on the occasion.

The [International Day](#) commemorates the historic space flight that Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen, took on 12 April, 1961, and which opened the way for space exploration for the benefit of all of Earth’s inhabitants.

This year’s commemoration features a live “Twitter Chat” with Mr. Kelly, a former astronaut with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), who holds the record for the most cumulative number of days spent in space by an American astronaut.

During his “year in space,” astronaut Kelly and NASA partnered with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) on the #WhySpaceMatters campaign to draw attention to the importance of space-based science technology and their applications for sustainable development.

In 2011, the UN General Assembly declared 12 April as the International Day of Human Space Flight “to celebrate each year at the international level the beginning of the space era for mankind, reaffirming the important contribution of space science and technology in achieving sustainable development goals and increasing the well-being of States and peoples, as well as ensuring the realization of their aspiration to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes.”

The Assembly expressed its deep conviction of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived there from.

**VIDEO:** International Day of Human Space Flight