

Message from H.E. Akihiko Nakajima, Ambassador of Japan on Mars Mission 2020

July 2020

Mars has always been an attractive planet, inspiring the imagination of authors of science fiction as well as being an object of scientific exploration and space engineering. Probing mission of Mars used to be under the monopoly of super powers, but thanks to the evolution of information technology, relevant scientific discovery, engineering technology and management expertise have become shared by players who dare to challenge this genuine frontier for humankind.

Still, it is a daunting task. Integrating all the related technologies, both mature and emerging, into a single mission architecture requires excellent talents, guts and skills. In this respect, I would sincerely respect and express my admiration to pertinent organizations and space engineers of the UAE for their dedication to realise this grand endeavour. The UAE's strong will and commitment are what many other countries should look up to, including our country. It convincingly demonstrates the top-level program/project management skills and outstanding leadership of this country.

I am glad that one of the leading companies of Japan can contribute to this program, and our team of both countries has overcome the hard time caused by COVID-19 and come to this stage. Meanwhile, during the overall process, there were human contacts between engineers of the two countries. Our engineers must have learned the strategic vision and the streamlined and stringent program/project management process from the UAE, while engineers of this country must have obtained the knowledge of our scientific activity and manufacturing technology of our space industry. Those mutual knowledge and understanding is an incredibly precious foundation for future synergetic cooperation.

Japan and the UAE have long been cooperating mainly in the oil industry. Besides commercial transaction, the bilateral cooperation extended to R&D activities and human resource development. The vast and deep human network between our countries, which was developed through these activities, is a truly valuable asset, and I would like to expect the same level of cooperation in other areas including space development in the coming years.

Now, we together face common global challenges such as climate change, food security, global peace, social engineering through information technology, and most recently COVID-19. Bearing in mind that there is a wide window of opportunities for further bilateral cooperation in any of these areas, I expect this project symbolises the herald of the future, thus together we can contribute to the international community.

Mars, Spaceship, Astronauts. These words inspire and attract all of us, and particularly younger generation. And through space program, we will be able to engrave "Hope" in the mind of every child in the world.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon the UAE's brilliant initiatives towards combating COVID-19. I am truly thankful that the UAE has been actively implementing preventive measures from an early stage. As of July 7th, over 3.6 million tests have been conducted throughout the country, which makes the UAE the leading country in mass testing per million people. While the death rate of infected people exceeds 10% in some countries, it remains less than 1% in the UAE. This is a result of the whole country confronting the disease as one, with the government's early implementation of various initiatives as well as its citizens' efforts such as refraining from going out. I encourage all the community members to adhere to all the precautionary measures initiated by the UAE government in order to overcome the challenges during these unprecedented times together.

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