

Lunar Exploration Analysis Group **Press Release – November 25, 2009**

The annual meeting of the Lunar Exploration Analysis Group (LEAG) was held at the Lunar & Planetary Institute in Houston, Texas, over 3.5 days (November 16-19, 2009). The meeting brought together NASA officials, lunar scientists and engineers, and established commercial space companies and lunar entrepreneurial firms. The focus of the meeting was to discuss how to make the next phase of solar system exploration (robotic leading to human) sustainable and, to this end, included the first exciting results from the NASA LCROSS and LRO missions. In the broadest sense, space exploration encompasses:

- Learning to live and work successfully and productively off world.
- Expanding Earth's economic sphere beyond Earth orbit.
- Strengthening existing and create new global partnerships.
- Engaging, inspiring, and educating the public.

Making it sustainable is one of the three themes in the draft Lunar Exploration Roadmap, developed by LEAG (http://www.lpi.usra.edu/leag/ler_draft.shtml), for the Science Committee of the NASA Advisory Council, which address why we are returning to the Moon through three themes:

- Pursue scientific activity to address fundamental questions about the solar system, the universe and our place in them.
- Use the moon to prepare for future missions to Mars and other destinations.
- Extend sustained human presence on the moon to enable eventual settlement.

To be sustainable, lunar activity must consistently return value greater than the investment required to create that value. International and commercial partnerships are vitally important in achieving this result. The following high-level conclusions from the LEAG meeting will be incorporated into the next version of the Lunar Exploration Roadmap:

- A sustainable lunar enterprise requires the use of lunar resources to “live off the land.”
- A sustainable lunar enterprise begins with robotic missions as incremental steps to facilitate more productive human missions.
- A sustainable lunar enterprise provides a basis for long-term human presence on the Moon, enabling exploration of the solar system and a space-based economy.

Impressive results from NASA's LCROSS-LRO, Japan's Kaguya, and India's Chandrayaan-1 indicate the presence of important lunar resources that are vital for sustainable human presence, and which could significantly reduce the cost of human space exploration. Furthermore, the scientific importance of the Moon is now clearer than ever, given strong evidence of its value for studying the solar system volatile flux history.

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