

**Remarks by The Honorable Michael Griffin  
NASA Administrator  
Indian Space Research Organization-NASA MOU  
Signing Ceremony  
Bangalore, India  
May 9, 2006**

Chairman Nair (G. Madhavan Nair, Chairman Indian Space Research Organization), Dr. Shankara (K.N. Shankara, Director Indian Space Research Organization Satellite Centre) distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen. Thank you very much for your warm welcome and your tremendous hospitality. Namaste.

I am honored to be your guest today, as we forge an important partnership to advance the exploration of the moon.

A generation ago, perhaps many of India's outstanding scientists and engineers were inspired to pursue their technical careers as they witnessed the

first great era of lunar exploration. It is fitting for our purposes today to note that 35 years ago this summer, during the Apollo 15 mission to Hadley Rille beneath the moon's towering Apennine mountains, among the special items our astronauts carried with them was the national flag of India. This was not the first time that the flag of your relatively young nation had been associated with the spirit of exploration, as 53 years ago India's national banner was hoisted on the summit of Mt. Everest, upon the conquest of Earth's tallest peak.

Today, the Indian people deserve to be tremendously proud that the next time the Indian flag travels to the moon it will be placed on a very impressive scientific spacecraft Chandrayaan-1. The mission you will conduct some 40 years after humans saw the moon up close for the first time, will greatly advance our understanding of our closest neighbor in space, and represents a very impressive technical

achievement. NASA is honored to be a participant on this mission.

The two year mission of Chandrayaan-1 to map the lunar surface and investigate its surface properties will advance knowledge about the moon's history and evolution, and inform future exploration decisions by characterizing the content of the lunar soil.

I understand that beyond the purpose of expanding scientific knowledge about the moon, you are undertaking this mission to upgrade India's technological capability and to provide challenging opportunities for planetary research for the younger generation. These are commendable goals and I applaud the Indian Space Research Organization for undertaking your first planetary mission.

It is my hope, and belief, that as we extend the reach of human civilization throughout the solar system, the United States and India will be partners

on many more technically challenging and scientifically rewarding projects.

Building on over four decades of productive and mutually beneficial U.S.-Indian space cooperation, I see great potential for NASA and the India Space Research Organization to expand our partnership in the future as we realize the potential of space activities to benefit our peoples and to extend the horizons of commerce, science and exploration.

During my visit, I very much look forward to the opportunity to see first hand India's impressive space facilities, to meet with your scientists and engineers, and to learn more about your remarkable work to develop and operate India's launch vehicles, satellites and control stations. I thank you once again for the opportunity to be here, and I very much look forward to the successful launch of this bold mission.