National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001

April 25, 2011

Dr. Kenneth Ford
Chairman
NASA Advisory Council
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Dr. Ford:

Enclosed is NASA's response to a recommendation from the NASA Advisory Council meeting held October 6-7, 2010, in Palmdale, CA. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Council would like further background on this response. I appreciate the Council's thoughtful consideration leading to this recommendation and welcome its continued observations and advice concerning NASA's plans and programs.

I look forward to working closely with you and the members of the Council in the future.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator

Enclosure:
2010-04-11 (SC-04) Astro2010 Decadal Survey

Tracking Number 2010-04-11 (SC-04)
Astro2010 Decadal Survey

NASA Advisory Council Recommendation:

A. NASA's Implementation of Wide Field InfraRed Survey Telescope (WFIRST) Mission

- NASA should proceed with implementation of WFIRST as the top priority large space mission of Astro2010.
- NASA should solicit nominations for the WFIRST Science Definition Team (SDT) as soon as possible, including representatives of all three of WFIRST's science areas and members of ESA's Dark Energy Mission, Euclid. By Summer 2011, the SDT should complete a conceptual mission design that is mature enough to support NASA negotiations with ESA on a collaborative mission.

B. NASA's role in ESA's Euclid Mission

- NASA should keep open the option of possible partnership with ESA on the Euclid mission.
- If Euclid is selected by ESA, NASA's goal should be the negotiation of a joint ESA/NASA program that meets the science goals of both the Euclid and WFIRST missions and is comprised of either a single combined mission or two complementary missions.

C. NASA's role in ESA's PLAnetary Transits and Oscillations of stars (PLATO), Mission

- NASA should inform ESA that NASA will not seek a strategic partnership on PLATO, since its science investigation was not recommended in the Decadal Survey.

NASA Response:

NASA concurs and is moving forward with some aspects of this recommendation.

A. NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) issued its call for nominations for the WFIRST Science Definition Team (SDT) on October 19, 2010. Nominations closed on November 23, 2010, with a total of 82 letters of interest received from scientists and technologists in the U.S. and abroad. SMD signed the charter for the WFIRST SDT and posted it online at http://wfirst.gsfc.nasa.gov/science/WFIRST_SDT_Charter.pdf. The SDT members were announced in December 2010; they held their first telecon on January 3, 2011, and first in-person meeting on February 3-4, 2011. The SDT will consider the mission requirements recommended in the Decadal Survey and the implementation options in the December 2010 National Research Council (NRC) report on Implementing the Recommendations of the New Worlds, New Horizons (NWNH) Decadal Survey, which overlap with, though are not identical to, the NASA Advisory Council (NAC) recommendation.

B. As noted in the FY2012 President's Budget Request, NASA will explore a potential joint European Space Agency (ESA)/NASA mission that is in line with Option B of the December 2010 NRC report. Option B is defined in the report as "a single, international mission, combining WFIRST and ESA's Euclid. Either a U.S.-led mission or an ESA-led mission could

be consistent with the NWNH report, contingent on whether or not the United States plays "a leading role" and "so long as the committee's recommended science program is preserved and overall cost savings result" (p. 1-6)." We will work closely with the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Office of Management Budget during the evolving decision-making process, and we will continue to update the NAC as circumstances warrant.

C. NASA informed ESA on October 7, 2010, that we would not be pursuing a strategic partnership on PLATO.