



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Eight Nations Sign US-led Artemis Moon Agreements

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Eight countries have signed an international agreement for moon exploration called the Artemis Accords.

The U.S. space agency, NASA, announced the agreement last week. NASA is trying to create rules for building long-term human settlements on the moon's surface.

The agreement is named after NASA's Artemis moon project. It seeks to build on existing international space law by creating "safety **zones**." These zones would surround future moon bases to prevent conflict between states operating there. It would also permit private companies to own the **lunar** resources they find.

The United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Luxembourg, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates signed the agreements. Officials met during a yearly conference on space that took place last week. The deal followed months of talks in a U.S. effort to build allies under its plan to return astronauts to the moon by 2024.

"What we're trying to do is establish **norms** of behavior that every nation can agree to," NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine told reporters. He said the agreements accept a 1967 treaty that says the moon and other planets cannot be claimed for national ownership.

Bridenstine said the agreements create the "the broadest, most **inclusive**, largest coalition of human spaceflight in the history of humankind."

The governments of the United States and other countries that have space programs consider the moon important to their long-term goals. The moon has value for scientific research that could make possible future missions to Mars. However, these activities are subject to international space law that many experts consider outdated.

In 2019, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence directed NASA to return humans to the moon by 2024. This cut in half the amount of time the agency had planned to take. The goal now is for humans to live on the moon for a long time.

The NASA program is expected to cost billions of dollars. It will send robotic vehicles to the moon before a human being.

NASA also plans to build a space station that will orbit the moon. Plans call for it to be built by companies supervised by NASA and international partners.

I'm Susan Shand.

The Associated Press reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

zone - *n.* an area that is different from other areas in a special way

lunar - *adj.* of or related to the moon

norm - *n.* something, such as a way of behaving or of doing some activity, that is usual or expected

inclusive - *adj.* open to everyone, not limited to certain people