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(Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence)

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Dear Colleague:

The "Declaration of Principles Concerning Activities Following the Detection of Extraterrestrial Intelligence" was developed over a period of several years by the SETI Committee of the International Academy of Astronautics, with the assistance of many experts interested in this question. In April of 1989, it was approved by the Board of Trustees of the Academy and also by the Board of Directors of the International Institute of Space Law. Over the next three years, it was endorsed by the Committee on Space Research, by the International Astronomical Union, by the members of Commission J of the Union Radio Scientifique Internationale, and by the International Astronautical Federation.

The document is intended as a series of guidelines for individuals or organizations, national or international, engaged in carrying out radio searches for extraterrestrial intelligence. In July of 1992, it was sent by the Academy to all such individuals and organizations with a request that they give consideration to endorsing it.

In the meantime, the SETI Committee of the International Academy of Astronautics will continue to review the principles and procedures of the Declaration, and has assembled a special post-detection committee, as indicated by Principle 9 of the document. The Committee has also prepared an Academy Position Paper designed to expand the wording of Principle 8 into a decision process for addressing the issues about a reply from Earth after the detection of a signal, or indeed of transmitting a signal from Earth if no detection has been made. The paper is entitled "A Decision Process for Examining the Possibility of Sending Communications to Extraterrestrial Civilizations: A Proposal."

Sincerely yours,

John Billingham
Chairman, IAA SETI Committee

Enclosures