

## **SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY**

### **Simonetta Di Pippo (Italy)**



Chair ESA PB-HME and Director, Observation of the Universe, Italian Space Agency.

Simonetta Di Pippo is an astrophysicist who has been working for the Italian Space Agency (ASI) since 1986, even before it was actually formally established in 1998. During her career she held several key positions in fields such as Earth Observation, Advanced Studies, Robotic Systems and the International Space Station Programme (as a delegate to the supervising Board since 1988) with broad responsibilities in programme management and international relations. Between 1999 and 2002 she acted as ASI's Secretary General. During that period she chaired the Potential Participating States Board preparing the European Exploration Programme and later coordinated the Italian astronaut Roberto Vittori mission Marco Polo. At international level she is among the founders both of the

International Lunar Exploration and of the International Mars Exploration Working Groups (ILEWG and IMEWG) and was appointed by NASA as international Team Member of the Mars Architecture Study in 1998.

Since 2002 she holds the position of Director for ASI's space science and exploration ("Osservazione dell'Universo"). In 2005 she was appointed as Chair of the European Space Agency's Board supervising large space programmes such the European contribution to the ISS, the microgravity research activities and the European Space Exploration Programme "Aurora" with its ExoMars mission.

Actually, she is also coordinating the Italian participation to the STS-120/ESPERIA mission with the Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli.

She was knighted by the Italian President of the Republic in 2006. In December 2006 she has been nominated one of the members of the National Committee for the Promotion of the Italian Culture Abroad at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She authored several scientific and technical papers and a book. She contributes regularly to outreach activities through interviews and interventions both on TV and on the press.