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Hawking: We need to go to other worlds, Earth becoming too small for us

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Speaking at the Starmus Science Festival in Trondheim, Norway, Stephen Hawking stressed the necessity of one day leaving the planet due to climate change and dwindling resources.

"I am convinced that humans need to leave earth. The Earth is becoming too small for us, our physical resources are being drained at an alarming rate," Hawking said, as cited by British media, adding that there is no more space on Earth to overcome a new crisis.

"When we have reached similar crisis in our history there has usually been somewhere else to colonize. Columbus did it in 1492 when he discovered the new world. But now there is no new world. No Eutopia around the corner. We are running out of space and the only places to go to are other worlds," he stated.

"If humanity is to continue for another million years, our future lies in boldly going where no one else has gone before," the 74-year-old said, noting that humanity is about to enter a new era, in which "colonization of other planets is no longer science fiction, it can be science fact." Hawking added that there is no other option.

The moon and Mars would be a perfect choice for colonization, the 74-year-old scientist believes. He appealed to governments to focus on creating a lunar base in 30 years and one on Mars within 50. The scientist also called for a moon mission to be launched by 2020 and for sending people to the Red Planet by 2025.

Hawking believes that people could go beyond the Solar System and send a probe to Alpha Centauri, the nearest star system to Earth, "within the lifetime of some of you alive today."

Mars exploration was also touched upon by space travel pioneer and former NASA astronaut Buzz Aldrin, who was wearing a 'Get your ass to Mars' T-Shirt. During his speech at the Starmus Festival, he called on spacefaring nations to join efforts in developing space programs.

"Repeating orbits between Earth and moon, which are not very satisfying, to go to the moon, but they are pretty damn good for tourism and adventure travel and we are going to find a lot of our finances are going to come from those sources," Aldrin said.

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