



SPACE GENERATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

1 October 2014, Vienna, Austria – “For Immediate Release”

Sri Lankan student names an asteroid

In an international campaign to name an asteroid, Chanaka Perera (17) from Sri Lanka, submitted one of over 1500 entries. His suggestion – Rayjay – after Prof. Ray Jayawardhana was officially accepted by the International Astronomical Union and asteroid (4668) 1987DX5 now bears the name Rayjay.

SGAC's Near Earth Objects (NEO) Project Group held an international campaign to name an asteroid late last year. Asteroids are rocky objects, left-overs from the formation process of the solar system. They can have sizes from a few meters to several kilometres and mainly circle the Sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter in the Asteroid Belt. Six asteroids were named in this campaign.

The lead of SGAC's NEO Project Group, Alex Karl, said in a statement: “This campaign was a great success. We had entries from 85 countries, and selecting the names was truly a challenge. It is great to see someone from Sri Lanka having their submission accepted. I would like to congratulate Chanaka for being picked among all those entries, and thank everybody involved who made this possible.”

As part of the annual World Space Week celebrations (October 4-10), an event will be held at the Russian Centre in Colombo for the official declaration.

About: The Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) is an international non-governmental organisation based in Vienna, Austria that connects students and young professionals interested in space and gives them a voice in global space matters. SGAC is represented by up to 2 National Point of Contacts per country.

The Near Earth Object (NEO) project group is dedicated to helping the worldwide planetary defence community to meet one of nature's greatest challenges. The group provides a youth perspective through annual reports, competitions, conference attendance, and public outreach projects related to NEOs.

More information can be found:

SGAC: www.spacegeneration.org
NEOs: <http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/neo/>

Naming Campaign: www.spacegeneration.org/naming
WSW: www.worldspaceweek.org

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