

GREENBELT, MD – Today, Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) welcomed England's Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, where the royal couple toured the facility, spoke with crew aboard the International Space Station, and was welcomed with a formal greeting ceremony, among other things. During the ceremony, Rep. Hoyer along with Senator Barbara Mikulski presented the Queen with a framed photo montage of one of the space center's most successful scientific enterprises - the Hubble Space Telescope.

"On behalf of the entire Maryland congressional delegation, I am pleased to welcome you to the Goddard Space Flight Center – NASA's first space flight center," Rep. Hoyer said in his greeting to the Queen and the Duke. "For nearly 50 years, Goddard's superb scientists, researchers, and engineers have made great strides and achieved important milestones in the effort to expand our understanding of the earth and the entire universe. It is fitting that your Majesty's visit – which began by commemorating the explorers who founded Jamestown 400 years ago – concludes here at Goddard where you will be able to witness firsthand the work being done by the present generation of explorers."

The Queen's visit to Goddard, which makes history as the first ever by a head of state, highlights and celebrates the bilateral collaboration between the United Kingdom and the United States in exploring the final frontier. The partnership was strengthened recently by a joint agreement signed between NASA and the British National Space Centre confirming a mutual desire to explore opportunities to collaborate on future planetary exploration of the moon and beyond.

"NASA is honored to be one of the U.S. organizations hosting a visit by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth," said NASA Administrator Michael Griffin. "The United States and the United Kingdom have a strong partnership in space, from British-born mission astronauts who serve in NASA's astronaut corps to the numerous joint scientific and research efforts under way."

The visit to Goddard also included a demonstration of the new Science on a Sphere visualization system, a tree planting ceremony at Goddard's "Rocket Garden" outside the visitor center, and a linked conversation between the Queen and the current crew aboard the International Space Station. The Duke toured facilities used to build and evaluate satellites and equipment being prepared for space flight.

Also attending the greeting ceremony were Senator Ben Cardin, Reps. C.A "Dutch"

Ruppersberger, Roscoe Bartlett and Elijah Cummings, diplomatic officers and dignitaries, and NASA employees. The tour of Goddard occurred on the final day of the Queen's 6-day visit to the United States to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement in Virginia.