

## Brazil's First Astronaut Will Talk Three Times from Space Station

Contributed by Flávio Dieguez  
Friday, 31 March 2006

Brazilian astronaut Marcos César Pontes is scheduled to arrive at the International Space Station (ISS) aboard the Soyuz spacecraft Saturday morning, April 1st, according to Vera Cantran, press officer for the Centenary mission.

When he reaches his destination, Pontes will have spent 49 hours and 30 minutes in space since the Soyuz was launched on Thursday at the Baikonur base in Kazakhstan.

The crew is composed of Pontes, Jeffrey Williams, from the United States, and Pavel Vinogradov, from Russia. Pontes will spend eight days in space, while the other two will remain on the ISS for six months.

According to Sérgio Gaudenzi, president of the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), Pontes is expected to communicate with the Earth three times from space.

"The first will be with president Lula and the minister of Science and Technology, Sérgio Rezende. The second will be with Brazilian reporters. The third will be with mission technicians, when he is about to return."

The AEB announced that his flight cost US\$ 10 million. Pontes is taking eight Brazilian experiments with him to the ISS to test in an environment of near-zero gravity.

Agência Brasil