

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION UNION ASTRONOMIQUE INTERNATIONALE



***** IAU0913: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 17 JUNE 2009 *****

www.iau.org/public_press/news/release/iau0913/

Media invitation for the 27th General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union

17 June 2009, Paris: The International Year of Astronomy coincides with the 27th General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in 2009. More than two thousand astronomers from all around the world are expected to meet and present their latest discoveries in Rio de Janeiro in August. A number of exciting media events are planned.

Astronomy has never before had it so good. Four hundred years after the first observation was made through a telescope, the technological progress, the construction of bigger and better telescopes on the ground and in space, and the ability to access the whole electromagnetic spectrum, from radio waves to gamma rays, has made it possible to witness discoveries about our Universe that could never have been dreamt of before. For two busy weeks, 3-14 August 2009, astronomers from all around the globe will gather at the IAU General Assembly at the SulAmérica Convention Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to discuss and evaluate the most recent discoveries and observations, to make decisions on fundamental issues and also to organise international cooperation.

The programme for the IAU XXVII General Assembly 2009 includes a variety of cutting-edge science talks, Symposia, joint discussions and special sessions together covering a vast number of subjects ranging from the Legacies of Galileo (Invited Discourse 1) to the most recent results on Planetary Systems as Potential Sites for Life (Special Session 6). There will be six Symposia, sixteen Joint Discussions and ten Special Sessions.

The IAU is the international astronomical organisation that brings together almost 10 000 distinguished astronomers from all nations of the world. Its mission is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects through international cooperation. The IAU also serves as the internationally recognised authority for assigning designations to celestial bodies and the surface features on them. Founded in 1919, the IAU is the world's largest professional body for astronomers.

It is the first time that an IAU General Assembly will be held in Brazil. In the last decade astronomy in Brazil has experienced a period of major growth and development triggered by significant investments from the Brazilian government. The astronomical community has grown to almost 200 astronomers and they were in 2008 responsible for nearly 2% of the total number of scientific papers in the world.

Overview

Where? SulAmérica Convention Center
Av. Paulo de Frontin with Av. Pres. Vargas - Cidade Nova
20260-010 Rio de Janeiro
Brazil

(access through the “Estácio” metro station)

When? 3-14 August 2009

What? IAU XXVII General Assembly 2009

Why? This is a unique opportunity to gather first-hand information on new developments in the many areas of space science and to meet the main players. This is the most important meeting in the field of astronomy and is especially important in 2009, the International Year of Astronomy.

Who? Almost 2000 astronomers from more than 70 countries have already registered.

Press registration

Bona fide members of the media can register for free and receive free access to all activities of the General Assembly.

Please send an e-mail to: Lars Lindberg Christensen (lars@eso.org) or Cassio Leandro Barbosa (cassio@univap.br) with the following information:

NAME: _____

E-MAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

MEDIA AFFILIATION: _____

TYPE OF MEDIA: _____

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

Press briefings and other interesting events

A series of press briefings on a range of topics are anticipated. A rough plan for some of the press briefings that have already received a slot is outlined below. All times are in BST (Brazil Standard Time UTC-03:00). Note: Several briefings are still at the planning stage and are not listed here.

More information as it becomes available at:

<http://www.astronomy2009.com.br/mediapress.html>

Friday 31 July

10:00 Press briefing: General information about the IAU General Assembly 2009. (in Portuguese)

Tuesday 4 August

10:30 Press briefing: General information about the Opening Ceremony.

12:00 Press briefing: The Gruber Award to a distinguished cosmologist.

14:00 Opening Ceremony, including the official announcement of the Gruber Award.

Thursday 6 August

12:00 Press briefing: The International Year of Astronomy 2009

Friday 7 August

11:00 Press briefing (topic TBD)

Monday 10 August

10:00 Press briefing: General update on the General Assembly.

19:30 IAU press dinner (no host, split bill).

Tuesday 11 August

11:30 Press briefing (topic TBD)

Thursday 13 August

14:00-17:30 Closing Ceremony.

Voting on Resolutions on:

- IAU Strategic Plan: Astronomy for the Developing World
- Current best estimates of astronomical constants
- The Second Realization of the International Celestial Reference Frame
- Supporting Women in Astronomy
- Defence of the night sky and the right to starlight

18:00 Press briefing: Concluding the General Assembly

Invited Discourses

The four Invited Discourses are overview talks given by highly eminent scientists in their fields.

Wednesday 5 August

18:00 Invited Discourse 1

Franco Pacini: The Legacies of Galileo

Thursday 6 August

18:00 Invited Discourse 2

James F. Bell III: Water on Planets

Monday 10 August

18:00 Invited Discourse 3

Simon D.M. White: Evolution of Structure in the Universe

Tuesday 11 August

18:00 Invited Discourse 4

Maria Teresa Ruiz: Do Low-Luminosity Stars Matter?

Invited Discourse 1 will also be the topic of a public talk in Rio.

Other events

Special Session 2 will be on the International Year of Astronomy 2009 and Special Session 9 will be on the 400th anniversary of Kepler's Astronomia Nova.

Screenings of several astronomy movies will take place in the Main Room:

- Eyes on the Skies
- 400 Years of Telescope
- Blast!

Two IYA2009 photo exhibitions will be on display: The World at Night and From Earth to the Universe. They will be accessible to the public during the weekend.

There will also be book-signing sessions organised by the publishers of several IYA2009 related books.

Links

- IAU: <http://www.iau.org>
- General Assembly: <http://www.astronomy2009.com.br>

Newspaper

Information and programme updates will be published in the daily IAU XXVII General Assembly newspaper Estrela D'Alva. Prof. Dr. João Evangelista Steiner from University of São Paulo is the Editor-in-Chief.

Press facilities

The IAU will operate a Press Office (R1.14) on all weekdays from 9:00 to 18:00, a Press Conference Room (R1.13), and a Press Interview Room (R1.12) on the ground floor of the SulAmérica Convention Center. It will have hard-wired and wireless internet hubs for the convenience of reporters who are filing to a deadline. The Interview Room is available to the media for one-on-one interviews, and is reserved and scheduled as requests are received. The Press Office will also have a fixed-net telephone, printer, access to copying machine etc. We encourage Public Information Officers and scientists to provide hard copies of press releases, background brochures, visuals etc. The IAU Press Office will update a wall with newspaper clippings.

The Press Office will be closed during the weekend 8–9 August.

Contacts

Lars Lindberg Christensen
IAU Press Officer
E-mail: lars@eso.org
Phone: +49 89 320 06 761
Cell: +49 173 38 72 621

Cássio Leandro D. R. Barbosa
Local Press Officer
E-mail: cassio@univap.br
Phone: + 55 12 3947 1113
Cell: +55 12 8168 9998

Raquel Yumi Shida
IAU Deputy Press Officer
E-mail: rshida@eso.org
Phone: +49 89 320 06 177
Cell: +49 151 11 055 413