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IAU Regional Meetings

MEARIM 2014: Third Middle-East and Africa IAU Regional Meeting

Start date/time
April 22, 2014

End date/time
April 27, 2014

Place
Beirut,
Lebanon

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Coordinating Division
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Chairs of SOC
Edward Sion (Villanova University, USA) and George
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Chairs of LOC
Task Force Astronomy & Astrophysics** (L-CNRS,
Lebanon)

Topics

1. Galaxies & Cosmolgy
2. Stars and Environments
3. Sun, Heliosphere, and Space Weather
4. Solar System & Exoplanets
5. Astronomical Projects with small telescopes
6. Archives and Virtual Observatories
7. Telescopes & Instrumentation
8. Astronomy for Development

Rationale

Following on the success of the first two meeting, all participants expressed the need to meet on a regular basis to assess the development of astronomy and astrophysics in the region, increase regional and international networking and collaboration, and provide opportunities to take stock of the international development of astronomy and astrophysics.

The region witnessed exciting developments in astronomy and astrophysics since MEARIM II in April 2011. The Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) was officially launched, and the first call for proposals announced a few weeks ago. A number of Regional Offices of Astronomy for Development (ROAD) is expected to be created in the region in the next few years, providing added development opportunities.

Furthermore, the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) was officially attributed to South Africa and will be developed in the southern part of the continent. An important number of Middle-Eastern and African countries have burgeoning astronomy and astrophysics programs and are working on establishing national observatories.

Lebanon is graduating astronomy and astrophysics masters degree holders and PhD will soon follow. The number of PhD holding astronomers and astrophysicists in Lebanon increased to 9. An observatory is soon to be completed in the country and is already scheduled to contribute to an international campaign to monitor Wolf-Rayet stars in 2013. In 2014, the planned year of the meeting, Lebanon will have been an interim member of the IAU for 8 years, with the requirement to ask for full membership the following year.

A third MEARIM in 2014 will be at the right time to discuss research and observational facilities that are and will become available, propose science that would benefit from these facilities, and network with international, cutting-edge research and facilities