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## **Agreements Signed for Five New Coordinating Offices of Astronomy for Development**

**The International Astronomical Union's (IAU) Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) has established new coordinating offices in Jordan, Armenia, Portugal, Nigeria and Colombia. These offices will support the use of astronomy as a tool for development in specific regions and languages. The new partnerships will support the IAU's decadal strategic plan, aimed at realising the societal benefits of astronomy.**

The agreements were signed over the course of the triennial IAU General Assembly at the Hawaii Convention Centre in Honolulu, Hawaii, with the last signatures taking place at a media event on Thursday 13th August at 10:00 (local time). The new offices will cover two important functions: Regional Offices will coordinate astronomy-for-development activities in countries within a general geographical region, and Language Expertise Centres will deal with all aspects relating to a specific language and/or culture.

The new coordinating offices of Astronomy for Development are: The Arab Regional Office and Arabic Language Expertise Centre in Jordan; the South West Asian Regional Office in Armenia; the Portuguese Language Expertise Centre in Portugal; the West African Regional Office in Nigeria; and the Andean Regional Office in Colombia. Each of these offices is hosted by a local institution or consortium of institutes supported in their efforts by various partners in the region.

Together with existing offices (the East Asian Regional Office and Chinese Language Expertise Centre in China; the South East Asian Regional Office in Thailand; the East African Regional Office in Ethiopia; and the Southern African Regional Office in Zambia), the OAD now comprises a network of eight regional offices and three language centres around the world. The newly signed agreements follow the IAU's Announcement of Opportunity, which remains open to proposals for new regional and language offices.

For more information on OAD offices and activities, including the Call for Proposals for projects relating to the OAD's three main focus areas: Universities & Research, Children & Schools and the Public, please visit [www.astro4dev.org](http://www.astro4dev.org).

### **More information**

The IAU is the international astronomical organisation that brings together about 11 000 distinguished astronomers from around 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.

The IAU established the Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) in partnership with the South African National Research Foundation (NRF). The OAD was officially opened on 16 April 2011 at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town, South Africa. It was tasked with the implementation of the IAU Strategic Plan including establishment of regional offices and three astronomy-for-development "Task Forces". The OAD coordinates an annual open Call for Proposals seeking innovative projects for each of the task forces: Universities and Research (TF1); Children and Schools (TF2); and Public Outreach (TF3).

Hosts of the new coordinating offices of Astronomy for Development are as follows:

- The Arab Regional Office and Arabic Language Office is hosted by the Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences and located at the United Nations Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Jordan;
- the South West Asian Regional Office at Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (BAO) in Armenia;
- the Portuguese Language Office at Núcleo Interativo de Astronomia (NUCLIO), in collaboration with the Institute of Astrophysics and Space Sciences in Portugal;
- the West African Regional Office at the Centre for Basic Space Science (CBSS), National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) at the University of Nigeria in Nigeria;
- the Andean Regional Office at three collaborating institutions: Universidad de Los Andes, Parque Explora-Planetario de Medellín and Sociedad Chilena de Astronomía

## Links

- [IAU website: www.iau.org](http://www.iau.org)
- [OAD website: www.astro4dev.org](http://www.astro4dev.org)
- [The Strategic Plan: http://www.iau.org/static/education/strategicplan\\_2010-2020.pdf](http://www.iau.org/static/education/strategicplan_2010-2020.pdf)
- [The Announcement of Opportunity: http://www.astro4dev.org/oadregions/](http://www.astro4dev.org/oadregions/)

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