

IAU Office for Astronomy Development in South Africa

George Miley, IAU Vice-President for Development and Education and Ian Corbett, IAU General Secretary represented the IAU at a ceremony in Pretoria on 30 July 2010 for the signing of a landmark agreement between the IAU and the South African National Research Foundation.

Under the agreement the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) at Cape Town will house the new IAU Office for Astronomy Development (OAD). The OAD will coordinate a wide range of activities as part of a ten-year plan initiated by Miley to exploit astronomy in the service of education and capacity building. The plan, "Astronomy for the developing world", builds on the enormously successful IAU - UNESCO International Year of Astronomy in 2009 whose activities in 148 countries reached millions of people.

The OAD will coordinate a wide range of development activities. These include inspiring very young disadvantaged children, stimulating science and engineering education, training school teachers, building up the research capacity of university departments and exciting members of the public.

Speaking at the ceremony George Miley said: *"From the earliest times astronomy has had a profound effect on human development. The OAD and its activities will continue the role of astronomy as a practical discipline in the present age. Today astronomy is still a unique tool for development because it combines cutting-edge technology with fundamental science and has deep cultural roots. Astronomy, like the new South Africa, is about inspiration."*

Read more:

Links

- IAU press release: http://iau.org/public_press/news/detail/iau1005/
- Press release from the South African Astronomical Observatory from the OAD selection: http://www.saa.ac.za/no_cache/public-info/news/news/article/181/16/

The Strategic Plan: Astronomy for the Developing World:

http://iau.org/static/education/strategicplan_091001.pdf

International Astronomical Union

Astronomy for the Developing World

Building from the IYA2009

Strategic Plan 2010–2020



