

The International Year of Astronomy Open in Argentina

On Friday, March 20th the International Year of Astronomy was officially open in Argentina. The ceremony –held at Córdoba Observatory- started at 11 am with about 100 guests.

Present at the ceremony were Dr. Marta Rovira, President of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONICET); Eng. Tulio del Bono, Minister of Sciences of the Government of Córdoba; Dr. Eduardo Staricco, President of the National Academy of Sciences of Córdoba; Dr. Alfredo Coccuci, member of the National Academy of Sciences; Dr. Diego García Lambas, Director of the Theoretical and Experimental Astronomy Institute; Eng. Ester Alonso, Director of the Félix Aguilar Astronomical Observatory; Claudio Mallamaci, Vicedean of the School of Natural and Hard Sciences School of the National University of San Juan; Arturo Guell, Director of the Geophysics and Astronomy Department of the National University of San Juan; Prof. Lucía Sendón, Director of the Buenos Aires City Planetarium.

Participants also included Representatives from the National Universities of Salta and Córdoba as well as from the Ministry of Education of Tucumán, the National Commission of Space Activities, the Planetarium of Rosario City, IYA2009 National Node, Córdoba Observatory, amateur astronomers from different associations of Argentina, students, and communicators also took part of the opening ceremony.

The ceremony began with the words of Dr. Emilio Lapasset, Director of Córdoba Observatory who welcomed all participants. Dr. Roberto Aquilano, Secretary of the National Committee of Astronomy addressed the audience highlighting the importance of the International Year of Astronomy and the way the National Node was formed. Dr. Hernán Muriel, president of the Argentinian Astronomical Association also made reference to the importance of the event. Dr. Olga Pintado, Single Point of Contact of the National Node referred to the activities prepared in conjunction with IYA 2009 and the importance of opening the International Year of Astronomy in Argentina at Córdoba Observatory, the first Astronomical Observatory of the country.

As a closing of the formal ceremony, Dr. Marta Rovira talked about the life and work of Galileo Galilei and showed a movie about Galileo's research and its importance in science, a video furnished by the Encuentro TV channel.

After Dr. Rovira's presentation, the participants were invited to the Observatory's main hall where a lunch was served.

Early in the afternoon, the Sarmiento – Gould Hall -the Observatory's Museum- was open for the public.

At 7.30 pm Dr. Diego García Lambas –the Observatory's Vicedirector- presented a talk called Formation and Evolution of the Structure of the Universe, specially prepared for a general audience. Until 11 pm, the Observatory remained open for the public to observe assorted celestial objects.