

Minute and Resolutions of the Second Meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group

8 September 2016

1. The second meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group (herein referred to as BAWG) and the second BRICS Astronomy Workshop were held in Ekaterinburg, Russia, on 5-8 September 2016. The BAWG meeting was attended by senior officials and representatives of the respective Ministries for science and technology in Brazil (by video conference), Russia, India, China and South Africa.
2. The meeting noted the report on the workshop on Astronomical Data and Computation held the previous three days at the Ural Federal University and expressed its deep appreciation to the university for successfully hosting the workshop. Topics discussed and suggestions emanating from the workshop were integrated into discussions of the BAWG.
3. The BAWG took note of the good progress made on all initiatives agreed at its previous meeting, and reiterated the importance of all member countries to nominate their respective astronomy focal points and communicate them to the BAWG Secretariat in South Africa. The establishment of the BRICS Astronomy website was appreciated and it was agreed to upload the logo for the Indian Chairmanship of BRICS.
4. The participants in the BAWG meeting adopted the BAWG Terms of Reference.
5. Each member country gave a short overview of recent domestic developments and future plans in astronomy.
6. The BAWG took note of the “First Edition of the BRICS Young Scientist Conclave” meeting to be held in India in due course, and commended India on this initiative. The Indian focal point for astronomy will disseminate more information on this opportunity.
7. The BAWG noted progress on the draft Science Plan. Russia proposed adding a dedicated section on instrumentation and technology, and it was agreed to incorporate this into Section 3 of the document, and appropriately rename this section. Russia will

submit an amended version of the Science Plan to the Secretariat by 1 October 2016, and the Secretariat will then distribute it to all astronomy focal points. Member countries will have two months to submit comment on the version to the BAWG Secretariat which will then table a consolidated version at the next BAWG meeting, for final approval. Members agreed that the document was more a Framework for Scientific Cooperation than a Science Plan.

8. It was agreed that the above document needed to be complemented by a roadmap. On the basis of discussions during and about the workshop members identified several specific and some generic interventions and/or projects that could be undertaken and should be incorporated into the roadmap, such as:
 - Summer schools
 - Scientific symposia and workshops
 - Promote access by BRICS researchers to BRICS large astronomy facilities (and data)
 - Initiatives specifically focussed on engineering and technology developments
 - BRICS side-events at major international initiatives
 - An integrated database of small instruments
9. The BAWG Secretariat will draft a template in which member countries will indicate what sort of interventions they wish to volunteer during the three-year horizon, beginning in 2017; such interventions could be drawn from or informed by the above list (Point 8.), or could include other ideas – the key issue is that the member country should be willing to organise the event, project or intervention. The BAWG Secretariat will disseminate the template to the focal points by the end of November 2016, and member countries will submit their responses by the end of May 2017.
10. The document emerging from the process outlined in Point 9. will constitute the root of a medium-term roadmap for BAWG activities, whose first draft will be discussed at the next meeting.
11. India offered in principle to host the next BAWG meeting, coupled to a workshop on Instrumentation Development in Astronomy, and will consider approval of this offer by October, whereafter further details would be disseminated. In the event India is not

able to host the workshop and BAWG meeting, Brazil will explore the feasibility of hosting it, failing which South Africa would act as the host.

12. The BAWG Secretariat will establish from the BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat (i.e., the BRICS S&T Coordinators) the mechanism for selection of proposals to be supported through the BRICS STI funding instrument, and will inform members of the BAWG in this regard. Information about projects chosen for support in response to the 2016 call should be presented at the next BAWG meeting.