

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

23 September 2017

1. The third meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group (herein referred to as BAWG) and the associated BRICS Astronomy Workshop were held in Pune, India, on 21-23 September 2017. The BAWG meeting on 23 September was attended by senior officials and representatives of the respective Ministries for science and technology in Brazil (by video conference), Russia, India, and South Africa.
2. The meeting noted the successful conclusion of the workshop on Astronomy Infrastructure and Instrumentation held the previous two days at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics and expressed its deep appreciation to the centre for successfully hosting the workshop.
3. The BAWG took note of the progress made on all initiatives agreed at its previous meeting, and reiterated the importance of all member countries to nominate and update as relevant their respective astronomy focal points, and communicate them to the BAWG Secretariat in South Africa. The user-friendliness of the BRICS Astronomy website was appreciated.
4. BRICS Framework for Scientific Cooperation in Astronomy: At its Second Meeting the BAWG agreed to include some additional text from Russia in the draft framework, and to allow each country further opportunity to make inputs or comments via email, before tabling the document for ratification at the Third Meeting of the BAWG. The members of the BAWG ratified the final draft, which will be disseminated to all member countries by the Secretariat, subject to last-minute factual corrections by respective countries to the description of their domestic astronomy enterprise; members will submit to the Secretariat their edits to those sections by 31 October 2017.
5. In the previous BAWG meeting it was agreed that the Framework needed to be complemented by a roadmap. The meeting agreed that the list of BRICS Astronomy activities now under development (see paragraphs 10 and 11) effectively replaces the roadmap.
6. Each member country gave a short overview of recent domestic developments and future plans in astronomy to complement the more extensive overviews presented during the two-day workshop.
7. A report on the workshop on Astronomical Data and Computation Workshop held in Ekaterinburg in September 2016 was presented, and specific recommendations made

to enhance the BAWG seminars – these will be forwarded to the host of the next seminar. A suggestion for a more concerted programme of BRICS astronomy seminars will be developed for consideration at the next BAWG Meeting as part of mapping out the way forward.

8. The Secretariat presented a brief overview of the outcome of the first call for proposals under the BRICS science and technology stream, published in 2016. The BAWG noted that of twenty six proposals chosen for support, three were astronomy proposals.
9. The 2017 call for science and technology proposals under BRICS prioritises Information Technologies and High Performance Computing, although reference to astronomy is made under this thematic priority. BAWG members agreed to strongly encourage their respective astronomy communities to submit strong astronomy proposals under this theme, and others as relevant. BAWG members expressed their concern that Astronomy had been dropped as an explicit priority in the 2017 call.
10. The meeting agreed that in addition to competing for support under the BRICS open calls, the BAWG should also explore the feasibility of establishing flagship projects that would promote and advance the BRICS consortium as an important new global science and technology platform. Several ideas were discussed in an informal manner and without prejudice to any party.
11. It was agreed that member countries would identify up to four possible programmes or interventions each, some of which might eventually become flagship projects. Proposals should consider both timing and scale. Members should codify these ideas in not more than one page, rank them, and then submit the proposals to the Secretariat by the end of January 2018. The Secretariat would then disseminate the collected ideas, which would be extensively discussed at the next meeting of the BAWG. In addition, the next BAWG meeting will be preceded by a scientific symposium on the proposed flagship programmes.
12. The Secretariat is exploring with Brazil and China the feasibility of their hosting the Fourth Meeting of the BAWG and the workshop in late October or early November 2018, and will revert to the members in due course. In the event neither is able to host the meeting and the workshop, South Africa would do so.
13. The meeting expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of India and IUCAA for hosting the BAWG meeting and workshop.