



**Joint Statement on the occasion
of the International Year of Astronomy 2009**

The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the President of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) are pleased to announce the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 62nd session to declare 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy, and the designation by the United Nations of UNESCO as the lead agency, in collaboration with IAU, in the implementation of scientific, educational and cultural activities during the Year.

They further

Emphasize the importance of the potential contribution of the International Year of Astronomy (2009) to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and

Consider that UNESCO, through its successful partnership with IAU and other relevant entities involved in the international coordination of astronomical activities, provides excellent opportunities for cooperation among professional and amateur astronomers worldwide to promote astronomy education and help safeguard natural and cultural heritage connected with astronomical observations.

Convinced that financial contributions from donor agencies, industries and foundations are crucial for the implementation of the activities of the International Year, they

Recognize that astronomical observations have profound implications for the development of science, philosophy, culture and the general conception of the universe,

Share the view that the Year could play a crucial role, *inter alia*, in raising public awareness of the importance of astronomy and the basic sciences for sustainable development, in promoting access to the universal knowledge of fundamental science, and in increasing scientific literacy, and

1. *Encourage* the astronomical community to take advantage of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 to promote action at all levels aimed at increasing awareness among the public of the importance of astronomy, in terms of its scientific value, its educational role, its cultural importance and its power as a gateway to understanding science and its methods ;
2. *Invite* planetariums, observatories, science centres, museums and astronomical societies to share their resources and expertise among like-minded bodies and to make these resources available to the general public in support of this initiative; and,
3. *Encourage* industries, foundations and private entities to join and support this initiative by providing opportunities that will promote and enhance the appreciation of astronomy and its important scientific, educational and cultural implications for the development and advancement of humankind.



Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organisation
(UNESCO)



Catherine Cesarsky
President of the International
Astronomical Union (IAU)