

## **The International Year of Astronomy 2009: The Global Programme**

Pedro Russo, Lars Lindberg Christensen and Mariana Barrosa on behalf of IAU IYA2009 Secretariat and IAU IYA2009 Executive Committee Working Group

*IAU IYA2009 Secretariat, ESO/ESA/ST-ECF,  
Karl-Schwarzschild-Strasse 2, D-85748 Garching bei München,  
Germany.*

**Abstract.** The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has launched 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009) under the theme “The Universe, Yours to Discover.” IYA2009 marks the four hundredth anniversary of Galileo Galilei’s first astronomical observation through a telescope. It will be a global celebration of astronomy and its contribution to society and culture, with a strong emphasis on education, public engagement and the involvement of young people, with events at national, regional, and global levels throughout the whole of 2009. IYA2009 has been endorsed by UNESCO and the UN General Assembly. As of today, the International Year of Astronomy 2009 is supported by 118 National Nodes, 21 Organisational nodes, 11 IYA2009 Special Task Groups, 17 Organisational Associates, 11 Global Cornerstone projects. And two special projects the IYA2009 Global Cornerstone projects are global programmes of activities centred on a specific theme and represent the means to achieve the IYA2009’s main goals; whether it is the support and promotion of women in astronomy, the preservation of dark-sky sites around the world or educating and explaining the workings of the universe to millions, the Cornerstones will be the key facets of the success of the IYA2009. The authors will present a snapshot of the current global status of the IYA2009 programme.

### **1. The International Year of Astronomy 2009**

The vision of the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009) is to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the universe through the day and night time sky, and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery. All humans should realize the impact of astronomy and basic sciences on our daily lives, and understand better how scientific knowledge can contribute to a more equitable and peaceful society.

The International Year of Astronomy will be a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, highlighted by the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. The aim of the Year is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science under the central theme “The Universe, Yours to Discover.” IYA2009 events and activities will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy that embody an invaluable shared resource for all nations.

### **1.1. Goals, Objectives and Evaluation**

The IYA2009 activities will take place at the global and regional levels, and especially at the national and local levels. National Nodes in each country have been formed to prepare activities for 2009. These Nodes establish collaborations between professional and amateur astronomers, science centres, educators, and science communicators.

The major goals of IYA2009 are to:

1. Increase scientific awareness.
2. Promote widespread access to new knowledge and observing experiences.
3. Empower astronomical communities in developing countries.
4. Support and improve formal and informal science education.
5. Provide a modern image of science and scientists.
6. Facilitate new networks and strengthen existing ones.
7. Improve the gender-balanced representation of scientists at all levels and promote greater involvement by underrepresented minorities in scientific and engineering careers.
8. Facilitate the preservation and protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage of dark skies in places such as urban oases, national parks and astronomical sites.

IYA2009 will be evaluated by a qualitative and quantitative analysis of how well each objective, as implemented in hundreds of national, regional and global activities, has been reached. Data will be collected by online questionnaires after the completion of each activity. The IYA2009 Secretariat will coordinate the evaluation. A rigorous evaluation procedure will follow each of the four phases of the project:

- I.** Planning (2006–2007).
- II.** Preparation (2008).
- III.** Implementation (2009).
- IV.** Closing, follow-up, evaluation (2010).

## **2. Who is behind the IYA2009**

The project was jointly initiated by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

The central hub of the IAU activities for the IYA2009 is the Secretariat, based at the European Southern Observatory (ESO), in Garching, Germany.

This structure was established to coordinate activities during the planning, execution and evaluation of the year. The Secretariat liaises continuously with the IYA2009 stakeholders, the media and the general public to ensure the progress of the IYA2009 at all levels.

The IYA2009 website<sup>1</sup> has been set up and more than 100 member countries have now established national committees and appointed Single Points of Contact (SPoCs). The Secretariat and the website are the most important coordination and resource centres for all the countries taking part in the IYA2009, but most particularly for those developing countries that lack the national resources to mount major events alone.

### **2.1. IAU IYA2009 Executive Committee**

The task of the IAU IYA2009 Executive Committee Working Group is to define and coordinate IYA2009. Its members are:

Catherine Cesarsky (Chair) (IAU President)  
Ian Robson (UK)  
Dennis Crabtree (Canada)  
Lars Lindberg Christensen (Denmark - ESA/ESO)  
Claus Madsen (ESO)  
Norio Kaifu (Japan)  
Ian Corbett (IAU-UK)  
Doug Isbell (USA)  
Susana Deustua (USA)  
Robert Hill (UK)  
Kevin Govender (South Africa)  
Mary Kay Hemenway (USA)  
Yolanda Berenguer (UNESCO)

### **2.2. IYA2009 Secretariat**

The IYA2009 Secretariat has been working since and has nowadays three members working full time and profits from the collaboration of other ESO based structures.

The IYA2009 Secretariat Mission Statement is:

- To assure the correct implementation of the IYA2009 vision, goals and objectives.

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.astronomy2009.org>

- To plan, execute, coordinate and evaluate the global IYA2009 activities, projects and events.
- To liaise continuously with the Single Points of Contacts, Task Groups, Official Partners, Sponsors, Associates, Media Partners and Event Sponsors to ensure the progress of the IYA2009 at all levels.
- To serve the astronomy community, media and society with respect to all global IYA2009 issues.

### **2.3. Organisational Associates**

The IYA2009 Organisational Associates are the Organisations, Institutions and Agencies related to astronomy, space science and natural science which support the global coordination of IYA2009 financially. The IYA2009 Organisational Associates enjoy full involvement in the IYA2009 with outstanding rights and benefits.

1. European Southern Observatory
2. American Astronomical Society
3. L'Institut National des Sciences de l'Univers
4. Canadian Astronomical Society
5. Sterrewacht Leiden
6. Nederlandse Onderzoekschool Voor Astronomie (NOVA)
7. Science & Technology Facilities Council
8. Swiss Academy of Sciences
9. The Society for Popular Astronomy
10. National Research Council Canada
11. Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (Spain)
12. Centre National d'Études Spatiales
13. Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt
14. European Space Agency
15. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
16. National Astronomical Observatory of Japan
17. Armagh Planetarium

### **2.4. IYA2009 Nodes**

Presently there are 117 IYA2009 National Nodes in 113 participating countries and 20 Organisational Nodes.

## 2.5. Finances and Funding

While taking the most traditional steps to assure the financing of its global activities with the usual partners, like calling upon public and governmental institutions to collaborate, the IYA2009 is also exploring a wide variety of commercial approaches to fundraising. Private commercial and industrial companies with an international scope alongside private foundations that operate in educational and scientific fields are being contacted to seek funding supporting the operation of the Secretariat and the establishment of global activities. The IYA2009 is being presented as a “brand” with attractive benefits for potential sponsors in terms of public visibility. Fundraising has been one of the major activities of the Secretariat and this effort is starting to bear its first fruits as important sponsors are being secured.

Support for the project has been very strong with more than a third of the projected monetary requirements already received. The current IYA2009 income “in the bank” is 148,000 EUR (including the IAU contribution). The funding situation (as a snapshot of today the 23. June 2008) is: Invoices for an additional 100,000 EUR are out and we are working hard to encourage timely payments from our Organisational Associates and Global Partners. More funding is expected from the Organisational Associates, Partners and Sponsors in 2009 (145,000 EUR) and in 2010 (43,000 EUR). The expenses for the project are expected to total 434,000 EUR for the entire period.

## 3. IYA2009 Global Projects

### 3.1. Cornerstone Projects

*100 Hours of Astronomy: An event 400 years in the making.* This is a 100-hour, round-the-clock, round-the-globe event, including live webcasts from research observatories, public observing events and other activities around the world. One of the key goals is to allow as many people as possible to look through a telescope, as Galileo first did 400 years ago. The 100 Hours of Astronomy will take place from 2–5 April. The Moon is at first quarter on 2 April, so it is at a good phase for early evening observing over this period.

This event consists of two parts:

1. Live observatory webcasts, observing events and other activities connecting large observatories around the world, coordinated by the European Southern Observatory (ESO).
2. A 100-hour “sidewalk” observing event to allow as many people as possible to look through a telescope—, and see what Galileo saw, managed by Astronomers Without Borders (AWB).

Co-chairs: Douglas Pierce-Price ([dpiercep@eso.org](mailto:dpiercep@eso.org)) and Mike Simmons ([mikes@astronomerswithoutborders.org](mailto:mikes@astronomerswithoutborders.org))

*The Galileoscope: Millions looking at the sky.* Who does not remember the first time they looked at the Moon through a telescope and were amazed by the details of the mountains and craters? The same is true for Jupiter’s

cloud belts and its Galilean moons, Saturn's rings and remote sparkling star clusters. Observing through a telescope for the first time is an experience that shapes our view of the sky and the universe. The IYA2009 programme wants to share this observational and personal experience with as many people as possible across the world and is collaborating with the U.S. IYA2009 National Node to develop a simple, accessible, easy-to-assemble and easy-to-use telescope that can be distributed by the millions. Ideally, every participant in an IYA2009 event should be able to take home one of these little telescopes. This simple telescope enables people to build and observe with a telescope that is similar to Galileo's. Sharing these observations and making people think about their importance is one of the main goals of IYA2009: Promote widespread access to new knowledge and observing experiences. A do-it-yourself Galileoscope could be the key to pursuing an interest in astronomy beyond IYA2009, especially for people who cannot afford to buy a commercial telescope. We aim to give 10 million people their first look through an astronomical telescope in 2009. This is achievable if, for example, 100,000 amateur observers each show the sky to 100 people. Millions of small telescopes are sold every year, but anecdotal evidence suggests that most are rarely used for astronomy. A worldwide Telescope Amnesty programme will invite people to bring their little-used telescopes to IYA2009 events, where astronomers will teach people how to use them and offer advice on repairs, improvements and/or replacements, encouraging more people to stay involved in the hobby. We encourage the organisers of IYA2009 celebrations in all countries to promote similar activities, with a common goal of giving 10 million people worldwide their first look through an astronomical telescope. Chair: Rick Fienberg ([rfienberg@skyandtelescope.com](mailto:rfienberg@skyandtelescope.com))

*Cosmic Diary: The life of an astronomer.* The Cosmic Diary is not about the science of astronomy but rather what it is like to be an astronomer and a scientist. The Cosmic Diary aims to put a human face on astronomy. Professional astronomers will blog in text and images about their life, families, friends, hobbies and interests, as well as their work, their latest research findings and the challenges they face in their research. The bloggers represent a vibrant cross-section of working astronomers from around the world. They will write in many different languages and come from five different continents. Outside the observatories, laboratories and offices, they are musicians, parents, photographers, athletes, amateur astronomers. At work, they are managers, observers, graduate students, grant proposers, instrument builders and data analysts. At some point during this project all the bloggers will be asked to explain one particular aspect of their work to the public. In a true exercise of science communication with the public, these scientists will be asked to translate the nuts and bolts of their scientific research into more popular language. This will be their challenge. These "explanations" will be highlighted on the web at regular intervals and they will be used as the basis for a book and a documentary, which will be released during the IYA2009 as the legacy of this project. Chair: Mariana Barrosa ([mbarrosa@eso.org](mailto:mbarrosa@eso.org))

*Portal to the Universe: A one-stop universe of news.* The Portal to the Universe (PTTU) seeks to provide a global, one-stop portal for online astronomy content, serving as an index, an aggregator and a social networking site for astronomy content providers, laypeople, press, educators, decision-makers and scientists. The PTTU will feature news, image, event and video aggregation; a

comprehensive directory of observatories, facilities, astronomical societies, amateur astronomy societies, space artists, science communication universities; and Web 2.0 collaborative tools, such as the ranking of different services according to popularity, to promote interaction within the astronomy multimedia community. In addition, a range of “widgets” (small applications) will be developed to tap live into existing “live data.” Modern technology and the standardisation of metadata make it possible to tie all the suppliers of such information together with a single, semi-automatically updating portal.

The vision for the Portal is threefold:

1. Enabling access: To aggregate (pull) from content providers, including all astronomy-related dynamic content (e.g. RSS feeds of blogs, images, news, etc) and distribute (push) to users.
2. Indexing and archiving: To collect and maintain a central repository of useful information, including resources such as educational materials and addresses for all astronomy stakeholders such as amateur clubs, planetariums and observatories.
3. Enabling communication and collaboration: To create and maintain a network of all stakeholders, including a social network for everyone interested in astronomy.

Chair: Lars Lindberg Christensen ([lars@eso.org](mailto:lars@eso.org))

*She is an Astronomer: Breaking down misconceptions.* Promoting gender quality and empowering women is one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The IYA2009 Cornerstone project, She is an Astronomer, will promote gender equality in astronomy (and in science in general) and tackle gender bias issues by providing a web platform where neutral information and links about gender balance and other related useful resources are collected.

Approximately one quarter of all professional astronomers are women. The field continues to attract women and benefits from their participation, but there is a wide global variation. In some countries there are no female astronomers, while in others more than half the professional astronomers are female. Moreover, the significant number of female dropouts suggests that scientific careers are heavily affected by social and cultural factors and are not determined solely by ability.

The project targets a varied audience, including professional and amateur astronomers, students and all those who share an interest in the gender-equality problem in science and in astronomy in particular. The project will develop around its own dedicated website, which will host a special “Portrait Diary” section where female astronomers will present their own career paths, some aspects of their private lives and the difficulties they may have encountered in their professional life and during their education, set in the context of gender equality issues. As part of a voluntary ambassador programme professional astronomers will talk to female students in schools, colleges and universities near where they live and work. Co-chairs: Francesca Primas ([fprimas@eso.org](mailto:fprimas@eso.org)) and Enikő Patkos ([epatkos@eso.org](mailto:epatkos@eso.org))

*Dark Skies Awareness: Seeing in the Dark.* The arc of the Milky Way seen from a truly dark site is part of our planet’s cultural and natural heritage. It

is now more urgent than ever to preserve and protect dark night skies in places such as urban cultural landscapes, national parks and sites connected with astronomical observations, as well as to support the goals of UNESCO's thematic initiative, Astronomy and World Heritage, to preserve sites of astronomical importance for posterity. The ongoing loss of a dark night sky for much of the world's population is a serious and growing issue that not only impacts astronomical research, but also human health, ecology, safety, security, economics and energy conservation. According to the United Nations, 2008 will be the first year in which 3.3 billion people, over half of the world's population, will live in cities. With the growth of large cities in Africa and Asia, the number of people living in cities could climb to 5 billion by 2030. As cities grow, so does their impact on the global environment.

For this Cornerstone project the IAU will collaborate with the U.S. National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO), representatives of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), the Starlight Initiative and other national and international partners in dark sky and environmental education on several related themes. The focus will be on three main citizen-scientist programmes to measure local levels of light pollution. These programmes will take the form of "star hunts" or "star counts," providing people with a fun and direct way to acquire heightened awareness about light pollution through firsthand observations of the night sky. Together the three programmes will cover the entire International Year of Astronomy 2009, namely GLOBE at Night (in March), the Great World Wide Star Count (in October) and How Many Stars (January, February, April through September, November and December).

Partnerships are under discussion with existing programmes such as the World Night in Defence of Starlight (April 20), supported by UNESCO and the IAU; Earth Hour (March 28), (Inter) national Dark Sky Week, International Sidewalk Astronomy Night, Astronomers Without Borders, and The World at Night, as well as other IYA2009 Cornerstone projects such as the 100 Hours of Astronomy and the Galileo Teachers Program. Chair: Connie Walker (cwalker@noao.edu)

*Astronomy and World Heritage: Universal Treasures.* UNESCO and the IAU are working together to implement a research and education collaboration as part of UNESCO's thematic initiative, Astronomy and World Heritage. The main objective of this initiative is to establish a link between science and culture on the basis of research aimed at acknowledging the cultural and scientific values of properties connected with astronomy. This programme provides an opportunity to identify properties related to astronomy located around the world, to preserve their memory and save them from progressive deterioration. The support from the international community is needed to implement this activity and to promote the recognition of astronomical knowledge including through the nomination of sites that celebrate achievements in science. Chair: Anna Sidorenko-Dulom (a.sidorenko@unesco.org)

*Galileo Teacher Training Program: Teaching the Teachers.* The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) provides an excellent opportunity to engage the formal education community in the excitement of astronomical discovery as a vehicle for improving the teaching of science in classrooms around the world. An incredibly rich store of useful astronomy resources is available

for such an effort, much of it in digital form and freely available on the Internet. However, experienced educators and outreach specialists identify a critical impediment: many teachers lack the training to understand these resources or use them effectively in their curricula. To address this problem and to sustain the legacy of the IYA2009, the IAU—in collaboration the National Nodes and leaders in the field such as the Global Hands-On Universe project, the U.S. National Optical Astronomy Observatory and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific—is embarking on a unique global effort to empower teachers by developing the Galileo Teacher Training Program (GTTP). The GTTP goal is to create a worldwide network of certified “Galileo Ambassadors” by 2012. These Ambassadors will train “Galileo Master Teachers” in the effective use and transfer of astronomy education tools and resources into classroom science curricula. The Galileo Teachers will be equipped to train other teachers in these methodologies, leveraging the work begun during the IYA2009 in classrooms everywhere. Through workshops, online training tools and basic education kits, the products and techniques developed by this programme can be adapted to reach locations with few resources of their own, as well as computer-connected areas that can take advantage of access to robotic optical and radio telescopes, web cams, astronomy exercises, cross-disciplinary resources, image processing and digital universes (web and desktop planetariums). Co-chairs: Jim Manning ([jmanning@astrosociety.org](mailto:jmanning@astrosociety.org)) and Rosa Doran ([rosa.doran@gmail.com](mailto:rosa.doran@gmail.com))

*Universe Awareness: One Place in the Universe.* Universe Awareness (UN-AWE) is an international programme that exposes very young children in underprivileged environments to the scale and beauty of the universe. Universe Awareness illustrates the multicultural origins of modern astronomy in an effort to broaden children’s minds, awaken their curiosity in science and stimulate global citizenship and tolerance. Using the sky and children’s natural fascination with it as common ground, UN-AWE creates an international awareness of our place in the universe and our place on Earth. Chair: Carolina Ödman ([odman@strw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:odman@strw.leidenuniv.nl))

*From Earth to the Universe: The Beauty of Science.* The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) is an unprecedented opportunity to present astronomy to the global public. The Cornerstone project, From Earth to the Universe (FETTU) endeavours to bring wonderful astronomical images to a wider audience in non-traditional venues. In delivering these images and the science behind them to public parks, metro stations, art centres and other locations, we wish to engage individuals who might normally ignore or even dislike astronomy, or science in general. Co-chairs: Kimberly Kowal Arcand ([kkowal@cfa.harvard.edu](mailto:kkowal@cfa.harvard.edu)) and Megan Watzke ([mwatzke@cfa.harvard.edu](mailto:mwatzke@cfa.harvard.edu))

*Developing Astronomy Globally: Astronomy for All.* This Cornerstone project acknowledges that astronomy needs to be developed in three key areas: professionally—(universities and research); publicly (communication, media, and amateur groups) and educationally (schools and informal education structures). The focus will be on regions that do not already have strong astronomical communities. The implementation will be centred on training, development and networking—in each of these three key areas. This Cornerstone will use the momentum of the IYA2009 to help establish and enhance regional structures and networks that work on the development of astronomy around the

world. These networks will support the current and future development work of the IAU and other programmes and should ensure that developing regions can benefit from the IYA2009 and the work of the other Cornerstone projects. It should also address the question of the contribution of astronomy to development. Chair: Kevin Govender ([kg@sao.ac.za](mailto:kg@sao.ac.za))

### 3.2. Special projects

*The World at Night: One people, One Sky.* The World at Night (TWAN) will create and exhibit a collection of stunning photographs and time-lapse videos of the world's most beautiful and historic sites against a night-time backdrop of stars, planets and celestial events. These images will present the night sky to the public in an accessible and understandable manner. The sky rises above all the landmarks and symbols of different nations and regions creating a bridge to understanding and friendship. When borders vanish, political and cultural differences become irrelevant. The universal nature of astronomy provides the means to connect people worldwide through this common interest. TWAN's parent organisation, Astronomers without Borders, has several projects designed to work toward this goal. TWAN is an innovative new approach to expanding this global perspective.

TWAN brings together photographers, astronomers and organisations worldwide to create a new international—team. Material released by TWAN will include photographs, descriptions of the subject sites, the site's historical, cultural or environmental significance, how TWAN was conducted, how TWAN affected—participating photographers and related issues—of global importance such as peace, ecology and light pollution. TWAN will cooperate with the IYA2009 Cornerstone—projects to supplement their outreach efforts and will seek venues for a worldwide exhibition and educational events in 2009. Chair: Babak Tafreshi ([btafreshi@twanight.org](mailto:btafreshi@twanight.org))

*400 Years of the Telescope.* The 400 Years of the Telescope project is an exciting multimedia celebration of Galileo's first telescopic observations of the cosmos, and the resulting journey of discovery for humanity. The project includes:

- High definition documentary, 400 Years of the Telescope, to be distributed internationally for broadcast in 2009. Cinematic version available for normal and IMAX theaters
- Companion full-dome and traditional planetarium program, Two Small Pieces of Glass, distributed by the International Planetarium Society
- Outreach programs coordinated with educational organizations, amateur astronomy organizations, national broadcasters and planetariums.
- Interactive website <http://www.400years.org>
- 400 Years of the Telescope companion coffee table book and DVD
- Monthly newsletter
- Series of events, online forums and activities

Contact: Jennifer Oman ([jennifer@interstellarstudios.com](mailto:jennifer@interstellarstudios.com))

### 3.3. Task Groups

*Opening Ceremony.* This ceremony will take place on 15 and 16 January 2009 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Leading figures in the world of astronomy and young people from all participating countries will attend. Chair: Françoise Combes ([francoise.combes@obspm.fr](mailto:francoise.combes@obspm.fr))

*EU Seventh Framework Programme.* The IYA2009 has established a Special Task Group to investigate possible European Commission calls for proposals in the framework of the 7th Research and Development Framework Programme (FP7). Chair: Claus Madsen ([cmadsen@eso.org](mailto:cmadsen@eso.org))

*Kepler.* This Group will celebrate the 400th anniversary of Kepler's *Astronomia Nova*, the cornerstone of modern astronomy, in the year of the launch of NASA's Kepler mission to seek Earth-sized extrasolar planets. Co-chairs: Terence Mahoney ([tjm@iac.es](mailto:tjm@iac.es)) and David Koch ([d.koch@nasa.gov](mailto:d.koch@nasa.gov))

*New Year's Eve Events.* The main objective of this Special Task Group is to announce that 2009 is the International Year of Astronomy on 31 December 2008. Chair: Helen Sim ([helen.sim@csiro.au](mailto:helen.sim@csiro.au))

*Solar Physics.* This Special Task Group aims to communicate the particular relation of the Sun with the rest of the universe, and thereby the place of solar science in astronomy. Co-chairs: Bruno Sánchez-Andrade Nuño ([bruno@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:bruno@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de)) and Phillippe Kobel ([kobel@mps.mpg.de](mailto:kobel@mps.mpg.de))

*Philately.* This Special Task Group will create and maintain a global philatelic checklist of postal authority releases generated in celebration of the IYA2009 and/or astronomy in general.

Co-chairs: Michael Howell ([mhowell@mail.accd.edu](mailto:mhowell@mail.accd.edu)) and John Budd ([jwgbudd@earthlink.net](mailto:jwgbudd@earthlink.net))

*Evaluation.* IYA2009 is an excellent opportunity to increase public understanding and awareness of astronomy. But will they achieve their objectives? What lessons will we learn? Co-Chairs: Pedro Russo ([prusso@eso.org](mailto:prusso@eso.org)) and Mariana Barrosa ([mbarrosa@eso.org](mailto:mbarrosa@eso.org))

*New Media.* This Task Group provides online astronomy experiences where people work, play and learn; creates content to expose people to astronomy; distributes content for active and passive channels and uses a diverse suite of technologies to reach people on multiple platforms and in a range of online settings. Chair: Pamela Gay ([pamela@starstryder.com](mailto:pamela@starstryder.com))

*Galileo.* The aim of this task group is to raise Galileo Galilei's public profile through intra-community communication, formal and informal education and public outreach. Chair: Paolo Galluzzi ([galluzzi@imss.fi.it](mailto:galluzzi@imss.fi.it))

*Extrasolar Planets.* This Task Group will operate in an area that is both easy for the general public to understand and one of the greatest scientific adventures of the 21st century: extrasolar planets and the search for life on these planets. The Task Group will create and maintain <http://www.exoplanet2009.org>, an international, multilingual website. Chair: Jean Schneider ([jean.schneider@obspm.fr](mailto:jean.schneider@obspm.fr))

*Closing Ceremony.* As the IYA2009 comes to an end, we will join in a celebration of astronomy and astronomical experiences.

#### 4. Resources

Over the past few months, the Secretariat has generated a plethora of resources to spread word of the IYA2009 among members of the general population. These include everything from trailers to brochures to presentations, many of which are easily accessible through the astronomy2009 website. Some of these online resources include:

*IYA2009 Trailer:* In order to reach a vast majority of the world's population the IYA2009 trailer is available in 41 different versions with many different languages. Also included in this section of the website are a generic trailer and the musical theme for the trailer.

*IYA2009 Public Brochures:* The main brochure for the IYA2009 is available in English. The website also features a partnership opportunity brochure and a brochure with further information regarding the International Year of Astronomy 2009.

*IYA2009 Power Point Presentation:* Here individuals can find materials explaining more about the IYA2009 and astronomy in general. Featured are two presentations about the IYA2009, presentations in English and Spanish answering the question "What is Astronomy?" and presentations in English, Spanish and Persian explaining who developed the telescope.

*IYA2009 Logo and Branding:* This section features explanations regarding the use of IYA2009 logos and provides examples of everything from letter head to business cards.

To view these resources and more, please visit: [www.astronomy2009.org/resources-mainmenu-47.html](http://www.astronomy2009.org/resources-mainmenu-47.html).

#### 5. Closing remarks

The first of January 2009 will mark the beginning of the IYA2009 in the eyes of the public. However this immense worldwide science outreach and education event began more than 6 years before that date, with IAU's initiative in 2003.

Never before has such a network of scientists, amateur astronomers, educators, journalists and scientific institutions come together. When the IYA2009 officially kicks off in Paris on the 19th of January, it is estimated that more than 5000 people will already be directly involved on the organization of IYA2009 activities across the globe.

The IYA2009 aims to unite Nations under the umbrella of astronomy and science, while at the same time acknowledging cultural differences and national and regional particularities. This can be seen in the establishment of the National Nodes, the design of national Logos and Slogans, the construction of national websites for the participating countries and the production of 40 national different versions of the official IYA2009 promotional trailer.