



International
Astronomical
Union | Office of
Astronomy
for Development

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NEWS



Edinburgh Medal Jointly Awarded to OAD Director and IAU

The 2016 Edinburgh Medal was jointly awarded to Kevin Govender, Director of the OAD and the International Astronomical Union (IAU) on 30 March at the Edinburgh International Science Festival, to recognise their wide reaching contributions to science.

Read the [Press Release](#) for more details.



Meeting of Regional Offices

The 3rd face to face meeting of the Regional Offices was held from 2-4 March 2016 in Cape Town. It was the first meeting of all nine regional offices and was held immediately after the meeting of the OAD Steering Committee. Participants discussed challenges, opportunities and potential collaborations.

Read more on the [OAD website](#)



Celebrating UK/SA Science Excellence

The UK Science and Innovation Team in South Africa hosted a reception at the British Consulate Residence for OAD Director, Kevin Govender, winner of the 2016 Edinburgh Medal. It was attended by the South African Minister of Science & Technology, Naledi Pandor, and engaged over 40 high-level South African scientists and officials in the Astronomy/Big Data field.

Read the article on the [UK government website](#)



Inauguration of Portuguese Language Office of Astronomy for Development

The Portuguese Language Office (PLOAD), hosted by Núcleo Interactivo de Astronomia and the Institute of Astrophysics and Space Sciences, was inaugurated in Cascais on 5 May 2016. This marked the launch of the ninth Regional Office. PLOAD will deal with all aspects relating to Portuguese language and culture.

Read more on the [OAD website](#)

PROJECT UPDATES



Promoting Science Inclusion

Dr. Wanda Diaz-Merced led an initiative, in collaboration with the Cape Town Science Center and Buzani Kumalo from SAAO, to introduce Braille signage at the Science Center. Students from the Athlone School for the Blind visited the Science Center, for the first time, in January. It is part of a larger effort to improve Science accessibility for under-represented groups.

Read more on the [OAD website](#).



NASSP Summer School Project

The OAD contributed to the [NASSP](#) Summer School run by the University of Cape Town. The organisers assigned the 2016 Summer School project on the topic of outreach and the OAD assisted in advising the groups and judging the winner. The winning team is being funded by the OAD to implement their project plan this year.

REGIONAL OFFICES – HIGHLIGHTS

- Andean region is organizing Massive Open Online Courses in Spanish for TF1 and TF3
- Arab ROAD and LOAD hosted by Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences has a dedicated website at <http://aw-road.auass.com/>
- East African ROAD organized a public lecture in space science and technology areas by the chairperson of African Union Commission
- East Asian ROAD and LOAD is engaged in astrophysics curriculum development at the National University of Mongolia, where a new astrophysics "minor" degree will soon be established.
- Portuguese LOAD held its inaugural conference where memorandums of understanding were signed with representatives from Portugal, Brazil, São Tome and Principe, Cape Verde and Mozambique
- NARIT, the host of the South-East Asian ROAD, co-sponsored a Radio Astronomy Winter School with Korea University of Science & Technology and Graduate University for Advance Studies
- South West Asia ROAD and Armenian Astronomical Society held a conference on "Scientific Tourism in the South West Asian Region" for better collaboration between science and tourism
- Southern African ROAD hosted a visiting expert, Dr. Sohan Jheeta, who gave astronomy talks at the Copperbelt University, Mukuba Secondary School, Munali Secondary School and at the University of Zambia and also in Malawi
- West African ROAD has started discussion with a non governmental organization on using astronomy to promote peace in the region

MEETINGS AND VISITORS

- Professor Crain Soudien, CEO of the Human Science Research Council, visited the OAD in January 2016 to discuss various matters relating to Wanda Diaz's work with the visually impaired and to explore collaborations between the OAD and the HSRC.
- African Regional Head of Science and Innovation for the British High Commission, John Wade-Smith, visited the OAD to learn about its work especially in Africa
- OAD Director attended the DST's NSI Forum On International Cooperation On Science Technology & Innovation (focussing on the Global Innovation Fund)
- OAD Fellow Ramasamy Venugopal represented the OAD at Scifest Africa, the AVN Newton Fund Outreach Training programme, and the DST's conference on STEMI Olympiads and competitions –

all held during March 2016

- OAD Director attended the Networking Meeting and Steering Committee meeting of the Newton Fund AVN Project in Johannesburg. The OAD's role is both to expand the project beyond target countries and to assist with the education/outreach component
- Members of the Steering Committee convened at the OAD in March for the first face to face meeting. This is the second steering committee formed since the establishment of the OAD
- The annual meeting of the OAD steering committee, overlapping with a meeting of the regions, was addressed by Nithaya Chetty, NRF; Takalani Nemaungani, DST; and remotely by Piero Benvenuti, IAU General Secretary
- OAD Director Kevin Govender attended the Edinburgh International Science Festival in the UK to receive the Edinburgh Medal together with the IAU, on 30 March 2016. The event was attended by several of the initiators of the strategic plan and the IAU President and General Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Communicating Astronomy to the Public (CAP) Conference

May 16 - 20, 2016, Medellin, Colombia

<http://www.planetariomedellin.org/cap2016/english-version/cap-2016/important-dates/>

Global Hands-On Universe (GHOU2016) conference and Galileo Teacher Training Program (GTTP) international workshop

Aug 22 - 27, 2016, Stord, Norway

<http://handsonuniverse.org/ghou2016/second-announcement/>

XV Latin American Regional IAU Meeting (LARIM)

October 3-7, 2016, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

<http://larim.unal.edu.co/>

Workshop on Astronomy beyond the common senses for accessibility and inclusion

Oct 08 2016, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

<http://wai.unal.edu.co/information/>



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