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CNES's Science Programmes Committee (CPS) meets at agency's Head Office

CNES's Science Programmes Committee (CPS) met on Thursday 24 September at the agency's Head Office. The committee's chief purpose is to advise the CNES Board of Directors on matters relating to space science research and help it to shape the agency's science priorities.

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall kicked off the meeting by reviewing the highlights of this summer, in particular the publication of the first scientific results from Philae, comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko passing perihelion and the recent Declaration of Mexico on climate, which is of special importance in the run-up to the COP21 climate conference to be held in Paris this December.

This Declaration agreed by the heads of the world's space agencies underlines the importance of international cooperation and the contribution of satellites to observing climate change and keeping a check on commitments made to mitigate its effects. "Helping to make the COP21 a success is obviously fundamental and the Mexico Summit clearly went a long way towards assuring that it will be," said Jean-Yves Le Gall.

At today's meeting, the CPS and its Chair Jean-Loup Puget therefore resolutely focused their attention on the COP21.

The proposal from CNES and the space industry to engage the MicroCarb mission to observe atmospheric carbon dioxide—a priority of the scientific community in the light of impending global and regional climate change—and its launch in 2020 were also discussed at length. The CPS members were also updated on the challenges of space-based infrared Earth observation and its contribution to studying stress on ecosystems, water resources and urban areas.

The meeting also reviewed progress of the agency's Earth Observation and Universe Science programmes, as well as science challenges, recent results and prospects for material sciences in microgravity. Lastly, the Committee commended the 'Stratosciences' balloon campaign at Timmins in Canada and in particular the successful flight of the PILOT telescope.

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