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French-UAE space cooperation First CNES-United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAESA) Steering Committee meeting

Under the terms of the agreement signed 9 April, the CNES-UAESA Steering Committee met for the first time on Sunday 25 October in Abu Dhabi. Chaired by CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and UAESA President Khalifa Mohammed Al Rumaithi, the meeting defined areas of cooperation between the two agencies and arrangements for exchanging information and personnel.

This first Steering Committee meeting followed on from the agreement signed last April and confirmed the two agencies' desire to work together, as witnessed by numerous recent exchanges and meetings, including a UAESA delegation's visit to the Toulouse Space Centre in January and CNES's presence at the agency's official launch in Abu Dhabi in May.

The Steering Committee kicked off with presentations from CNES and UAESA of ongoing programmes by Marc Pircher, Director of the Toulouse Space Centre, and Mohamed Al Ahabbi, UAESA Director General. CNES underlined that after a year marked by international acclaim from the Rosetta-Philae mission in 2014, this year is focusing on preparations for the COP21 climate conference to be held in Paris in December.

The two agencies then detailed their current roadmaps, CNES concentrating on innovation and UAESA on its Hope mission to Mars. A seminar bringing together the agencies' specialists will be held in Toulouse in the weeks ahead and exchanges for students and engineers, space technology training for scientists and workshops on topics of shared interest will be organized.

After the Steering Committee meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "UAESA has quite spectacular ambitions. Despite its recent inception, the agency is already working on a large-scale space exploration project with its forthcoming Hope mission. This Steering Committee meeting gave us the opportunity to reaffirm our strong desire to work together, both on UAESA's Martian project and on the cutting-edge projects that CNES is conducting."

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