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France-Mexico space cooperation French-Mexican Strategic Council meeting reviews progress

Wednesday 10 February, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was in Mexico City for the meeting of the French-Mexican Strategic Council to review the progress of space cooperation between France and Mexico. The framework agreement signed by the two nations in April 2014 in Mexico City has quickly been set in motion and was instrumental in the success of the Heads of Space Agencies meeting in September 2015 at which the Mexico Declaration constituting the space agenda of the COP 21 climate conference was approved.

The French-Mexican Strategic Council was set up to nurture proposals and projects aimed at boosting bilateral cooperation between the two nations. Currently composed of 27 French and Mexican dignitaries, it is co-chaired by Jorge Castañeda Gutman, Mexico's former Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Philippe Faure, France's former Ambassador to Mexico.

French-Mexican relations concerning space are pursued through CNES and AEM, the Mexican space agency. CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and AEM Director General Francisco Javier Mendieta Jiménez signed a framework agreement in April 2014 during French President François Hollande's state visit to Mexico. This collaboration between the two agencies has been quickly consolidated, with the signature end 2014 of a specific cooperation agreement and another in July 2015 covering environmental, climate and ocean research. In September 2015, CNES and AEM were also instrumental in organizing a meeting of the world's heads of space agencies at the Paris Air Show, leading to the Mexico Declaration on the contributions of space to the study of climate change and monitoring of natural disasters. This declaration was adopted unanimously and marked the founding act of the space agenda of COP 21.

Yesterday's meeting in Mexico City reviewed the status of cooperation between CNES and AEM, who will be organizing a 'Space and Sea' workshop in Mexico this March for users of oceanography satellite data. Also on the agenda was the installation of a telescope in Mexico to track the French-Chinese SVOM astrophysics mission, as well as antennas for the GNSS network.

After the council meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I am delighted to note the continuing vitality of Mexico's space sector and the great ambitions it is pursuing. Since the signature of our framework agreement in April 2014, we have already achieved much together at both industrial and scientific levels. I would like once again to congratulate our partner AEM for its key role in promoting the space agenda of COP 21 and successfully engaging the international space community with CNES to mobilize its efforts in tackling climate change. Our role today is more important than ever before, since we must now work to implement the decisions reached at COP 21 and ensure that nations' commitments are being met."

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