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France-China space cooperation Status check on CFOSat and SVOM projects Preparation of Climate strand of IAC 2016 in Guadalajara

Monday 4 July in Beijing, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall met Xu Dazhe, Administrator of the China National Space Administration (CNSA), to discuss space cooperation between France and China and review progress on the flagship CFOSat and SVOM programmes the two agencies are pursuing together, and to prepare the Climate strand of the 2016 International Astronautical Congress (IAC 2016) taking place from 26-30 September in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Cooperation between CNES and CNSA is centred on two missions decided by the French and Chinese governments: CFOSat (China-France Oceanography Satellite), a science mission designed to study ocean surface wind and wave conditions, and SVOM (Space-based multi-band astronomical Variable Objects Monitor), an astronomy mission to observe and characterize gamma-ray bursts, the highest-energy phenomena in the Universe. SVOM is also eagerly awaited to confirm the nature of signals detected by the new generation of gravitational wave probes like LISA Pathfinder.

Space oceanography is key to understanding climate, which is why it is a domain of shared interest for both nations, as attested by the agreement signed in November 2015 in Beijing, in the presence of the French and Chinese Presidents, to establish a framework for long-term cooperation on climate change studies. This commitment has now been materialized through the New Delhi Declaration that came into effect on 16 May. At their first meeting since its entry into effect, Jean-Yves Le Gall and Xu Dazhe took the opportunity to discuss this declaration in which they both played an instrumental role. CNES and CNSA have agreed to step up exchanges between the French and Chinese research communities, notably to exploit data from CFOSat, and to focus their efforts on derived applications, particularly for ocean weather forecasting.

A status report will be presented at IAC 2016 from 26-30 September in Guadalajara, Mexico. In particular, a plenary event entitled **“How Will Space Agencies Contribute to the Implementation and Follow-up of the Paris Agreement during COP 21?”** will be bringing together heads of space agencies from around the world on Tuesday 27 September to review these issues as a prelude to the COP22 to be held in Marrakesh in November.

After the meeting, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: “Our collaboration with CNSA is proving increasingly rich and the two main missions we are working on together are addressing the hot topics of the moment: SVOM is set to further the study of gamma-ray bursts and gravitational waves, while CFOSat will deliver vital data in the field of space oceanography that are set to make a key contribution to climate change research.”

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