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France-Morocco space cooperation Preparing the space agenda for COP22 CNES takes part in “Defence and Climate Change” conference in Rabat

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall was in Rabat on Wednesday 7 September to take part in the “Defence and Climate Change” conference—a key milestone in the preparations for COP22, to be held in Marrakesh from 7 to 18 November. His attendance was at the invitation of Abdellatif Loudiyi, Morocco’s Minister Delegate to the Head of Government for the administration of National Defence, whose remit covers space affairs.

Space relations between France and Morocco have gone from strength to strength in recent years, as illustrated by the framework agreement signed between CNES, the Royal Centre for Space Studies and Research (CRERS) and the Royal Centre for Remote Sensing (CRTS), on 28 May 2015 in the presence of the French and Moroccan Prime Ministers. These relations have developed yet further over the last few months, as the two countries prepare the space agenda for this November’s COP22 in Marrakesh.

Yesterday’s conference on “Defence and Climate Change”, held in Rabat under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, centred on space and its contribution to preserving our climate, and implementation of the Paris Agreement. Speaking on the theme of “Space technologies—tools for tackling and adapting to climate change”, Jean-Yves Le Gall highlighted that it was satellites that first brought climate change to light and that will play a key role in its protection. He gave the example of European satellites MicroCarb and Merlin, which will start measuring atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane before the end of the decade.

He went on to reiterate the international space community’s determination to redouble its efforts in order to help reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement. It’s a fight that can only be undertaken through cooperation, and that has now been made possible by the New Delhi Declaration that was adopted by more than 60 countries this May. CNES’s President also mentioned the importance of dual satellite systems and of sharing between civil and military users. This is one of CNES’s strengths, for both Earth observation and telecommunications.

After the conference, Jean-Yves Le Gall said: “I am grateful to my Moroccan counterparts for their invitation and for the success of this conference, which has shown once again that space is a vital tool for tackling global warming. Thanks to the historic outcome of COP21, and to the cooperative framework created by the New Delhi Declaration, space agencies have—now more than ever before—a key role to play in climate protection. This makes it extremely important to have regular meetings, as we will once again at COP22 in Marrakesh.”

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