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New Year wishes at the Guiana Space Centre

CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall and Didier Faivre, Director of the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), presented the agency's New Year wishes to local institutional and socio-professional partners and paid tribute to the centre's teams for their contributions to a year of extraordinary accomplishments for Europe's space programme.

This year's gathering was held Monday 16 January at the Guiana Space Centre (CSG), one of CNES's four centres of excellence, to pay tribute to all of the teams for their efforts over the course of the year in conducting 11 launches and accomplishing Ariane 5's 76th straight successful flight. It also provided the opportunity for CNES to present its New Year wishes to all of its parliamentary and institutional partners, and to elected local representatives, government agencies and socio-professional stakeholders.

Jean-Yves Le Gall thanked all of those who contributed in 2016 to the achievements of the CSG, one of spacefaring Europe's most important assets, starting with the employees of CNES in the agency's roles as launch base operator, investor and developer. He also underlined that the 11 launches completed during the year included the orbiting of four satellites for Europe's emblematic Galileo satellite navigation system, enabling initial services to start operating.

Jean-Yves Le Gall next pointed to CNES's role in French Guiana and its actions in support of local development. To this end, the agency signed an agreement with the French Guiana education authority on model aircraft projects, zero-gravity experiments and a partnership with the University of Guiana on e-learning and the Saint-Laurent du Maroni teaching hub, funded student grants and invested €3 million in the project to connect French Guiana to Europe via a cable designed to bring fast-broadband to underserved areas in the region. He also lauded the collaboration with the Guianese regional council, which notably helped to secure an increase in funding under the government-regional council plan.

Jean-Yves Le Gall also emphasized that French Guiana can look forward to a bright future with the development of Ariane 6 and a record launch manifest of six launches in three months for the proven Ariane 5, Soyuz and Vega workhorses during the first half of this year. CNES is paying very close attention to the local economic spin-offs of the Ariane 6 programme, for example through the agency's SME plan and work contracts for young job seekers. Construction of the new ELA4 launch complex is expected to generate 600 jobs in 2018, of which 70% will go to local people.

At the end of the gathering, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: "I want to congratulate everyone at the CSG for being a part of what was a great year for space. Upcoming launches and the ramp-up of development work on Ariane 6 pose new challenges for which your dedication will once again prove crucially important. I would also like to most warmly thank the Préfet and government agencies, institutional stakeholders and local authorities, and all of the firms involved, without whom the successes achieved this year would have been impossible."

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