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## France-Israel space cooperation CNES at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ilan Ramon Conference “Bringing Space Down To Earth”

**CNES and IAF President Jean-Yves Le Gall was at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ilan Ramon Conference in Herzliya, Israel, on Sunday 29 and Monday 30 January, on the theme “Bringing Space Down To Earth”. He took this opportunity to laud the value of international cooperation through the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and to meet his counterpart at the Israel Space Agency (ISA).**

This year’s event, under the patronage of Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), took place on Sunday 29 and Monday 30 January in Herzliya, Israel. Jean-Yves Le Gall spoke about science, exploration and their benefits to humankind alongside ESA Director General Jan Wörner, Roberto Battiston, President of the Italian space agency ASI, and ISA Director General Avi Blasberger in the presence of Ofir Akunis, Israel’s Minister for Science, Technology and Space, and ISA President Isaac Ben Israel.

Jean-Yves Le Gall and Isaac Ben Israel also met to discuss current and future French-Israeli cooperation projects. They noted with satisfaction the progress made on their joint Venus mission (Vegetation and Environment on a New Micro-Satellite) to be launched from the Guiana Space Centre (CSG) by Vega in mid-2017. Venus will monitor vegetation at high spatial resolution and lay the groundwork for Copernicus services, as well as flight-qualify the Israeli Hall Effect Thruster (IHET) system. This launch will mark Israel’s return to the CSG 20 years after the launch of Amos-1 by Ariane 4.

CNES and ISA’s Presidents then reviewed ongoing joint R&T efforts, which are progressing well under the agreement signed in 2015. They noted with satisfaction that a key milestone has been reached in working towards a new joint climate-monitoring mission for which several concepts are under study by the two nations’ scientific communities.

At the end of his stay, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented: “As always, it was a great pleasure for me to be here in Israel and to meet my counterparts at ISA. Our longstanding and fruitful cooperation is set to gain new momentum with the launch of Venus from the Guiana Space Centre and the promising projects we are working on in the wake of the COP21. I would particularly like at this time to pay tribute to Ilan Ramon, Israel’s first astronaut in whose honour this conference is named, since France currently has an astronaut aboard the International Space Station. From a more personal standpoint, I would also like to say that the success of the 66<sup>th</sup> International Astronautical Congress in Jerusalem in 2015 will always remain etched in my memory, as it was in that historic place that the international space community did me the honour of electing me as IAF’s President.”

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