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Promoting diversity in the space industry

Wednesday 7 March in Paris, at the invitation of ANRT, the French research and technology association, and in partnership with the Pink Innov' and Femmes & Sciences women's advocacy groups, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall took part in a symposium on the impacts of gender diversity on careers in research and innovation, opened by Frédérique Vidal, Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, where he spoke in his capacity as President of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF).

Jean-Yves Le Gall looked back to the inception of IAF in 1951 in the midst of the Cold War to foster dialogue between scientists worldwide and encourage cooperation across political divides. Today, IAF has 343 members from 68 countries. He then recalled that on becoming taking over as IAF President in September 2016 he set out its Global Innovation Agenda 2016-2019 to assure IAF's development and ready it for the global challenges facing the space community. This agenda, designed to help the space community evolve in a more open world, is founded on seven priority actions. One of these is fostering the principles of 3G diversity—for gender, generation and geography—to which IAF's President attaches special importance.

To illustrate his point, Jean-Yves Le Gall commented the [diversity video](#) in which IAF surveyed its member community, pointing in particular to the under-representation of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education and careers—the first 'G' of 3G—as a missed opportunity to take advantage of the fresh perspective they can bring to the table. With regard to the second 'G' (Generation), he stressed the need to harness the enthusiasm of young generations and give them free rein to pursue their passions and foster the experimental approach required to conceive new solutions. Lastly, with respect to the third 'G' (Geography), he emphasized that ethnic diversity is a rich seam of talent, experience and cultures to be tapped into, stimulating creativity and boosting innovation.

Jean-Yves Le Gall then presented the new IDEA (International Diversity and Equality in Astronautics) platform created to nurture lively and open debate on diversity within IAF, illustrated in the [IDEA video](#). This platform is designed to help IAF play a pivotal role in promoting the principles of diversity and equality within the world space community and to lead by example in the area of 3G. It thus aligns closely with IAF's motto of Connecting @ll Space People.

After listing numerous concrete applications in his address, Jean-Yves Le Gall concluded: "IAF was born out of a desire to bring cultures and generations closer together, and today it is working to create harmony between us, for in space we are all simply humans, irrespective of gender, generation and geography, and we are all connected together to Earth."

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