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Edited by

Piero Benvenuti

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH GENERAL
ASSEMBLY HONOLULU 2015

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Nighttime panorama of Halekalā, Maui Island, Hawai'i

Credit: Jason K. Chu

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Preface

The IAU *Transactions B* series report the non-scientific, administrative activities that take place during the General Assembly (GA). These reports are very important from the historical point of view, because they record all the essential decisions taken by the main governing body of the IAU: the approval of the financial accounts and of the proposed budget for the next triennium, the admission of new National Members and Individual members, the evaluation of Division and Commission reports, the approval of Resolutions, etc.

The XXIX GA has been characterised by the completion of the internal restructuring that began in 2012 at the XXVIII GA in Beijing with the approval of the new 9 Divisions. At the time, aiming at a smooth transition, the existing Commissions remained unchanged, they were only re-allocated to the new Divisions. As announced in Beijing, all the old Commissions had to terminate at the XXIX GA and new ones (which could also be a continuation of the existing) had to be approved in Honolulu.

Following a Call for Proposal for the new Commissions, they were analysed and discussed by the Executive Committee in its 95th Meeting (Padova, April 15-17, 2015) and 35 Commissions were finally approved, together with the elected Presidents and Organising Committees, in the 96th EC Meeting (Honolulu, Aug 2nd, 2015). This action completed the restructuring of the Union.

In order to mark this important milestone in the history of the IAU, it was decided to dedicate the Volume XXIXA of the *Transactions A* of the IAU to the Reports by the old Commissions. The Volume, edited by Thierry Montmerle, is entitled “Commissions legacy Reports”: because of this, the Chapter VI of the current *Transactions B* Volume, which is traditionally dedicated to the Commissions Reports, has been left empty. In addition, since most of the affiliation to the new Commissions took place after the XXIX General Assembly, the Chapter XI of this *Transactions B* Volume, only lists the members of the old Commissions, updated to August 2015.

An additional novelty in the scientific programme of the XXIX GA, was the substitution of the meetings called “Joint Discussions” (JD) and “Special Sessions” (SpS) with a single type of meeting called “Focus Meetings”. As a matter of fact, the distinction between the previous two type of meetings had become more and more diffuse and their replacement in a single category was in order. The proceedings of the JD and SpS were traditionally published in the Volumes called “Highlights in Astronomy”: the last issue of the Series, Vol. 16, was published after the XVIII GA in Beijing while the new Series “Astronomy in Focus” was inaugurated at the XXIX GA in Honolulu and collects in two Volumes the proceedings of the new “Focus Meetings”. The Proceedings of the 6 Scientific Symposia that took place during the GA were published separately by Cambridge University Press in the Series IAU Symposia.

The General Assembly welcomed the re-admission of Columbia as a National Member and of 1199 new Individual Members from 55 Countries. The XXIX GA also offered the occasion to sign the Agreement for the constitution of 5 new Regional Nodes of the Office of Astronomy for Development: the South-West Asian Regional Office at Yerevan, Armenia, the Andean Regional Office at Bogotá, Colombia and Santiago, Chile, the Arab Regional Office at Amman, Jordan, the West African Regional Office at Nsukka, Nigeria and the Portuguese Language Expertise Centre in Porto, Portugal.

Strictly connected with the growth of the world network of OAD Regional Nodes was the Resolution B1, approved by the GA, which extends the validity of the “Strategic Plan 2010-2020: Astronomy for Development” until the XXXI GA to be held in August

2021 in Busan, Republic of Korea (see Chapter II). The same Resolution also assigned to the Executive Committee to prepare an extended “Strategic Plan” to be presented for approval at the XXX GA in August 2018 in Vienna.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the XXIX General Assembly in Honolulu was animated by some local group protesting against the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on top of the Mauna Kea mountain. The protest was always pacific and it did not interfere with the scientific activities of the general Assembly, although the foreseen visits to the Mauna Kea Observatory were cancelled for preventive security measures.

A sincere thank to the American Astronomical Society, to the Hawai‘ian Astronomical Institutes and to the local Government for organizing an exceptionally fruitful and pleasant General Assembly, in one of the most beautiful place in the world and most renown astronomical site!

Piero Benvenuti
General Secretary