

## **Report on the 9<sup>th</sup> COSPAR Capacity-Building Workshop**

The “9<sup>th</sup> COSPAR Capacity-Building Workshop in Space Optical and UV Astronomy in the Asia-Pacific Region” was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 1<sup>st</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> June, 2008. The location of the workshop was the Judicial and Legal Training Institute (ILKAP).

A total of 30 “student participants” and 8 lecturers took part. The former included 9 from Malaysia, 9 from India, 4 from China, 3 from Indonesia 2 from Iran, 2 from Vietnam and 1 from Pakistan. The director of the workshop who was responsible for a large part of the detailed planning was Prof Martin Barstow, University of Leicester, UK, but because of family illness he was unable to attend, and the leadership was taken over at short notice by Dr Duccio Machetto.

The lecturing team consisted of:

Dr Duccio Machetto, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA

Mr David Boyce, University of Leicester, UK

Prof Ana Inez Gomez de Castro, Instituto de Astronomia y Geodesia, Madrid, Spain

Prof Norbert Kappelmann, Institut für Astronomie und Astrophysik Tübingen, Germany,

Dr Jayant Murthy, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India

Prof Isabella Pagano, Osservatorio Astrofisico di Catania, Italy

Dr Megan Sosey, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA

Dr Prajval Shastri, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India.

Mr Mark Mahabir, University of Leicester, UK, provided specialist help with the software and computer systems which are a vital part of these workshops. Prof Peter Willmore, Chair of the COSPAR Panel on Capacity-Building, attended on behalf of COSPAR.

The programme was divided roughly equally between lectures on both the science and the software and data analysis of the Hubble Space Telescope, FUSE and GALEX missions and practical sessions. The latter included both an exercise on proposal preparation and a project, but the latter was the major task. The last part of the last day was devoted to presentations from the 18 project teams, who had worked on a wide range of scientific topics in either optical or UV spectroscopy or imaging. The presentations are available on the workshop website at [www.angkasa.gov.my/cospar2008](http://www.angkasa.gov.my/cospar2008). The topics were tailored to the current or future research interests of the individual participants. The work described showed a considerable level of achievement, given the limited time available.

ILKAP provided a very pleasant working environment. We all went on trips to Kuala Lumpur proper over the weekend (ILKAP is in a suburb of Kuala Lumpur) to see the sights.

Practical support throughout the workshop came from a team from ANGKASA, the Malaysian Space Agency, led by Dr Fairos Asillam. They looked after our needs to an unusual degree and their efforts ensured that everything ran smoothly.

Dr Murthy and Prof Willmore gave public lectures in two local universities on topics in space science.

This is the first workshop to be held since the new programme of COSPAR Fellowships was initiated. This programme is intended to facilitate short visits by workshop participants to collaborating institutes, usually those from which the lecturers come. These visits should take place in the years immediately following the workshop and are for carrying out joint research. Provisional agreement to take part from institutes in India, Spain, Italy and UK has already been offered.

These workshops are always related if at all possible to space activities in the host country, and indeed this is one of the criteria for selection into the COSPAR programme. At the present time, space science and astronomy are receiving strong support from the Malaysian government. To ensure that these efforts gain maximum benefit from the workshop, discussions were held with the supervisors of those Malaysian participants who are postgraduate students, both in the selection of projects, and also in relation to possible follow-up activities. It is expected that the fellowship programme will be especially valuable in this connection.

Funding for the workshop came from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and ANGKASA and from the International Astronomical Union and COSPAR, and all these bodies are thanked for their help.

The Organising Committee consisted of:

Dr. Mustafa Bin Subari, Acting Director General, ANGKASA- Chairman  
Prof. Martin Barstow, University of Leicester, UK  
Prof Dipankar Bhattacharya, IUCAA, Pune, India  
Prof. Fuzhen Cheng, University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei, China  
Prof. J P de Greve, International Astronomical Union  
Dr. H Haubold, UNOOSA, Vienna  
Dr. Hasan Kassim, University of Malaya, Malaysia  
Dr. Hakim L. Malasan, Bandung Technology Institute, Indonesia  
Dr. R Missoten, UNESCO, France  
Prof. Mazlan Othman, UNOOSA, Vienna  
Dr B Paul, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India  
Prof. Peter Willmore, University of Birmingham, UK  
Prof. Suijian Xue, National Astronomical Observatories of China, Beijing, China  
Prof. Dr. Baharuddin Yatim, National University of Malaysia, Malaysia  
Prof. Mohd Zambri Zainuddin, University of Malaya, Malaysia  
Mhd Fairos Asillam, ANGKASA - Secretary