

BRICS ASTRONOMY WORKING GROUP MOOTS NETWORKING OF EXISTING TELESCOPES

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: BRICS, IBSA and India

Requirement: Each country was required to present the scientific work carried out. | Photo Credit: [Gil-Design](#)

The BRICS Astronomy Working Group has recommended networking of telescopes in member countries and creating a regional data network.

Under the science, technology and innovation track of the BRICS 2021 calendar, India hosted the seventh meeting of BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG) on online mode from May 19 and 20. Also present were astronomers from these countries. In the BAWG meeting, the delegates agreed to develop a flagship project in this area. It witnessed participation from all five BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – with more than 50 participants, including researchers, academicians and government officials.

The members of the working group also indicated future directions of research in this area such as building a network of intelligent telescopes and data, study of transient astronomical phenomena in the universe, big data, artificial intelligence, machine learning applications to process the voluminous data generated by the enhanced multi-wavelength telescope observatory.

The delegates deliberated on strategic and operational matters and recommended the networking of existing telescopes in BRICS countries and creating regional data network. They agreed to develop a flagship project in this area, according to a statement by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. From the Indian side, the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, and the DST coordinated the meeting.

The BAWG, which provides a platform for BRICS member countries to collaborate in the field of astronomy, recommended that each country should present the scientific results of the work being carried out in their country. This will help seek funding support to realise the flagship project whenever funding opportunities were announced by BRICS funding agencies. The BAWG noted the importance of enhancing collaboration among astronomers from the BRICS countries.

S K Varshney, head of international cooperation division of the DST, presented India's perspectives, and lead scientific researchers from each BRICS country presented their country report which highlighted the research activities and infrastructure they have created.

India assumed the BRICS Presidency from January 2021. About 100 events, including ministerial level meetings, senior official meetings, and sectorial meetings or conferences, stand to be organised in 2021.

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In Indonesia, at least 81% of forested land cleared to produce palm oil is estimated to be illegal, the report said.

END

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