



THE UNITED NATIONS PROCLAIMS AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT IN 2015

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly 68th Session has today proclaimed 2015 as the **International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL 2015)**. This International Year has been the initiative of a large consortium of scientific bodies together with UNESCO, and will bring together many different stakeholders including scientific societies and unions, educational institutions, technology platforms, non-profit organizations and private sector partners.

In proclaiming an International Year focusing on the topic of light science and its applications, the United Nations has recognized the importance of raising global awareness of the importance of how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture and health. As the Chairman of the IYL 2015 Steering Committee John Dudley says: "An International Year of Light is a tremendous opportunity to ensure that international policymakers and stakeholders are made aware of the problem-solving potential of light technology. Photonics provides practical and cost-effective solutions to challenges in so many different areas: energy, sustainable development, climate change, health and agriculture."

The International Year of Light will celebrate a number of important anniversaries that take place in 2015, from the first studies of optics 1000 years ago during the Islamic Golden Age, to discoveries in internet optical fiber technology in 1965. The study of light is accessible to all ages and all cultures, and light is a tremendous subject to motivate education. For centuries it has transcended all boundaries, including geographic, gender, age, culture and race.

The IYL 2015 resolution was submitted to the United Nations Second Committee on 6th November 2013 by the nation of Mexico, and delegates from both Mexico and New Zealand spoke to support the submission. The resolution was adopted with co-sponsorship from 35 countries: Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Palau, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and United States of America. This impressive list of co-sponsors reflects the truly international and inclusive nature of the theme of an International Year of Light

The global IYL2015 consortium is gearing up rapidly to develop an exciting programme of activities for 2015. For more information, and to be placed on a **mailing list for updates**, please contact light@eps.org Downloads are available from www.eps.org/light2015

Background Information

The International Year of Light 2015 (IYL 2015) partnership was formed in 2010 and currently consists of over 100 stakeholders including learned societies, educational institutions, networks, technology platforms and other non-profit organizations. The partners include professionals and volunteers in areas ranging from technology and engineering to art and culture, and come from Africa, Europe, the Americas, Eurasia, Asia and Australasia. Young people are represented prominently through the many international student chapters of international learned societies. The **founding science partners** of the IYL 2015 consortium include the African and European Physical Societies (AfPS and EPS), the International Commission on Optics (ICO), the Optical Society (OSA), the international society for optics and photonics (SPIE), the international network of light source facilities (Lightsources.org), the New Zealand Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of New Zealand, the European Centre for Outreach in Photonics (ECOP), and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).



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YEAR OF LIGHT**

The IYL 2015 is endorsed by a number of other international Scientific Unions and the International Council of Science ICSU. The IYL 2015 will be administered by an International Steering Committee in collaboration with the UNESCO International Basic Sciences Programme at UNESCO HQ in Paris and a Secretariat at The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) which is a UNESCO Category 1 Institute.

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) will play a central role in promoting outreach with regard to celebrating the particular anniversary in 1965 of the discovery of the cosmic microwave background light replica from the big bang, and in raising awareness of the need for innovative lighting solutions for dark sky initiatives.

The major scientific anniversaries that will be celebrated during 2015 are: the works on optics by Ibn Al-Haytham in 1015; the notion of light as a wave proposed by Fresnel in 1815; the electromagnetic theory of light propagation proposed by Maxwell in 1865; Einstein's theory of the photoelectric effect in 1905 and of the embedding of light in cosmology through general relativity in 1915; the discovery of the cosmic microwave background by Penzias and Wilson, and Charles Kao's achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication, in 1965.

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