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## CNES at the first IAA International Conference on Climate Change

**CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall delivered the opening speech today at the first International Conference on Climate Change and Space-Based Disaster Management organized by the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) and the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) from 26 to 28 February in Kovalam, Kerala, India.**

This conference, co-organized by IAA, IISL and the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), is focused chiefly on the many ways in which space is helping to enhance our understanding of the climate. Of the 50 essential climate variables (ECVs) that scientists are closely watching, 26 can only be monitored from space, which demonstrates its importance in keeping track of climate change.

IAA is a non-governmental organization recognized by the United Nations that brings together 1,200 international experts in astronautics from 75 countries. It aims to foster the development of astronautics for peaceful purposes, honour individuals who have distinguished themselves in a related branch of science or technology and encourage international cooperation in the advancement of aerospace science.

Invited to deliver the conference's opening speech, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall began by stressing the historic challenge now facing space to preserve the future of our planet : "Space agencies cannot provide the solutions to curb climate change. But without them, no one ever will". He continued : "Space observatories are vital both to understand climate change and to shape the right response".

He then underlined the "vital role of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)" and the fact that "Europe and especially France are leading players in climate observation". In this domain, the Copernicus, Jason, SWOT and Merlin programmes are hugely important, while French-Indian cooperation is achieving great results, notably with the Megha-Tropiques and SARAL-AltiKa missions.

"The COP 21 global climate summit in Paris in December, IAA's stature and universal voice, and international cooperation in space should all converge towards a broad consensus on protecting our planet and monitoring it with space data collected regularly and analysed continuously over time," noted Jean-Yves Le Gall. He concluded by insisting on the need for all concerned to take up this challenge, as in the words of the United Nations Secretary General : "There is no Plan B since there is no Planet B".

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### Contacts

Pascale Bresson  
Alain Delrieu  
Didier Jau  
Julien Watelet

Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 75 39  
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 74 04  
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 76 77  
Tel. +33 (0)1 44 76 78 37

[pascale.bresson@cnes.fr](mailto:pascale.bresson@cnes.fr)  
[alain.delrieu@cnes.fr](mailto:alain.delrieu@cnes.fr)  
[didier.jau@cnes.fr](mailto:didier.jau@cnes.fr)  
[julien.watelet@cnes.fr](mailto:julien.watelet@cnes.fr)

[cnes.fr/presse](http://cnes.fr/presse)