PREFACE

Astronomical site testing has become a very active area in modern astronomy. The complexity of ground base observations and the high cost of astronomical facilities demand a better characterization of the sites that will host the future extremely large telescopes. The detailed, reliable and long term testing of a site is nowadays a key aspect in the decision making process. A variety of characteristics must be carefully assessed, in terms both of precision and variability, including fractional cloud cover, precipitable water vapor, long-term weather patterns, prevailing winds and wind flow across local topographic features, seeing and turbulence profiles, geologic activity, geotechnical characteristics, and light pollution. Also, it has become evident that the continuous characterization of operating observatories is very important for their efficient use. However, a lack of agreement still exists on some areas regarding the parameters and methodology to accomplish the site evaluation. Many groups around the world are working in this matter and studying sites that will make possible to produce astronomical data of superb quality, both to improve our astronomical knowledge and to lead to new discoveries.

For this reason, the Instituto de Astronomía at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (IA–UNAM), decided to organize a "Workshop on Astronomical Site Evaluation". The purpose of this meeting was to gather the expertise of colleagues from several site testing projects around the world, to discuss the relevant parameters and instrumentation for site evaluation, and to compare the methodology for data acquisition and reduction of such parameters

The workshop was held on March 13–15, 2007 at the Observatorio Astronómico Nacional in the summit of the San Pedro Mártir Sierra in Baja California, Mexico operated by the IA-UNAM.

Our thanks to the Scientific Organizing Committee:

Marc Sarazin (ESO), Matthias Schöck (TMT, USA), Andrei Tokovinin (NOAO, Chile), Jean Vernin (U. Nice, France), Marc Chun (IA-UHawaii, USA), Casiana Muñoz-Tuñón (IAC, Spain), Irene Cruz-González (UNAM, Mexico, chair), and Juan Echevarría (UNAM, secretary).

and to the Local Organizing Commitee:

David Hiriart (chair), Michael Richer, María Eugenia García, Raúl Michel, Edgar Sáenz, Urania Ceseña, Erika Sohn, and Leonardo Sánchez.

We are especially thankful to all the people in the Observatory who work up there and made this workshop an unforgettable summit event. We also thank all the participants in the workshop for their enthusiasm shown at the presentations and in delivering their contributions on time.

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Editors of the Proceedings