PREFACE

The 12th IAU Regional Latin American Meeting of Astronomy took place in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, from 22 to 26 October, 2007. The number of registered participants in the meeting was 254. More than half of these participants were either graduate students or advanced undergraduate students in astronomy or physics, postdoctoral fellows or young astronomers from Latin American countries. Participants came from 18 different countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, France, Germany, Honduras, Italy, México, Nicaragua, Perú, Puerto Rico, Spain, United States, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The meeting was held in Hotel Hesperia Isla Margarita and lasted for 5 days. The scientific sessions were organized in 29 sessions. A total of 17 invited lectures where presented in 5 plenary sessions, one per morning, and 123 talks were given in the remaining sessions, held in parallel mode, 3 at a time. About 100 posters were exhibited during the five days of the meeting. The main topics covered in this session represent the most active areas of research in Latin America: (1) Solar system, (2) Star formation and interstellar medium, (3) Galactic structure and galaxies in the local group, (4) Stellar evolution, stellar populations, and galaxy evolution, (5) Galaxies, large scale structure and cosmology, (6) Astronomical instrumentation, (7) Public outreach. In addition, a total of 15 public outreach talks were given in different locations in Isla Margarita during the week of the meeting. Wednesday afternoon was free for people to enjoy and rest.

The following discussion sessions on topics suggested by the participants were organized: (1) Plans for a collaboration to build a large Latin American Telescope, (2) Integration of graduate study programs in Astronomy in Latin American Countries, (3) Situation of women astronomers in the region, and (4) The International Year of Astronomy 2009. The conclusions of each discussion group were presented to the General Assembly, which took place on Thursday October 25th. The General Assembly accepted the invitation by Mexican colleagues to hold the 13th IAU Regional Latin American Meeting in México in 2010.

The Scientific Organizing Committee was integrated by Manuel Bautista (Venezuela), Alberto Bolatto (USA), César Briceño (Venezuela, co-chair), Gustavo Bruzual (Venezuela, chair), Leticia Carigi (México), Esperanza Carrasco (México), Marcio Catelán (Chile), Ignacio Ferrín (Venezuela), Tabaré Gallardo (Uruguay), Miguel Ibañez (Venezuela), Claudia Mendes de Oliveira (Brazil), René Méndez (Chile), César Mendoza (Venezuela), Hernán Muriel (Argentina), Basilio Santiago (Brazil), and Patricia Tissera (Argentina).

The members of the Local Organizing Committee were Carlos Abad (CIDA), Gladis Magris (CIDA, co-chair) Claudio Mendoza (IVIC), Orlando Naranjo (ULA), Jenirée Ramírez (CIDA, secretary), Patricia Rosenzweig (ULA), Eloy Sira (CIDA), Jeanette Stock (LUZ), and Kathy Vivas (CIDA, chair).

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The following private corporations contributed support for our meeting: Fundación Empresas Polar, Sun Microsystems, Pandock, Grupo Winsoca, Crumar, Familia, Ghella Sogene C.A., and LubriZulca.

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The collaboration of CIDA's personnel was crucial in the critical stages of the organization of the meeting.

We thank all participants for coming to our meeting and contributing to its great success.

Gustavo Bruzual & César Briceño
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