

# *Astronomy in Syria*

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Syria has been involved in astronomy domain since 1997. When, prof. F.R. QUERCI ; expert of United Nation for Space and Astronomy Science for west Asia, visited Syria and gave an introduction on the international NORT project;

(NORT: the Network of Oriental Robotic Telescope) which was adopted by The Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (document no. A/AC 105/657 dated 13/12/1996).

This project aims to establish a robotic telescope network on a top of high mountains, which are existed around tropic of cancer, starting form Morocco in the west till China desert in the East.

The purposes of this network establishing are:

## *On the technical level:*

- Improving astronomical research in developing countries through participation in different studies and projects.
- Realizing unified scientific levels in space and astronomy.
- Astronomical observations round the day for the variable objects, through international cooperation with other Global Network Astronomy Telescope (GNAT).

- Achieving data base through using interferometry for the astronomical objects such as variable stars.
- NORT project give the opportunity to World develop new techniques in the Arab Countries.

## *On the Educational level:*

- Preparing courses in astronomy and space science in the national universities, in addition to providing training courses in the national Observatories.

- Offering training courses for students at the specialized summer schools by Arab and international Astronomers.

- Preparing basic courses on the astronomical theory, technology of equipment and processing research data concerning variable stars.
- Participating in summer schools and camps through the astronomical clubs.
- Encouraging students on inquisitiveness, imagination and participation in discovery works.

The General Organization of Remote Sensing (GORS) has carried out a pilot study using remote sensing techniques and has selected four sites in order to determine the best location for the astronomical observatory, within NORT program. This study was published in SEMINARS of the United Nation program:

This stage requires vehicle equipped with 16 inch telescope of connected with computer and digital camera (CCD camera). This phase may take two years.

Following this project, GORS decided to establish an office for astronomical studies, its tasks are supervising, following up the astronomical works and observation, preparing almanac, plans and periodical reports for the different

on Space Applications, selected papers from Activities held in 2000.

Astronomical phenomena, and exchanging astronomical data with the local, Arab and International administrations and universities in order to:

- Disseminate astronomical education and space science.
- Supporting and improving the technology of astronomy and the related sciences through educational curriculum methodology directed to university and school students
- Providing society with astronomical information i.e. connecting the society with scientific bodies.

The Astronomical Studies Office at  
GORS is divided into:

1. Observatory and planetarium  
department.

2. Coordination and astronomical data  
exchange department

One of the earliest works of GORS in astronomy was the initiative of establishing planetarium within GORS campus, to accommodate 120 observers approximately. An architecture contest to choose the best planetarium design, on Arabic world level, took place at GORS. The contest comprised 21 contestants from Libya, Egypt, Emirates, Lebanon and [Syria](#).

The Evaluation Committee members were specialists from Syrian and Lebanese universities, in addition to UN expert of space and astronomy science of West Asia. The execution works of building the planetarium will start by the end of 2007 and will go on until 2009.

In parallel National Syrian committee for developing astronomy and space science was formed from different interesting bodies.

# Additional Astronomical Activities in Syria:

Summer astronomical camps take place in Syria annually, they are organized by The Revolution Union Youths in cooperation with GORS, Syrian universities and the Syrian Cosmological Society. Astronomers from Syria and Arab countries participate in these camps. During these camps specialized lectures are presented in day time, and astronomical observations take

place at night, in addition to these activities, simplified presentations are provided to participants from school students in the mobile planetarium.

Also, we provide educational astronomical lectures according to the successive annual educational season.

The most important of these was the announcement of partial eclipse phenomena that would be observed in our area on 3<sup>rd</sup> October between 10<sup>h</sup>:38<sup>m</sup> – 13<sup>h</sup>:27<sup>m</sup>, 2005 in winter local time. This was by informing the mass media and asking the Ministry of Education to provide special class on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October to explain this phenomena and

the harm that would be caused for the eye in case of looking at the sun during the eclipse.