



PRESS RELEASE

PRESS AND COMMUNICATION SECTION

Launch of Indo-French satellite SARAL on Monday, 25 February 2013

New Delhi, 22 February 2013

H.E. Mr François Richier, Ambassador of France to India, and Mr Yannick d'Escatha, President of the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) will be present at the Sriharikota launchpad on 25 February, for the launch of the joint Indo-French satellite SARAL. This satellite illustrates the depth, and the broad-based and outstanding quality of Indo-French space cooperation. **Following the recent State visit of the President of the French Republic, H.E. Mr François Hollande, in India, this cooperation will be further bolstered in key areas.** Space cooperation is a pillar of the Strategic Partnership between France and India.

Indo-French collaboration in the area of space is the oldest and most important conducted by India with any European country. **From as early as the 1960s, France had extended technical cooperation for the establishment of the Sriharikota launch station, where the Satish Dhawan Space Centre was the platform for the launch of the first Indo-French satellite "Megha-Tropiques" in October 2011.**

SARAL is the outcome of a close cooperation between CNES and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for monitoring the environment. The technology offered by SARAL will significantly improve the satellite measurement of sea levels as well as our understanding of tropical climate phenomena. Two French payloads will be embarked on the polar satellite launch vehicle developed by ISRO: the "AltiKa" altimeter and "ARGOS-3". AltiKa is an innovative Ka-band altimeter system that helps measure ocean surface topography with unparalleled accuracy. ARGOS-3 is a state-of-the-art instrument for localisation and data collection, transmitted by 17,000 geo-tracking devices worldwide.

On 14 February 2013, the ISRO and the CNES signed a new Statement of Intent for long-term cooperation in space in the presence of President Hollande, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Given the success of the Megha-Tropiques project and the upcoming SARAL launch, both leaders agreed to move forward, and the French and Indian space agencies acknowledged the existing potential for further strengthening their cooperation in key areas for future development.

Most recently, **Ambassador Richier** was warmly welcomed by the space community at the Vikram Sarabhai Centre in Trivandrum, Kerala (February 2012), and **had the honour of being present at Sriharikota with the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on the occasion of the 100th ISRO launch, which carried the French satellite SPOT 6.**

Note to editors: Key dates for Indo-French cooperation in the area of space

1960's	First steps of the Indo-French space cooperation in the field of launchers
1965-1969	French technical support for the establishment of the Sriharikota launch station
1972	Technical cooperation between CNES and ISRO
1977	First Indo-French Cooperation Agreement in the space field
1993	Agreement Cooperation in the field of outer space between ISRO and CNES
1998	Indo-French strategic partnership in Defence, Nuclear and Space fields
2001	Indian support to the International Charter on "Space and Major Disasters" proposed by the European spatial agency and the CNES
2010	Memorandum of understanding for cooperation in Earth System Science and Climate between ISRO and CNES
2011	Launch of the first Indo-French satellite: Megha-Tropiques
2013	Launch of the second Indo-French satellite: SARAL

For further information, please contact Ms Carine BRUNET, Deputy Head of Press Section, Embassy of France in India (Tel 98 99 33 46 70)