

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT & LIGHT-BASED TECHNOLOGIES

STEERING COMMITTEE
GLOBAL SECRETARIAT
ABDUS SALAM INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THEORETICAL PHYSICS
ICTP, UNESCO CATEGORY I INSTITUTE
TRIESTE, ITALY



18 December 2015
For Immediate Release

Launch Ceremony of the International Year of Light 2015

With just weeks to go before the start of 2015, the International Year of Light is getting ready for a grand Opening Ceremony to be held on the 19-20 January 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The Opening Ceremony will introduce all key themes of the year, acting as inspiration for events worldwide during 2015 to raise awareness of the importance of light-based technologies in providing solutions to worldwide challenges in areas such as energy, education, communications and health.

Over a thousand participants will converge on Paris for the two day event, and speakers and attendees will include international diplomats and decision-makers, Nobel laureates, CEOs, and science and industry leaders from across the globe. After high-level opening addresses by international political leaders, a series of keynote lectures, symposia and round-tables will cover areas of basic science, innovative lighting solutions for society, light pollution, emerging trends in photonics, the Einstein Centenary, the role of light-based technologies in addressing global challenges, light in art and culture, the history of science, and science policy.

Keynote speakers from the light science community will include Nobel laureates Ahmed Zewail, Steven Chu, Zhores Alferov, William Phillips and Serge Haroche, pioneering and inspiring scientists who will speak on a diverse range of topics: light and life, energy, telecommunications, and the fundamental physics of light-matter interactions. The programme will also include contributions by: Gianfranco Cardinal Ravasi (President of the Pontifical Council for Culture); renowned Mexican architect Gustavo Avilés; the CEO of Royal Philips Lighting Eric Rondolat; Harry Verhaar (President of the Global Off-Grid Lighting Association); Alessandro Farini (Expert on Human Vision and Art); Thanh-Nga Trinh Tran, (Vietnam Vascular Anomalies Center); Linda Wamune (SunnyMoney and SolarAid); Martin Aufmuth (from onedollarglasses.org); Illac Diaz (aliteroflight.org); Andrew Forbes representing the Photonics Initiative of South Africa; Zohra Ben Lakhdar (UNESCO L’Oreal Prize Winner); and many other leading scientists and representatives from international NGOs. The Opening Ceremony will also see leading science and cultural heritage organization 1001 Inventions launch their accompanying international campaign to promote the life and works of the pioneering Muslim scientist Ibn Al Haythem.

The programme will also feature several cultural and musical interludes, and the outside of the UNESCO Building in Paris will be lit by Finnish light artist Kari Kola with a display entitled “Light is Here” which will reflect the powerful elements of the Northern lights.

About IYL 2015

The International Year of Light and Light-Based Technologies (IYL 2015) is a global initiative adopted by the United Nations (A/RES/68/221) to raise awareness of how optical technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to worldwide challenges in energy, education, agriculture, communications and health. With UNESCO as lead agency, IYL 2015 programs will promote improved public and political understanding of the central role of light in the modern world while also celebrating noteworthy anniversaries in 2015—from the first studies of optics 1,000 years ago to discoveries in optical communications that power the Internet today. The IYL Global Secretariat is located at the Abdus Salam International Centre of Theoretical Physics (ICTP).

The Founding Partners of IYL 2015 are the American Institute of Physics (AIP), the American Physical Society (APS), the Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft (DPG), the European Physical Society (EPS), the Abdus Salam International Centre of Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the IEEE Photonics Society (IPS), the Institute of Physics (IOP), Light: Science and Applications, the lightsources.org International Network, 1001 Inventions, The Optical Society (OSA) and the International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE).

Patron Sponsors include Bosca, the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD), Royal Philips Lighting, Thorlabs and UL.

Contacts

John Dudley
Steering Committee Chair
International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies 2015
president@eps.org

Joe Niemela
Global Coordinator (IYL Secretariat)
International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies 2015
light2015@ictp.it

Jean-Paul Ngome Abiaga
Assistant Programme Specialist
International Basic Sciences Programme
UNESCO HQ, Paris
jj.ngome-abiaga@unesco.org