

# The Year of Astronomy (2009)

F. Pacini \*

The XXV General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (Sydney, July 2003) has approved unanimously a Resolution requesting that the Year 2009 be declared "The Year of Astronomy", in coincidence with the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first astronomical use of a telescope and the observational discovery that the Earth is not alone in the cosmos. The request to Unesco has been submitted through the proper diplomatic channels and will be discussed next fall by the General Conference of this organization. Subsequently the request will be examined by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The IAU Executive Committee has already formed an ad-hoc Working Group for the Year of Astronomy. This preliminary report will review the initial activities of the WG and, hopefully, stimulate the astronomical community to start thinking about possible initiatives for the Year of Astronomy, both at a national and international level.

\* Chairman of the IAU WG for the Year of Astronomy