

International Heliophysical Year: A Global Effort

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The international Heliophysical Year (IHY) 2007 is the logical next step following the International Geophysical Year (IGY) 1957. The IHY not only marks the 50th anniversary of IGY, but also recognizes the fact that the humankind has enhanced its capability from probing Earth's atmosphere in 1957 to probing the local inter stellar medium in recent times. This paper describes the international organization of the IHY and planning for a successful program in 2007. In particular, we describe the national, regional and global efforts in pooling the resources to address the universal processes that govern the solar system and its interaction with the surrounding medium. The efforts include identifying science questions of immediate concern and the data sets needed to address these questions. The data will be acquired using a truly distributed observatory consisting of all the ground and space-based instruments that exist today and those to be constructed before 2007. The international planning also involves coordinating with the United Nations, which through its Basic Space Science Initiative, is facilitating the participation of the developing nations in the IHY program. An update of the current status of the planning activities at the international level will be presented.