



# ASTROBIOLOGY

## 2017 - COYHAIQUE - CHILE

Conference in Coyhaique:

### **Astrobiology 2017: From southern Chile to the Universe**

*From November 26<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup>, experts in Astrobiology will gather in our country to present and discuss their research. For the first time, the region will be headquarters to an international event uniting multidisciplinary experts on the subject.*

Are we alone in the Universe? Are there other planets we could inhabit? How did the Earth and the other planets in the Solar System form? For years, these questions, with a huge public impact, have been a recurring subject of discussion and have even been taken to the literature and movies. However, little is known about the steps researchers are taking to tackle these questions.

Every three years, the Commission F3 of the International Astronomy Union (IAU) organizes an International Astrobiology Conference, an event that brings together researchers and students from different disciplines such as biology, chemistry, geology, astronomy and sociology, to discuss about the latest results about our understanding of life in the Universe.

After rotating through Asia, Europe, and North America, the selected destination for this year is the south of Chile, specifically the city of Coyhaique. The event will be held from November 26<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> of December at the Convention Center of the Patagonia Dreams Hotel, where over 300 scientists, researchers, professionals, academics and students are expected to participate.

This will be the first time that this event is held in South America, in an unprecedented milestone for the area, especially for the Aysén region. "It is a fantastic opportunity for pushing the development of this discipline in our country", claims Dr. Patricio Rojo, academic of the University of Chile, member of the F3 Commission of the IAU, and the local chairperson of the Conference. Moreover, Dr. Rojo adds that "this discipline should be of even higher relevance for us, considering all the advantages of the geography of our country. Chile possesses a great variety of extreme environments, from dry and desertic areas, like

glaciers, to a variety of thermal sources and salars. These kinds of environments are also abundant near by Coyhaique”, he explains.

Twenty-three prestigious invited speakers have already confirmed. Among them are: Dr. N. Haghighipour (U. Hawaii-Manoa, NAI, USA), Dr. P. Cox (ALMA Observatory), Dr. K. Altwegg (U. Bern, Switzerland), Dr. D. Galante (U. de Sao Paulo, Brazil), Dr. B. Diez (PUC, Chile), Dr. A. Belloche (Max Planck Institute for Radioastronomy, Germany), Dr. L. Ziurys (U. of Arizona, USA), Dr. Y. Ueno (Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan) and Dr. C. Impey, (researcher at U. of Arizona and author of science divulgation books).

Undoubtedly, Astrobiology 2017 will be a key event for researchers establish and grow collaborations to widen their study areas, and a great opportunity for Chile and the Aysén Region, to validate themselves as a suitable international destination for conferences, conventions and meetings of this magnitude.

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