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Astronomy at Oukaïmeden Observatory (Morocco): Bridging Research, Education, and Gender Inclusion to Advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Abdelmajid Benhida

First Name:	Abdelmajid
Last Name:	Benhida
Institution/Affiliation:	Cadi Ayyad University/Marrakech/Morocco
Country of Residence:	Morocco
Preferred type of presentation	Oral
Will you attend in person or online?	—
Email	a.benhida@uca.ac.ma

Abstract

Located at 2750 meters altitude in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the Oukaïmeden Observatory (OUCA) serves as a regional model for combining world-class astronomical research with education, outreach, and social inclusion. This presentation will highlight how OUCA's activities contribute to key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably: SDG 4 - Quality Education, SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals. OUCA hosts international collaborations in near-Earth object tracking, exoplanet detection, space weather, and time-domain astronomy, helping to position Morocco as a contributor to global scientific advancement while supporting technological capacity-building (SDG 9). Alongside its research mission, the observatory actively engages in inclusive science education through: University-level astronomy courses and training programs, Teacher capacity development initiatives, Science outreach targeting underserved and rural communities, Regional collaboration efforts across the African continent. A key focus of OUCA's outreach and training activities is the promotion of gender equality in STEM (SDG 5). The observatory supports programs that encourage the participation of girls and young women in astronomy through mentorship, role models, targeted workshops, and partnerships with schools and NGOs. These efforts aim to reduce gender disparities and foster inclusive scientific communities. By leveraging astronomy as a tool for education, empowerment, and cooperation, OUCA demonstrates how observatories in the Global South can directly support the SDGs and amplify their impact through collaboration with the BRICS community.