

## **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

The International Symposium on Solar Physics and Solar Eclipses (SPSE 2006) is unique in several respects:

- It takes place in a remote location of the Sahara desert, where the participants will have the world's best viewing conditions of the 29 March 2006 solar eclipse.
- It is a model for collaboration between scientists from Arab and western countries.
- It brings together, for the first time, scientists representing the two disciplines of solar astronomy and solar energy utilization.
- It is the first major international conference in Libya in this field of science.

The organization of the symposium has been a difficult enterprise, due to the many novel aspects that we had never encountered before. The idea to do something like this came from Dr. Osama Shalabiea of Sebha University, who contacted me last summer about it. At that time I was quite skeptical that such a conference at a remote location in the desert without any preexisting infrastructure could be successful, but the unique circumstances made it irresistible to try. I am glad we did. Although at times it seemed that the whole enterprise was at the brink of collapse, last-minute solutions to the various problems could always be found thanks to the dedication and determination of our colleagues at Sebha University. This has now resulted in a rich, high-quality symposium program that is exceeding our expectations.

This enterprise would not have been possible without the full, determined backing that we at all times have received from Sebha University, including the university President, the Local Organizing Committee, and in particular thanks to the enormous efforts invested by the coordinating scientist and astronomer at Sebha, Osama Shalabiea. I also want to thank the members of SOC and all the symposium participants for their patience and faith in the success of the meeting during times when the situation was still ill defined. It is because all of you have decided to come together at Waw an Namos to contribute to the meeting with high-quality presentations that our enterprise is becoming a great success. Finally we are grateful to Rob Schreuders of Eclipse-City and all his coworkers for building the infrastructure and finding practical solutions to all our individual problems, while working under difficult conditions and time pressure.

Personally I see this meeting not as an end product, but as a new beginning, a new chapter of international scientific collaboration that will be followed up in various forms after we have departed from Waw an Namos. Let us all work together for this to happen!

Jan Olof Stenflo