

essor Harry van der Laan, who emphasized the importance of close connections between the planetaria and the scientific institutions. The scientists produce the new discoveries which are then conveyed to the public by the professional planetarians. Together, they work to explain the science which is an indispensable part of our general culture.

This intervention was followed by a demonstration of some of the latest ESO video films and other educational and publicity products from the ESO Information Service. One of the ESO astronomers spoke about the VLT project and some of the research projects which will be undertaken with it, beginning in 1996 when the first 8.2-metre VLT unit telescope will be ready at Paranal. Thereafter, the participants had the opportunity to visit various areas of the ESO Headquarters, including the Remote Control facility, the image pro-



Figure 1: The ESO Director General, Professor Harry van der Laan, welcomes the European Planetarians to ESO.



Figure 2: Geert Dobbels, Remote Telescope Operator at ESO, explains the Remote Control Facility in Garching, from where observations are made with the New Technology Telescope at La Silla.



Figure 3: Claus Madsen from the ESO Information Service demonstrates some of the photographic techniques employed in the sky atlas laboratory at the ESO Headquarters.

cessing room and the photographic laboratories. At each place, ESO staff explained the techniques. The possibility of observing from Germany with a telescope in Chile, 12,000 km away, was particularly impressive to many of the participants.

The evening ended with a festive conference dinner in a very Bavarian environment.

The next day was fully devoted to the presentation of new projects and techniques and the individual planetaria, and several demonstrations of new equipment were made.

ESO was pleased to be host to this meeting and to inform this distinguished audience about the scientific and technical work taking place at this organization. At the same time, many Planeta-

rians in Europe learned more about the various materials, available from ESO and which may be useful for their work. The meeting was a good demonstration of how the common cause may be fur-

thered by mutual support and it certainly contributed to bringing the originators and the disseminators of astronomical information closer to each other.

*The Editor*

## The VLT Tale

ESO announces its latest video film: THE VLT TALE. It has been produced by the ESO Video Team and describes the background and the first fifteen years (!) of the ESO 16-metre Very Large Telescope project. Beginning with the very first, vague ideas in 1977, it follows the many-sided developments that have led to the present, hectic construction phase. The VLT is placed in its historical context and some of its many high-tech features are explained.

THE VLT TALE is available from the ESO Information Service (address on the last page), in VHS and S-VHS format; the duration is 29:20 min. The price is 70.- DM and prepayment must accompany each order. Please be sure to indicate the desired format.