

Re: Pluto loses status as a planet

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- *From:* "canopus56" <canopus56@xxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 24 Aug 2006 22:53:46 -0700
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Brian Tung wrote:
<snip all>

For lurkers – the text of the final resolutions – Canopus56

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From the IAU website:

<http://www.iau2006.org/mirror/www.iau.org/iau0603/index.html>

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 5A is the principal definition for the IAU usage of "planet" and related terms.

Resolution 6A creates for IAU usage a new class of objects, for which Pluto is the prototype. The IAU will set up a process to name these objects.

IAU Resolution: Definition of a Planet in the Solar System
Contemporary observations are changing our understanding of planetary systems, and it is important that our nomenclature for objects reflect our current understanding. This applies, in particular, to the designation 'planets'. The word 'planet' originally described 'wanderers' that were known only as moving lights in the sky. Recent discoveries lead us to create a new definition, which we can make using currently available scientific information.

RESOLUTION 5A

The IAU therefore resolves that "planets" and other bodies in our Solar System be defined into three distinct categories in the following way:

(1) A "planet"¹ is a celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and (c) has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit.

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(2) A "dwarf planet" is a celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape², (c) has not cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit, and (d) is not a satellite.

(3) All other objects³ except satellites orbiting the Sun shall be referred to collectively as "Small Solar-System Bodies".

¹ The eight planets are: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

² An IAU process will be established to assign borderline objects into either dwarf planet and other categories.

³ These currently include most of the Solar System asteroids, most Trans-Neptunian Objects (TNOs), comets, and other small bodies.

IAU Resolution: Pluto

RESOLUTION 6A

The IAU further resolves:

Pluto is a "dwarf planet" by the above definition and is recognized as the prototype of a new category of trans-Neptunian objects.¹

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