

## **ICSU REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATINAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. OPENING CEREMONY.**

Dr. Sergio Rezende, Minister of Science and Technology of Brasil.  
Prof. Eduardo Krieger, President of the Academia Brasileira de Ciencias.  
M. Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, Director General de CONACYT, México.  
Prof. Jacob Palis, Elected President of the ABC and President of TWAS.  
Dr. Juan Pedro Lacllette, President of the Mexican Academy of Sciences.  
Dr. Hernan Chamoivich, Director of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences and Vicepresident of ICSU.  
Dra. Alice Abreu, Director of the ICSU Regional Office for LAC.  
Prof. Thomas Rosswall, Executive Director of ICSU.  
Colleagues of the Regional Committee of Latin America and the Caribbean,  
Dear Colleagues and friends.

The opening of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Council for Science represents both a reason to celebrate and an opportunity for reflection. We have to celebrate the success of an important initiative of ICSU to open Regional Offices in regions of the world more needed of support, the developing countries. We have to celebrate the generosity and commitment of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences and the Brazilian government to make possible the existence of the Office in a country of our region. We have to celebrate the opportunity which the Office and the work of the associated Regional Committee for the region open for the collaboration, exchange and consolidation of the scientific communities in the region. This ceremony provides also a moment for reflection on the situation of science in our region and the future that we may all together build.

ICSU decided to create the Regional Offices as a strategic way to ensure that the regional priorities are efficiently reflected in the policies of the international community and at the same time as a tool to ensure the participation of more scientists of the developing world in strengthening science in a global context. No doubt, we all of us present in this room today share the ICSU vision and conviction to engage the scientific community in the persue of a world where science is used for the benefit of society and the scientific knowledge is effectively linked to policy-making.

To this day two Offices, those of Africa and Asia are completely operational and already presenting results. We have the pleasure to have with us Prof. Ogunmola and Varma Chairs of the repective Regional Committees. We are certain that in a short time our Office in the LAC

region will also show consequences of its existence and will become an important player in the academic and political arenas.

The Regional Office is tightly joint with the Regional Committee of ICSU for the region. Together these two organisms should help to implement some of the policies of ICSU in the region: help disseminate scientific knowledge in the society, help promote science among young people, give advice to national organisms for building the capacities needed in the country to enhance the impact of science and technology in favour of society. These organisms should be also important nodes to enhance the relation between the scientific communities of the countries of the region and among these countries and the world.

Certainly, an important aspect of these activities is to reinforce the ties between the different countries of the region. This south-south collaboration is central to the vision of having a more balanced world. In this context of collaboration is particularly important the initiative of TWAS, promoted by Jacob Palis, to have a system of scholarships for students to finish PhDs in the strong countries of the developing world: China, India, Brazil and Mexico. It is to celebrate the signing of this agreement by Mexico as was done today.

A good example of the need of reinforcing these ties between the countries of our region is given by Mexico and Brazil. Two strong countries in several fields of knowledge, with strong institutions, have had along the years many individually based collaboration exercises, but only a small amount of institutional collaboration. These seems to be changing in a positive way. This is a propitious moment and we welcome the commitment of the Minister of Science and Technology of Brazil and the General Director of CONACyT on one side, and the Presidents of the Academies of Mexico and Brazil to consider the importance of closing the scientific ties between our countries, not only through formal agreements but by specific actions that may be undertaken by scientists of both countries working together. It is, no doubt, a brilliant sign of the coming of better times the presence of these Mexican personalities in this important occasion in Brazil. The presence of all us scientists and authorities, allows us to say that this is an important occasion for the LAC region.

The Regional Office has already started its work in practice, since Alice Abreu was in charge of organizing the last days activities showing already her efficiency and knowledge. Congratulations Alice.

Let me finish by acknowledging once again the commitment of the Brazilian Academy of Science, in particular of the President Edoardo Krieger and the elected President Jacob Palis, both have marked a difference in favor of the internationalization of Brazilian science and the solidarity of this country with less strong countries in the world. I use the opportunity to salute Jacob for the new mandate he is receiving in few minutes as President of ABC, I am sure that his enthusiasm and wisdom will mark new times for science in Brazil and the region.

I hope that the work of the Regional Office and the Regional Committee together will help the National Academies and scientific disciplinary organizations to make a stronger LAC continent where science plays a role in political decisions and has a positive impact in the well being of our societies.