



# ICSU

International Council for Science

Regional Office for  
Latin America and the Caribbean

## INAUGURATION OF THE ICSU REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**ALICE ABREU**

Minister Sergio Rezende, Minister of Science and Technology of Brazil

Professor Eduardo Krieger, President of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences

Professor Hernan Chaimovich, Vice President for International Relations of ICSU, co-chair of IANAS, and Director of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences

Professor José Antonio de la Peña, Chair of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean of ICSU and Deputy Director of CONACYT Mexico,

Representatives of ICSU programs and international organizations,

Fellow scientists

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here, at the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, to the inauguration of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Council for Sciences.

Quisiera saludar en especial a los participantes latino-americanos del Comitê Regional para América Latina y Caribe aquí presentes, en la persona del Coordinador del Comitê, Profesor José Antonio de la Peña, y a todos los latino americanos, en la persona del Director General del CONACYT de Mexico, Maestro Juan Carlos Romero Hicks.

A special welcome also to the Chairs of the ICSU Regional Committees of Asia and Africa, Professors Professor Gabriel B. Ogunmola and Professor Professor Anupam Varma, as well as for Professor Marian Addy chair fo the ICSU Policy Committee on Developing Countries. And to all the representatives of the ICSU National members and Disciplinary Unions who are represented in this ceremony.

It is also a great satisfaction to great many representatives of sister organizations, such as the International Institute for Global Change Research, the Regional Center for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin American and the Caribbean, the Inter American Network of Academies of Sciences, the Regional Office of TWAS. And thank the presence of the many Brazilian institutions that came here today, like the Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos, my good friend Lucia Melo, FINEP, and my fellow university researchers of the UFRJ and PUC-Rio.

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Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean: Prof. Alice Abreu, Director

Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean: Prof. José Antonio de la Peña (Mexico) (Chair), Prof. Juan. A Asenjo (Chile), Prof. Tara Dasgupta (Jamaica), Prof. Sandra Diaz (Argentina), Prof. Mahabir Gupta (Panama), Prof. Enrique P. Lessa (Uruguay), Prof. Carmen Samoyoa (Guatemala), Prof. Elena Vigil (Cuba), Prof. Belita Koiller (*Ex Officio*: Brazilian Academy of Sciences), Prof. Thomas Rosswall (*Ex Officio*: ICSU), Prof Alice Abreu (*Ex Officio*: ICSU-LAC)

Celebrating 75 years: 1931-2006



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I would like to remember Paulo de Goes, the international coordinator do the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, that is representing the Academy in a meeting in China and will not be with us today, but who has been working with great enthusiasm to make this office a reality.

This is a very joyous day, when an institution like ICSU, that plans and coordinates interdisciplinary research to address major issues of relevance to both science and society, actively advocates for freedom in the conduct of science, promotes equitable access to scientific data and information, facilitates science education and capacity building and that acts as a focus for the exchange of ideas, the communication of scientific information and the development of scientific standards, opens its third regional office in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In fact in this XXI<sup>st</sup> century it is unthinkable to create jobs, face poverty and strengthen democratic governance without making extensive use of science, applying locally-appropriate technology, introducing the concept of innovation at all levels of society, and improving the quality of science teaching. In our time, science, technology, engineering and innovation play a fundamental role in the creation of wealth and economic development, as well as in the improvement of quality of life for all citizens of the region.

Science, technology and innovation are engines of integral development and are essential for building the new capacities required for the sustainable development of a country. When implemented within a framework of protection of the environment, sustainable development, addressing gender inequality, and strengthening democracy, they generate employment and well-being through innovation, help reduce poverty; and improve education, health, nutrition and trade.

The concern for gender equity must be a central one. Ignoring this dimension is not only a major obstacle to women's ability to participate in the Knowledge Society but it is also depriving society of a significant portion of its intellectual force, a sure way to weaken national scientific capacity.

In ICSU's proposal for the Regional Offices, it was clearly stated that they would have two main objectives: Firstly they should help to ensure that the regional priorities are reflected in the international ICSU strategic development. Secondly they should enhance participation of scientists and scientific organizations from the region in ICSU's research and policy activities and enable ICSU to play a more effective role in strengthening science within the context of regional priorities and building capacity through international collaboration.

In this sense I think that the regional offices have a especial responsibility in promoting the importance of developing local scientific and technological capacities. It will do this through the coordination of scientific programs in the four areas that were discussed at the international symposium that preceded this inauguration, bringing together the best of the scientific capacity of the region and putting forward programs and projects that will develop our own priorities and strengthen the collaboration between all the countries of the region.



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All this would have not been possible without the commitment of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences and the generous support of the Brazilian Ministry of Science. I would like to thank publicly Professor Eduardo Krieger and of Professor Jacob Palis, the President and elected President of the Academy, and Minister Sérgio Rezende for this.

That Mexico, through its CONACYT has also pledged to make an important financial contribution for the office for the next three years clearly shows that this is a regional endeavor and my very warm thanks for its Director General, Maestro Hicks.

It is therefore a very great pleasure to be part of these efforts and I will give the best of my abilities to bring the Regional Office to its full potential in the next few years. But I could not end this greeting without mentioning three people who were central to all this and whose friendship and support are deeply appreciated.

My good friend and long time collaborator Professor Hernan Chaimovich, whose vision in relation to the role of science and technology in the modern world goes hand in hand with his excellence in research and dedication to scientific policy, Professor Thomas Rosswall, Executive Director of ICSU, a new friend, whose helping hand throughout this initial period of installing the Regional Office has been much valued.

And Professor Eduardo Krieger, President of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, whose sure vision of the role of Academy in the international scenario has encouraged the establishment not only of ICSU Regional Office but also of the secretariats for the Inter American network of Academies of Sciences and the Regional Office for the Academy of Developing World, TWAS. His mandate as president of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences will certainly be an important mark in the long history of this institution. Thank you for your support and encouragement.

My very final word goes to Marcelo, Fernanda and Carlos, my husband and children. Thank you for being there for me.

Thank you all for your attention.

Rio de Janeiro, April 18<sup>th</sup> 2007

Alice Rangel de Paiva Abreu

Director of ICSU-LA