



## **HELSINKI DECLARATION**

An international roundtable on “Science Technology and Innovation Policy: Parliamentary Perspective” was organised by the Parliament of Finland, UNESCO and ISESCO, during the period 13-14 January 2003 in Helsinki. Delegates from 31 countries from all regions attended this important meeting.

The participants exchanged and shared their national and regional experiences with issues such as legislation, technology assessment and other aspects of policy-making and learned of the complexity of decision-making in these areas. It was also noted that there are a number of key analytical lessons that can be learned from national parliamentary experiences. In particular, the successful experiences of Sweden and Finland as well as of EPTA and the Council of Europe in this area were recognised.

The participants discussed major fundamental factors affecting national and global science, technology and innovation policies, creativity. Innovativeness, effective networking and sharing of knowledge, and capacity building in science at all levels were especially identified as factors with significant importance in developing knowledge-based economies and social structures.

It was also noted that the future of economic success is more and more built on national innovation systems with special emphasis on well-targeted regional and local innovation policies. Further it was recognized that increases in investments in science education and in research and development are of crucial importance in government policy.

As a result of the discussions, the roundtable concluded that the following future policies should be considered and acted on by parliaments around the world:

1. Parliaments should further develop their own concepts through which they deal with science, technology and innovation policy. A good example of such concepts is the way the Committee for the Future operates at the Finnish Parliament among other parliamentary committees with a permanent status. An association of parliamentarians and scientists has proven in some countries to be a useful tool for contacts and exchange of information between parliamentarians and scientists. The setting up of such associations of scientists and parliamentarians is encouraged. Another example is the regional networking between

parliaments in Europe through EPTA – European Parliamentary Technology Assessment Network.

2. The role of the media has been acknowledged as an essential element in communicating science to policy-makers, Parliamentarians and the public at large. The need for closer co-operation between journalists and scientists has been recognised.
3. Policymakers should continue to set ambitious aims for lifelong learning and research and development, with special emphasis on funding;
4. The co-operation and interaction of the innovation system with other policy sectors must be further developed and deepened
5. Inter-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity in education and in research, as well as the cluster approach in industry and economic policy, should be improved and extended.
6. Future work force competencies should be developed. Special care must be taken to ensure the availability of well-trained personnel to promote R&D in industry, to increase the supply of knowledge intensive services wherever needed, and to issue regulations for the protection of intellectual property, as well as other regulations which affect innovation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recognising the need for closer co-operation among policy-makers, parliamentarians, scientists, journalists, industry (public and private) and civil society at national as well as at international levels, the participants recommend:

The setting-up of an international fora of parliamentary science committees, the scientific community and representatives of civil society, that aims at:

- Exchanging experiences and know-how in science, technology and innovation policy-making
- Strengthening partnerships between legislators, scientists, the media, civil society, and public and private sectors in developing national innovation systems
- Supporting capacity-building by science parliamentary committees in emerging democracies, making use of best practice from national and regional experiences of organisations such as the Committee for the Future, EPTA etc.
- Discussing whether, and if so, how to harmonise the principles that underpin regulation of applications of scientific and technological investigation, at the same time, recognising the diversity of situations that result from different regional circumstances. Regulations are needed not only in developing but also in developed countries.

The Forum should convene regularly and have continuous communication through newsletters, websites etc

International Scientific Parliamentary Conferences should be organized preferable once every two years with the support of such bodies as IPU and The Council of Europe.

The participants to the International Roundtable on “Science Technology and Innovation Policy: Parliamentary Perspective”, Helsinki 13-14 January 2003,

Call on UNESCO and regional partners to organise regional workshops in national parliaments

Call on the Organizers, namely the Parliament of Finland, ISESCO and UNESCO, to establish such a Forum, in consultation with national, regional and international parliamentary actors.

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