

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by
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on the occasion of the Award Ceremony for UNESCO Science Prizes

Budapest, 10 November 2003

Mr Silvester Vizi, President of Hungarian Academy of Science,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Prize Winners,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this year's award ceremony for the UNESCO prizes in science. I would like to express my special thanks to the Donor Governments and Institutions through whose foresight and generosity these Prizes in Science have been made possible. I would like also to welcome and congratulate the distinguished prizewinners who have been able to be with us on this occasion.

Today marks a very special day: it is the first time the UNESCO Prizes in Science are being awarded during the celebration of the World Science Day for Peace and Development. In doing so, UNESCO wishes to further highlight its mission in linking scientific activities with the message of the World Science Day: the use of research to the benefit of society. Science is important not just to scientists, but also to society and the purpose of scientific research is not only the advancement of knowledge, but also a contribution to the wellbeing of humankind. This is of particular importance in our complex world, where science is universally recognized to be a most powerful instrument of modernization and progress. This is why we look to science and particularly to scientists to help overcome the interrelated challenges that are facing today's world, such as poverty, environmental degradation and wide disparities among countries. Of course the crucial importance of science is not new: in the middle of the 20th century the mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell expressed it as follows: "Almost everything that distinguishes the modern world from the earlier century is attributable to science". But the complexity in which we are living today, the magnitude of the problems, the risk and uncertainty we face, make the tasks of scientists more difficult and call for greater responsibility on the part of scientists.

More than ever, the Einstein-Russell words are of great relevance. "We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death". Many scientists feel that they have a special responsibility to consider the implications and consequences of what they do. This responsibility is a necessary condition for the use of science for Peace and Development. All UNESCO prize-winners who are with us today have – directly or indirectly – been working very hard, through their scientific work, for peace and development. Some of them have been spending all of their lives to gain these honorable objectives. For this reason I am particularly glad to be linking this ceremony to the celebration of the World Science Day for Peace and Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have six prizes that are being awarded today. The general objective of the science prizes is to encourage researchers around the world by honouring their contribution to the creation and strengthening of peaceful and sustainable societies. But each prize has its specific objective.

- First, the **Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science** has been created to encourage a dialogue between scientists and the general public. I am very pleased to inform you that the laureate of this year's Kalinga Prize is being honoured for his work on popularizing science for peace. The Master of Ceremonies will give you more information about the winner.

- Second, the **Carlos J. Finlay Prize for Microbiology** rewards an outstanding contribution to microbiology, including immunology, molecular biology, genetics, and its applications.
- Third, the **Javed Husain Prize for Young Scientists** recognizes outstanding pure and applied research carried out by young scientists below the age of 35.
- Fourth, the **Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation** rewards outstanding contributions by individuals or groups of individuals, institutions or organizations in the preservation of the environment.
- Fifth, the **Institut Pasteur-UNESCO Medal** is presented for outstanding and innovative contributions to health, agriculture or food.
- And, last but not least, there is the **UNESCO Science Prize**, which rewards outstanding contributions by individuals or groups of individuals to the technological development of a developing Member State or region, through the application of scientific and technological research.

Let me finish by thanking the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for its generosity in hosting this ceremony in this prestigious House of Parliament. I also wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the members of the Jury for their difficult task in selecting from among the many good candidates and projects presented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before awarding the prizes to the 2003 Laureates, allow me to draw your attention to last year's Laureate of the Kalinga Prize, namely, Ms Marisela Salvatierra from Venezuela. Normally, the Prize should have been awarded to her last year at our UNESCO Office in New Delhi. However, owing to her poor health, she was unable to leave Caracas. Therefore, in September 2003, we made arrangements to organize a ceremony to award the prize to Ms Salvatierra in Caracas.

The prize should have been awarded to her last month on 9 or 10 October 2003. Very sadly, she passed away on Monday 6 October 2003 without having the opportunity to receive the Prize. Today, our colleagues at the UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Caracas are organizing the prize award ceremony for her, during which a member of her family or her representative will be invited to receive the prize on her behalf. I would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of Ms Salvatierra in popularizing science and to express to her family our sincere condolences.

I would like to invite everyone to stand up and observe one minute's silence in her memory.

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Thank you very much. And now we shall proceed with the awards ceremony. Before handing over to the Master of Ceremonies, allow me once again to convey, in my own name and on behalf of the Organization, my warmest congratulations to the prize-winners.