



Chair:

- Jean JOUZEL

Vice-President, IPCC Scientific Council; President of M.U.R.S. (Mouvement universel de la responsabilité scientifique)

Speakers:

- Welcome speech by Jacques DERMAGNE

President of the Conseil économique, social et environnemental (CESE)

- Opening address by Jean-Pierre ALIX

Science-Society Advisor to the CNRS Presidency

- Speech by Valérie PÉCRESSE

French Minister for Higher Education and Research

- Speech by Annette SCHAVAN

German Federal Minister for Training and Research

- Video message by Janez POTOČNIK

European Commissioner for Science and Research

Opening Session



JACQUES DERMAGNE

Madame la Ministre, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, welcome to the auditorium of the Palais d'Iéna for this conference on science organized by M.U.R.S., [Universal Movement for Scientific Responsibility] with the support of the European Commission and the CNRS. It is a pleasure to welcome you here today on behalf of my colleagues at the Conseil économique, social et environnemental. There is no more effective place to raise awareness of the issues generated by the challenges of science and technology than in this gathering, as is demonstrated by its history and by very recent events in current affairs. Here, we have often worked to discuss science and its applications in such a way as to dispel the ambiguity promulgated by some types of blind scientism. This is the reason why we set up a permanent working group four years ago with all the Academies to look at a major issue, namely: how can the ever-widening gap between the language of scientists and the language of citizens be filled in such a way that the principle of caution should not just be a refuge for fear born of ignorance, for lack of understanding or sometimes for manipulation.

Actually, we are well aware that misunderstandings concerning science are on the increase in all our countries, with the sudden acceleration of discoveries and their applications in all areas ranging from information technology to genetics. Yet science is neither moral nor immoral, it simply exists. It is up to mankind and society to have the last say on its applications when planning the future. When it comes to science, we have to base our approach on a forward-facing and slightly prophetic vision, founded on knowledge and on an ethic of responsibility. The future is never predetermined but stems from the human desire to defeat chance, in the sense attributed to it Professor Jacques Monod in his book on biology, *Le Hasard et la Nécessité* [Chance and Necessity]. Being able to plan the future in an ethical manner involves first of all understanding the challenges presented by science and its applications on the basis of knowledge sharing between the scientific community and society. What is actually at stake to a large extent is a societal wager, i.e. our ability to place scientific progress at the service of society and human values. This debate on science is not new. Rabelais said, "Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul". Conscience is the fundamental thing which prevents man from placing himself in a passive position. Every-

body knows that science on its own cannot be either a social project or a destiny.

In order to avoid all these pessimistic scenarios forums for discussions are necessary, forums which will allow the different stakeholders in civil society to use their contributions and activities to place mankind at the heart of society's thoughts and actions. However, time is not on our side since everything is speeding up, as is demonstrated by the financial upheaval which we are currently experiencing. By welcoming you to this auditorium, we would like to bear witness to a simple idea: science has undoubtedly improved mankind's living conditions in every sphere. But we should also like to express the need for ethical scrutiny of science and its applications. Your role therefore is to reassure us and to protect us from all these fears generated by modern day sorcerer's apprentices. Economic and social advisers are here today to listen to your ideas and will be enriched like us by your presence, Madame la Ministre, and by the speech you are going to deliver. I wish you a fruitful day and am always delighted to welcome you all, as we are very devoted to this community. Thank you for your attention.



JEAN JOUZEL

Thank you, President Dermagne for welcoming us here to this splendid venue and for hosting this conference. As you know, I am speaking in my capacity as head of M.U.R.S. rather than as a researcher in the field of climate change. I would now like to ask Mr. Jean-Pierre Alix, General Secretary of M.U.R.S. and also the person in charge of Science and Society at the CNRS, to say a few words about the aims of these two days.



JEAN-PIERRE ALIX

Thank you, President Dermagne, for welcoming us to this magnificent auditorium. Science has never been more relevant than today. Every country wants researchers, every profession and company swears by