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**Red de Academias de Ciencias de las Américas
Simposio sobre Mujeres en la Ciencia**

Dr. Juan Pedro Laclette

Dr. Rosaura Ruíz, President of the Mexican Academy of Sciences and host for this meeting; Distinguished speakers visiting from a number of countries of three continents; Attendants to the meeting from Mexico and abroad; Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Board of IANAS (the InterAmerican Network of Academies of Science) I welcome you all, to this Meeting on Women for Science, organized by the Mexican Academy of Sciences and sponsored by the Interacademy Panel (IAP) and the National Council of Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACYT).

Allow me to mention that IANAS includes 17 academies and scientific organizations of the American Continent. Our mission is to promote coordination among its member academies for a number of shared projects and goals in the continent. In this respect, we have continuous coordinated actions on our major programs of science education and Water.

A parallel but not less important role of IANAS, is a relentless effort to build up the capacities of the academies in our region. In a way, IANAS enrolls in a number of projects and goals of world wide academic organizations, including IAP, ICSU, IAC and even TWAS and UNESCO. We have the closeness to make an effective follow up, as well as to support and reinforce the work, in those countries that require it. This is the case of Women for Science which is a global initiative originally supported by IAP, that is being mirrored in a number of other organizations, including IANAS. Let me tell you that during the joint meeting we recently had, also in Mexico City , including the participation of UNESCO and ICSU in addition to IANAS; this meeting was organized in preparation for the World Forum on Science, to be held in Hungary on November 2009. In this meeting, a workshop on Women for Science was also included. So, I could say that different local and global organizations are strongly promoting the analysis of gender issues in the scientific and academic environments. A lot is being done by a number of actors, but much more has to be done, in order to archived an effective gender equality, not only in the base of the pyramid of scientific workers, but also in the more reduced decision-making positions.

Organizing this meeting in Mexico City is especially auspicious, first of all, because our host: Dr. Ruíz, is the first woman president of the Mexican Academy , and secondly, because our host academy includes about one fourth of women members. Let me tell you that we have another woman president in our Continent. The Guatemalan Academy of Sciences is presided by professor Carmen Samayoa, who is also member of the organizing committee.

You know, in this gender issues there are two points of view: some see mostly the positive advances and think that a lot is being achieved. On the other side, some see what remains to be done and think that the advancement is too slow. In my opinion, we should adopt this last vision, in order to speed up what has to be done. I received a message from Professor Anneke Levelt Sengers, our brilliant opening speaker, asking if a short list of well-thought, practical action items should be expected during the plenary session. Yes, that is exactly what we need. And I would guaranty that these items would be discussed within IANAS Executive Board, to be delivered to all member academies, as well as to IAP and other academic organizations, with the idea that the proposed actions could be adopted by as many academies as possible.

I understand that Prof. Sengers will work with a group of other participants to produce a list of those action items to be considered for adoption in the plenary session. Thus, I would like to request your participation and support to prepare an effective document. I consider this document a most useful tool to organize our effort on the desired direction.

Organization of the meeting has included opinions of all member academies. I understand that the organizing committee included a lot of the received proposals. I mention this, to point out the profile of things being organized by IANAS, in an inclusive way, considering all contributions.

Finally I would like to let you know that I will have to leave the meeting for a few hours but will be back for the afternoon sessions. Having said that, I just hope that this will be a very productive and interesting meeting for you all. Please enjoy your stay in our country and don't hesitate to let us know if there is something that you need.

Thank you