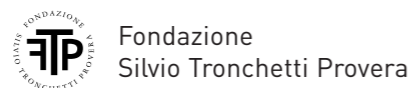


THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE

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VENICE CHARTER

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Participants of First World Conference on the Future of Science believe it of vital importance that the world community realises we are on the threshold of a new era of knowledge. Science impacts all fields of human life and explosive growth of knowledge in areas such as genetics, astrophysics and information technology will lead to an even greater influence on human activities. Scientific knowledge offers us the possibility not only of improving the conditions of life for all, but also of radically changing the biological makeup of living organisms. Humanity must be aware of the new freedoms and responsibilities these advances imply. Participants are also aware that this enhanced potential of science generates unanswered questions about its applications, and reasonable doubts about its possible misuse. The signatories of this Charter believe science will continue to be vital for the progress and well-being of humanity; however the issues raised by scientific progress must fully and openly debated by the whole of society.

THEY THEREFORE UNDERTAKE TO:

1. Create an alliance for scientific development – involving scientists, philosophers, theologians, politicians, industrialists, jurists, and all interested parties – which will oppose the isolation of science by promoting constructive dialogue between all forms of knowledge that respect human identity and dignity. Maximum priority must be given to harmonising the scientific and religious world views, reconciling ecology movements and science, and inserting scientific issues into political programmes worldwide.
2. Actively reaffirm the humanism of science, its intrinsic spirit of tolerance and incompatibility with absolutism in all its forms. Only if it reasserts these principles can science and other fields

of endeavour hope to continue pursuing the fundamental aims of promoting civilisation and protecting human life. While basic research will expand the horizons of knowledge, applied research must be concerned with goals that are essential for the future of humanity, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, reduction of child mortality, conservation of ecosystems and bio-diversity, elimination of pollution, improvement of energy efficiency and reduction of fossil fuel use, reduction of the toll taken by HIV, malaria and cancer, provision of water for agriculture and uncontaminated water for drinking.

3. Promote scientific thought and the scientific method as a way of investigating and understanding the world, particularly among young people and in societies that have not attained an adequate level of material progress. The universal language of science and the rationality of the scientific method are unifying elements having the potential to bridge deep differences in culture, experience and faith, making constructive dialogue possible. The importance of encouraging interest in science in young children has been recognised by UNESCO, with its Declaration and Programme in Science and Technology Education.

4. Set up a permanent Authority for Science consisting of scientists, philosophers, theologians, industrialists, jurists, politicians and others, whose task will be to suggest the objectives and limits of scientific progress and to make rational proposals for the society of tomorrow. The Authority for Science will not be a group of super-technicians deciding in the name of all, but a committed team that systematically and conscientiously examines the problems posed and the opportunities offered by continuing scientific progress, and periodically submits its deliberations and conclusions to governments and public opinion.

Venice, September 23, 2005