

Universal Declaration: Role of National Science Academies in the 21st Century

11th October 2008, Podgorica, Montenegro

The human race is facing unprecedented global challenges and transformations. Climatic changes, energy shortages, food scarcity, new diseases and emerging social unrest are major warning signs that humankind might be on the verge of irreversible decline.

This development has potentially dramatic consequences for the future of humanity - not only in the long-term, but also for the immediate future of our own generation.

Against this background, on the 11th of October 2008 in Podgorica, Montenegro, the participants of the international conference¹ “Role of National Academies in the 21st Century” adopted and proclaimed this *Universal Declaration*.

Following this act, the conference calls upon all National Science Academies to publicize the *Universal Declaration* to political leaders, scientific organizations, civil society organizations and educational institutions.

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1. Human activities play important role in many global changes, including the declining state of the environment and related global consequences.

We must stop this trend immediately. The contemporary philosophy of development, and even our way of life, has to be re-examined. There is no more time to lose by arguing and developing grandiose out-of-reach plans.

There is no more time to waste time.

2. The unprecedented challenges to sustainable development necessitate more understanding, greater tolerance and solidarity, as well as urgent action on the part of political leaders, scientists and members of civil society.

This situation has never been faced before, nor required action on such a scale.

Such challenges require new ground in human creativity: holistic ideas, interdisciplinary and novel scientific approaches, development of new technologies, and innovative solutions in order to assure the well-being of humans.

No single country, nor single group of politicians or scientists is able to address this complex issue in isolation.

3. Political leaders must accept that National Science Academies are a necessary part of the global solution. Full use must be made of the Academies' potential in producing new knowledge and building efficient non-political communications and networks beyond national borders.

In particular, National Sciences Academies have to play a crucial role in formulating policy advice for solving these issues.

Political leaders, National Science Academies and civil society must act together. If not, we will all lose. Humankind will lose: not only coming generations, but also our own.

We must act:

Think Locally - Act Globally.

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Nothing in this *Universal Declaration* may be interpreted as anything but a call for immediate action. We all survive or we fade away - TOGETHER. Humankind lives in, or vanishes from, the same fragile, global village.

¹ Organized by the: Inter Academy Panel, European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Network of Central and Eastern European Academies, South East Europe Division of World Academy of Art and Science, Interacademy Council of South East Europe, and Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts.