

Dr. Johannes Hahn

Mr. President, Sir State Secretary, Mr. Undersecretary General, distinguished guests, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Austrian Federal Government I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the incorporation of IIASA. As the Federal Minister in charge of Science and Research I am happy to be here and to participate in your celebrations. For more than 35 years your institution has been serving as a platform for scientists to do research, to cooperate, and to communicate and to do all this with great success. Having turned 35, take this occasion not as a mid-life crisis, but as a point in time to look ahead in an encouraged fashion. The term mid-life doesn't fit IIASA at all. Your mission is designed to last for generations to come. Your mission is to enhance quality in research on a global scale.

I would like to mention those 16 researchers from the institution already mentioned. You contributed to the IPCC Report and were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year to highlight the standing and the reputation of your institution. And as an Austrian I am delighted that a number of researchers from Austria actively participated, and that even more participate extensively in projects carried out at IIASA. I therefore would like to express my gratitude to and respect for Professor Komarek for his enduring work within IIASA during the last decades.

Against the background of global climate change, we have to conduct a clear-sighted policy based on profound analysis. We therefore face an increasing need for research and communication, particularly in those research areas which are on the agenda at IIASA. For this reason, it comes as no surprise that the IPCC asked IIASA to contribute to the IPCC report. The main objective of the priority research areas is not only to gather information on the current standards of knowledge concerning possible health and environmental risks brought about by global change, but also to analyze and summarize available results. So for the first time in scientific discourse, the important aspects of technology developments are analyzed systematically on a much broader scale than would be possible on a stand-alone project basis. By working this way, wide spots in the scientific landscape can be traced in differing hues, and appraisals can be collected. IIASA serves as a clearing-house for questions dealing with possible health and environmental risks. In this context, IIASA may serve as an information platform and as a catalyst in discussions. A kind of service point can be established to answer questions of regarding aspects of human security—questions that may arise from discussions in the broader public domain; questions raised by administrations or issues brought up by the scientific community itself.

May I address three points that come to mind as I think about the future of IIASA. First, in the long run, IIASA should develop into a topic center dealing with issues of possible health and environmental risks in global change that is recognized not only by citizens but also by administrations and members of the global scientific community. Second, IIASA should become an information platform by organizing workshops on a regular basis and conferences on spatial issues such as how to deal with global change, how to communicate global change, or how to deal with the North-South divide on a global

scale. Third, IIASA should identify important unanswered questions of risk-assessment and in the medium term contribute actively to the global change debate by conducting adjunct research to investigations dealing with global change. Global change research, due to its cross-sectional interdisciplinary nature and its importance for society, has already today gained outstanding relevance. The ongoing discussion is building a bridge between society and politics. The idea is to combine existing knowledge with basic research and to utilize this combination in a way that finally provides new knowledge and insights. This new knowledge may help to bring about substantial improvements in the field of politics and in society. It is here where IIASA should deploy its strength, for example, the inter-disciplinary approach of its priority research areas.

In the past years, IIASA experienced some difficulties with its member states. Therefore I am happy that three new countries have joined the IIASA family. India, Pakistan both in 2006 and Korea in 2007, I think a few days ago. It would also be wonderful if former family members returned to the IIASA community. Explicitly I would like to address the case of France in this context. It's with this end in mind that I ask our Federal Chancellor to add this issue to the agenda for his forthcoming trip to France. Our president, Heinz Fischer, will also attend. As far as I am concerned, I will bring up this point at our next meeting of the European Union Ministers and will ask my colleague from France how we can proceed. Furthermore I would like to reassure you that I am prepared to campaign for IIASA requests further on. Taking the occasion of 35 years IIASA membership of Austria I would like to announce here that I am willing to host a ministerial conference in Austria with the long-term strategy and positioning of IIASA on the agenda. I will also invite all former and all potential member countries to attend this conference together with Director Hordijk and Professor Komarek. I will discuss the objectives and the outline of this Ministerial conference in the near future. Having said that I would like to wish IIASA all the best for the future in general and I would like to extend this in particular to the big family of the national commissions. Have at least another 35 successful years, thank you very much.