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Interciencia: New Journal, New Journey

Interciencia seeks to foster unity and cooperation between the scientific communities of the Americas and to stimulate interchange so that the uses of science and technology can best serve the cause of development.

The journal will place particular emphasis on Latin America, a group of nations urgently in need of the benefits which science and technology can provide but which has been painfully lacking in regional magazines of a scientific nature.

The differences in science and technology between the northern and southern parts of the hemisphere are evident. In the North, the most advanced country in the world, endowed with funds aplenty, abundant research personnel, and an efficient communications circuit between research and production. In the South, a continent where research is inadequately financed and staffed and where the absence of conduits between science and production tends to increase the already marked dependence of these two fields on the resources of the great country to the North. By way of compensation, the South brims with enthusiasm and faith in science, plainly contrasting with the pessimism which all too frequently is observed in the North, particularly among the younger generations.

Despite the inequalities and differences between North and South, I am convinced that at the level of scientific communities cooperation can and must be fostered in an atmosphere of *convivencia*. The North is endowed with a lengthy experience and a healthy pragmatism which most investigators are eager to share with their colleagues in the South. The South, on the other hand, is freer to explore new paths for the application of science and technology—with different life-styles and values—and could help to demonstrate that other alternatives, besides those that have already been tried and tested, are valid and feasible.

Science and technology should favor development. Though unwilling to minimize in any way the importance that economic growth has at a root level, I believe that full development implies the eradication of a number of ills: poverty, unemployment, extreme economic and social inequalities (between individuals as well as between nations), and an excessive dependence of one country on another. If science and technology are to justify their existence, they will have to help mitigate these ills or make them disappear altogether.

Development, however, should also be understood as an increase in the intrinsic quality of science and technology. Side by side with the research which is applicable to our most immediate social and economic problems, there is a need for the kind of basic science that can shed its own light and permeate, through its cultural, educative, and multiplying effects, all the spheres of our society, including that of applied science, which should not be of lesser quality for being practical.

It is evident that the ways of science and technology are interlocked with the aims of the whole of society. Given the fact that there is no consensus on the type of society which is desirable for Latin America and since one of the principal problems derives from the great differences existing between the nations in the hemisphere, it follows that disagreements and divergent ideas will tend to surface whenever the uses and applications of science and technology are discussed. Far from avoiding such issues, *Interciencia* will welcome controversial opinions as posed, under the full responsibility of each author, provided they are supported by testable facts and written in a style compatible with that of a scientific journal.—MARCEL ROCHE, Editor, *Interciencia*, Apartado 51842, Caracas 105, Venezuela

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