

dorsed, one of a utility-sponsored gasification project in California and the other the Great Plains Project, whose chief sponsor is the Tenneco pipeline company. Coal state congressmen on Synar's subcommittee complained to Noble on 16 May that the SFC has ignored the Appalachian region in making awards. However, now that the SFC has been

put on a short leash and a small budget, these states seem less likely than ever to benefit from the synfuels program.

It is ironic, some Administration officials say, that the SFC should be gutted in the same week that a Saudi oil tanker was attacked in the Persian Gulf by fighter planes. U.S. energy supplies may be more secure now than a decade ago,

but they are still vulnerable to disruption, with potentially severe consequences for the economy. It is also ironic that the SFC, designed intentionally to be beyond the reach of Congress, is now being reined in on the grounds that its directors have been operating too much in the fashion of private businessmen.

—ELIOT MARSHALL

Third World Academy Looks for Funds

Trieste, Italy. Funding difficulties are threatening to undermine an imaginative attempt to establish a new learned society that is intended to act as a mouthpiece for the scientific communities of the developing nations, the Third World Academy of Sciences.

Launched last year primarily at the initiative of a group of Third World scientists who had first discussed the idea at a 1981 meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in Rome, the new academy has been warmly welcomed by politicians and scientists ranging from Li Xian Nian, chairman of the People's Republic of China, to Frank Press, president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

At the inaugural meeting of the academy, held in Trieste last fall, its members agreed on a number of activities that they hope to carry out. These include the publication of a quarterly newsletter on scientific and technological activities in the Third World (and eventually a Third World science journal); the award of five annual prizes to recognize outstanding accomplishments by scientists from developing countries; and the organization of conferences on themes such as "biotechnology for development" and "microelectronics for development."

So far, however, despite warm words of support received from all over the developed and developing world, the academy has had little success in raising the initial \$4-million endowment which it calculates is necessary to finance such activities. Looking for money has proved to be "a very uphill task," says president Abdus Salam, 1979 Nobel Prize winner in physics and director of the International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, northern Italy.

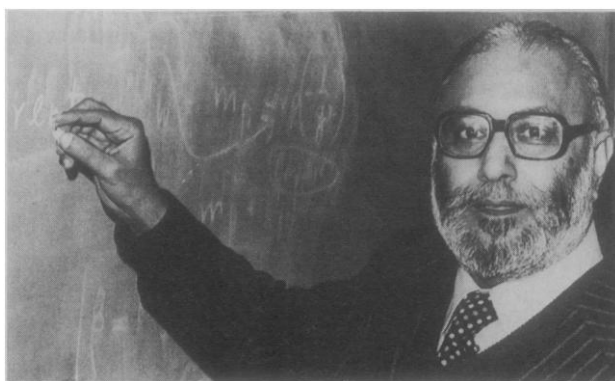
Salam says that one of the main purposes of the academy is to convince Third World countries—as well as the development agencies which fund projects in them—of the importance of basic science. "There can be no proper technology transfer without science transfer," he says, pointing to examples of fields from biotechnology to solar energy where fundamental knowledge is an essential component of technical development.

Toward this goal, he is hoping to organize a meeting of representatives from all the existing scientific academies in Third World countries to discuss the opportunities for greater South-South collaboration in science. "There are some 35 such academies, but they have never met," he says, adding that one of the purposes of such a meeting would be "to keep each other's morale up."

A more practical aim of such a meeting would be to find a common strategy for convincing Third World governments of the growing importance of basic science in their develop-

ment plans. "I wrote to all the heads of state who attended the Cancun meeting in Mexico in 1981," says Salam. "I got replies from all the rich heads of state, supporting what we are doing; but India was the only poor country to respond."

Salam, who comes from Pakistan, says that this reaction confirms his feeling that fundamental scientists still have to convince people of the contribution they can make to development. "Third World countries have to realize that basic science is a legitimate activity for them to support," he says, pointing out that many governments in such countries award funds for applied science but not for fundamental research.



Abdus Salam

Received verbal support but little hard cash.

The Third World Academy, which started with 28 founding fellows (each chosen on the grounds of their existing membership of First World academies of science) and has since elected another 14, has already received an offer from Belisario Betancur, the President of Colombia, to host an international symposium on both South-South and South-North cooperation toward the end of 1984.

Organizing such a conference, however, and in particular contributing toward the air fares of the 200 nongovernmental scientists who would be invited to attend, will take funds which currently do not exist. The Third World Academy has received a grant of \$100,000 from the Canadian International Development Agency, most of which goes toward running the organization from a small office in Trieste, and received a further \$50,000 from a local fund to organize its first meeting last fall.

Salam acknowledges that considerably more will be needed to mount a sustained program of activities, and says that finding such money is now his top priority.

—DAVID DICKSON