

Science and Man in the Americas

A joint AAAS/CONACYT meeting
in Mexico City (20 June to 4 July 1973)

On 4 August 1971 a formal agreement was reached between the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) of Mexico to convene a joint, special meeting in Mexico City on the subject "Science and Man in the Americas." The purpose of this meeting is to explore the promise and some of the problems of technological advances and scientific understanding on the lives of the inhabitants of the American continent.

The agreement to share in the planning, execution, and expenses of this common enterprise brings together two organizations disparate in age and objectives. The AAAS, celebrating its 125th anniversary this year, is one of the oldest private science-oriented establishments in the Western world, representing the individual concerns of all scientists and the lay public, no matter what their specialized interests might be. In contrast, CONACYT was founded less than 2½ years ago at the behest of Lic. Luis Echeverría, the President of Mexico, with its primary goals directed toward formulating and implementing public policy in science and technology.

Despite these differences in age and objectives the two organizations have several goals in common: for example, to interest the public, and especially young people, in the benefits derivable from a deeper understanding of the world in which they live and from a wise application of technology. Both hold the view that these interests extend beyond national boundaries.

In subsequent issues of *Science* the content of the joint meeting will be published in detail. It will be a large meeting, attended by several thousand participants from the United States, Mexico, and other countries of the American continent. It will deal with a multiplicity of topics, chosen primarily to transcend the interests of any country. Topics in development are selected that are at the forefront of concern for the living standards and public well-being of the inhabitants of the Amer-

icas. Topics in science in which Latin Americans have made signal contributions or which are of particular interest to the host country are also included.

All symposia are jointly planned by Mexican and U.S. arrangers, with a particular desire to include participants from the other countries of the Americas or from abroad. Approximately half of the 700 active participants are from the United States, one-quarter from Mexico, and one-quarter from elsewhere.

The core of the technical program consists of ten central themes, ranging in length from 2 to 6 days. The themes will explore in considerable depth crucial problems at the interface of scientific insights, technological developments, and public policy and goals. For example, the symposium on "Science, Development and Human Values" (arranged by Victor Urquidí, Presidente, El Colegio de México, and Harrison Brown, Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Sciences of the United States) will deal with the fundamental questions of the value of science and technology in human welfare, research priorities for economic development in Latin America, basic human wants and needs. Some of the U.S. participants are Kenneth Boulding (University of Colorado), Hollis Chenery (Vice President for Development Policy, World Bank), Leona Baumgartner (Harvard Medical School), Harvey Brooks (Harvard University), and Renee Fox (University of Pennsylvania Medical School). Six Mexicans and nine persons from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela will contribute their views.

Some of the questions raised in this symposium will be explored in more detail in a second central theme symposium on "Problems of Population" (organized by Roger Revelle, Harvard University, and G. Castanares, Colegio de México) which deals with Urbanization and Internal Migration, Economic and Social Problems of Population Growth, and Population Policy, with 18 participants from the United

States, 6 Mexicans, and 11 persons from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica. The topics will be further explored in a 3-day supporting symposium on Technology Transfer, assessing the economic and social impact of technological change, the vehicles of technical trade (multinational corporations, international patents, and licenses), and the determinants of the educational system and of entrepreneurial development.

Altogether 41 symposia, spread over 12 days, will cover a plethora of topics. Several symposia will deal with the wise development and preservation of resources (The Sea and Its Resources, Deserts and Arid Lands, Non-nuclear Energy, Nuclear Energy Applications, Ecology and the Deterioration of the Environment, Aerial Inventory of National Resources, Wildlife and Its Environment, etc.). Still others are concerned with matters of Health, Behavior, and Education (Opportunities in Education, Nutrition and New Food Technology, Environmental Health in the Americas, Aerobiology of Diseases, Violence and Behavior, etc.). Topics in the Physical Sciences deal with Earthquakes, Volcanism, Hurricanes, Geodynamics, and Symmetry, while the Biological Sciences include discussions of Tropical Ecosystems, Chemical Coding of Brain Function, Mathematical Questions in Biology, Mind-Altering Drugs, and others.

This varied technical program will be supplemented by a number of Invited Lectures intended for the general public, by an International Science Film Festival, and by programs for young people. Tours of the rich cultural, scenic, and scientific sites in Mexico will be organized, as well as Group Flights at reduced air rates from several cities in the United States to Mexico City and return.

This joint meeting thus represents an unusual opportunity to participate in a unique undertaking that will bring together some of the most thoughtful representatives from universities, industry, business, and government who are concerned with the future of the American continent. They will be joined by students and the public who are interested in the interaction of science and technology with their well-being. Mexico and the citizens of Mexico City will welcome visitors from the United States and other countries with open arms.

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