



“Science, ethics and
responsibility”

Science, ethics and responsibility – World Science Forum again in Budapest

The World Science Forum (WSF), organized jointly by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the most influential international scientific organizations, will be held again in Budapest this year.

Between 20 and 23 of November 2019, scientists, decision makers in science policy and the representatives of scientific press will be arriving in Budapest from over 100 countries. This marks the 20th anniversary of the first conference that launched the World Science Forum. The 1999 interdisciplinary conference organized by UNESCO and the International Council for Science (ICSU) also included in its agenda the problems of the role and responsibility of science, and the ethical questions of scientific research.

These problems might be considered even more important today. Owing to the astonishing development in technology in the past two decades and the speeding up of research in for example, gene technology or artificial intelligence, the leading body of the Forum chose ethics and the responsibility of science as the main focus of the World Science Forum this year. Due to the revolution in infocommunication, private opinions and false beliefs often lacking any scientific proof or substance spread through the public at lightning speed. This poses a great challenge for players and stakeholders within scientific circles, for the public interested in scientific questions as well as scientific policy makers.

These challenges and the possible answers given to them will be discussed during six plenary and approximately 30 other sessions by leading scientists, policy makers and representatives of science diplomacy from all over the world.

The opening lecture of the three-day-long conference will be delivered by Peter-Paul Verbeek, professor at the Dutch University of Twente, in the Palace of Arts (MüPa) on 20 November.

The plenary sessions will take place in the Palace of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. During the first plenary section (titled: *Are There Ethical Limits to What Science Can Achieve or Should Pursue?*) lecturers from the USA, Brazil, Russia and Norway will be discussing the ethical considerations of scientific fields such as the editing of the human genome, nano- and bio-technology, artificial intelligence and data science.

What are the ethical aspects of research supported by market players? How to divide resources between basic research and innovation? In the session (titled: *The Ethics of Science Funding*), opening lectures will be held by France Córdova, President of the American based NSF, which is one of the largest science funding agencies in the world. Also participating, will be Michinari Hamaguchi, the president of the largest science funding organizations in Japan.

What are the ethical questions of scientific research itself, especially concerning reproducibility and publication possibilities? During the plenary session *The Ethical Conduct of Science* the speakers include Quarraisha Abdool Karim, the head of AIDS Research in South Africa; Indira Nath, professor of the Indian Academy of Sciences; and Cheiko Asakawa, blind computer scientist who speaks about the Accessibility Project of IBM.

The plenary session *Ethics in Science Communication* will be chaired by James Gilles, communication expert at CERN. Lecturers include Matthew Liao, director of Center for Bioethics at New York University; Angela Saini British science journalist; and Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan, principal scientific advisor of the Indian government.

In the plenary session *20 years of Science Diplomacy*, Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, the President of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) in Jordan, organizer of WSF 2017 and UNESCO Ambassador for Science for Peace; and Khotso Mokhele, Chancellor of the University of the Free State in South Africa will be delivering lectures.

Besides the largest international scientific organizations, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences also offers some plenary sessions, e.g. *Sustainable Agriculture*, which is organized jointly by the MTA, the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC) and the Department of Science and Innovation of the Republic of South Africa. Lectures will be delivered by the Nobel laureate professor Paulo Artaxo, University of São Paulo, Brazil, who studies the climatic effects of the shrinking of tropical rain forests. In the other MTA session, *Hunting for Alien Worlds: Recent Advances in Exoplanet Research*, a panel of extinguished astronomers will be discussing the extraterrestrial living possibilities of humanity. The session is organized by

academician László Kiss, director general of the Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences (CSFK).

All sessions are open to the press, but pre-registration is required. You can register at vajda.kristof@titkarsag.mta.hu after which you will be sent an invitation to register formally. Press Points will be provided in the Palace of the MTA during the WSF, where questions can be posed directly to speakers of the conference. Should you wish to conduct an interview with someone please contact Kristóf Vajda at vajda.kristof@titkarsag.mta.hu. All events, including press conferences, are in English.