

Common statement about Science

Paris, 27th of September, 2016

Science and trust

Knowing and understanding what surrounds us and who we are is a driving force of human life. The acquisition of scientific knowledge over the centuries has always been a source of progress. It is a catalyst for culture, development, creative cooperation and can lead to unexpected applications. Scientific knowledge, with its advancement due to research and accompanying technologies, is part of the heritage of humanity that must be made available for use by everyone.

Faced with the major issues of this early 21st Century – an unprecedented increase in world population, the depletion of natural resources, unbalanced development, changes in our planet's ecosystem - it is of crucial importance that our societies make use of the rational approach that characterizes scientific thought so that we can address the issues of today responsibly and face those of tomorrow with serenity.

Science – universally shared, with its applications under control and consolidated for peoples' benefit and not to their detriment – is quite capable of confronting these major issues. However, it would be a mistake to ask science to provide all the answers. This it cannot do. On the other hand, a return to obscurantism would constitute a major regression for our civilisations.

From time immemorial, human progress has resulted from multiple exchanges, from prehistoric migrations to today's universe of virtual outreach. The rapidity of communication by digital technology sometimes leaves us confused, without the necessary time for reflection. It is essential to shape this new tool in order to safeguard the time to think.

The two human realisations, science and society, interact with each other. They should not be antagonistic but rather synergise through dialogue and mutual support to enable human advancement.

Aware of the doubts that periodically surface in our societies about the usefulness of science, the Academies gathered in Paris on this 27th of September, 2016, express their trust in education and in the capacity of scientific research to promote the progress of mankind.