



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

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de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Remarks by Flavia Schlegel,  
Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the**

**Presentation of the IYL report**

**Room II, UNESCO HQ, 3 October 2016**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to close this session on the presentation of the report of the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL).

I am most grateful to the preceding speakers who have given a comprehensive overview on the achievements in science, technology and innovation for sustainable development held during the International Year.

I wish to express my thanks and congratulations to the leadership of the International Year of Light, John Dudley, Ana María Cetto, and Francis Allotey, for their commitment and hard work which dates back many years.

I would also like to thank those within UNESCO HQs, ICTP, and other agencies of the United Nations and related international organizations who supported and participated so enthusiastically during 2015.

My thanks and congratulations also go to the consortium of partners which meaningfully contributed to the success of the IYL in keeping track of all the IYL-related activities on a global scale.

Thanks to the efforts of all these partners, the International Year of Light involved a total of 13,168 activities of various types (that we know of) reaching 147 countries, on all continents including Antarctica!

All these activities contributing significantly to advance the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The IYL contribution extended in so many ways, spanning from the capacity building aspects for research and innovation with local benefits, to science policy settings through policy briefs and information meetings on light science and sustainable development, as was the case with the UNESCO Executive Board Information Meeting “Future Prospects Initiative” during which Nobel laureates participated.

A major theme tackled by the IYL was also the promotion of gender parity in science, aiming to address the well-known problem of minority participation of women in science, particularly at the highest level.

This has been addressed through programmes in education for girls, through showcasing female role models to motivate future generations of female students, and through initiatives that promoted careers in science and engineering for young girls.

Many events used innovative means to highlight the importance of light-based technologies amongst the general public.

Over 100 light-themed videos and documentaries were produced for science education and outreach during 2015. The UNESCO Active Learning in Optics and Photonics (ALOP) teachers' training programme, for instance, developed positively with schools held in Indonesia, Mauritius, South Africa, Bolivia and Pakistan to cite a few.

A Photonics Research Workshop for African Development was organized in Ethiopia, and 3,500 people attended the Africa Science Week on the theme of Light and Energy in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Globally, around 1.1 billion people still do not have access to energy and reliable lighting infrastructure in the world.

That is why a central aim of the IYL was to raise awareness on this issue, since eradicating such "light poverty" is clearly a vital step in addressing numerous development goals.

UNESCO's concern for "green development" taking into consideration the objectives set in the Paris Agreement for Climate Change was at the cutting-edge of the IYL movement.

Indeed, the IYL encouraged solar-based energy and energy efficient LED lighting solutions. The Human Energy Project installation promoted renewable energy sources to light up the Eiffel Tower. The NGO Liter of Light promoted ecologically sustainable and cost-free lighting in developing countries.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

L'Année de la Lumière a également été une année d'expression de la créativité.

Le pouvoir symbolique de la lumière a été souligné avec beauté dans le monde entier avec l'illumination de monuments et sites du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, tel que le Vieux-Port de Valparaiso au Chili.

J'ai encore à l'esprit l'illumination des trois faces du siège de l'UNESCO aux couleurs de l'aurore boréale lors de la cérémonie de lancement de l'Année internationale.

Le thème de la lumière a aussi inspiré de nombreux artistes et compositeurs. Je pense en particulier aux sept compositions musicales originales produites dans le cadre de cette Année, y compris celle intitulée « Lumière d'Einstein » dont la première représentation, par Joshua Bell et Marija Stroke, a eu lieu à la Maison de l'UNESCO en Janvier 2015.

L'histoire de la lumière est aussi celle de l'humanité.

La célébration de l'Année de la lumière était une Aude à la vie, qui est le fruit de la lumière à travers la photosynthèse. Une Aude à l'accomplissement exceptionnel d'hommes et de femmes de talents qui ont mis leur savoir et leur énergie au service du progrès et du développement de la société.

Je pense à Rosalind Franklin pour sa fameuse Image B 51 (51ième image de diffraction de l'ADN) qui identifia la structure en forme d'hélice de l'ADN il y a plus de 70 ans. Je pense aussi à Ibn Al-Haytham, qui, il y a plus de 1000 ans, publia le premier livre sur l'optique et la vision.

Ibn Al-Haytham a exploré le monde et la nature de la lumière en utilisant une chambre noire qu'il appela « Albeit Almuzlim », traduit en latin par "camera obscura". Ce dispositif qui forme aujourd'hui la base de la photographie moderne a aussi été utilisé par un grand nombre de peintres de la Renaissance pour produire des œuvres d'un réalisme exceptionnel.

La diversité est une richesse. Et notre héritage commun se résume en une communauté de destin où la science a toute sa place. C'est la raison pour laquelle l'UNESCO travaille à maintenir la paix à travers l'éducation, la science et la culture, qui toutes trois étaient des composantes essentielles de l'Année internationale.

Light is also about cooperation. The IYL has been an important player in creating bridges and opportunities for South-South and

South-North cooperation in science, technology and innovation, and in strengthening partnerships for a more sustained science-policy-society interface.

Light science holds answers to key questions we must address over the next century – questions about equitable and inclusive growth, about eradication of poverty, about sustainable development, about the resilience of our societies.

UNESCO's role is to help Member States answer these questions, together.

Our position is clear.

Science flourishes, in a soil that is rich in diversity, through dialogue, through the interaction of peoples and cultures, and through the meeting of minds.

This is, I believe, the spirit which underpinned the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies.

The IYL Report is an excellent opportunity for us to look back what has been achieved, and also to look ahead in the future towards what is still to be accomplished for a sustainable world.

I thank you all for your participation in the Unveiling of the Report of the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, and wish you an enjoyable and rewarding reading experience!