

in developing countries as well as doctoral work on problems of interest to developing countries could be financed and encouraged and the status of such work raised by enlarging the facilities for publication or discussion of the results of such work. Universities or other institutions in advanced countries could give their scientists sabbatical leave on full salary or half salary for work in developing countries, and could safeguard their career prospects and other privileges during their absence. Private multinational corporations often have highly trained staff suitable for work on problems of special interest to developing countries and often with field experience in developing countries, and these could be made available for such work, directly through bilateral or multi-lateral aid arrangements. Retired senior R and D staff from private companies might form a particularly valuable reservoir for work in developing countries. Foundations which have already played such a crucial part in solving major scientific and technological problems related to development could be strengthened by suitable means. The proposal has been made that a World Science Foundation be created which would award a series of incentive or challenge grants to enable selected scientific institutions in developed countries to supplement their staffs for the purpose of increasing their capacity to attack programmes or support research for the benefit of developing countries.'

## Follow-up action in Europe

After publication of the *World Plan of Action*, two important events have been the Joint Meeting of European scientists and research directors with the UN Advisory Committee (Geneva, 19-20 November 1971), and the International Symposium on Targets for Scientific and Technological Development (Baden-bei-Wien, May 1972). The Geneva meeting recommended how research and development organizations in developed countries, particularly Europe, could help find solutions to problems in developing countries.

Mainly on the basis of a very detailed report on military R and D expenditure in developed countries, prepared for this purpose by the Swedish Institute for International Affairs, the Symposium at Baden-bei-Wien adopted unanimously the following resolution with regard to Target III of the World Plan :

'The proposed shift in research orientation in developed countries is eminently desirable. Moreover, development needs might well justify that Target III be based on total R and D expenditures rather than on internal non-military R and D expenditures, and that such a transition might be

reached by the end of the Second United Nations Development Decade. This objective should be made a part of national science policies.'

## Conclusions

In view of strong emphasis that the UN Advisory Committee for the Application of Science and Technology to Development places on the active support of the international scientific community, European physicists might well wish to consider how they can assist. The UN Advisory Committee will be happy to advise on courses of action, and will also be pleased to receive suggestions and offers of help. For further information, please contact Mr. G.B. Gresford, United Nations, New York or Mr. H. Einhaus, United Nations, Geneva.

## Publications

- 1 *World Plan of Action* (United Nations, New York, 1971)
- 2 CLARKE, R. *The Great Experiment* (United Nations, New York, 1971)
- 3 MORAVCSIK, M.J., Physics in the developing countries, *Physics Today* **25** 9 (September 1972) 40-43, 46, 47

# Letter to the Editor

## Physics, Society and the Future

At the Plenary Discussion on Physics and Society held on the evening prior to the General Assembly Meeting at Wiesbaden, I made the following points :

- (i) EPS should act as a centre of information and critical analysis on matters of policy and planning in the realm of physics in Europe and beyond ;
- (ii) EPS should provide a forum for the dispassionate assessment of the environmental crisis, the various plans to meet it and the role of physics and physicists in the pattern of Society as it is variously envisaged to develop.

There is now wide agreement that planning of research in physics, whether pure or applied, is vital in the interests of Society as a whole. This is indeed one of the trends which was brought out in the Conference. Physicists at large will accept, will have to accept, the "new role for scientists", to quote from an interview with L. Kowarski reported in the September 1972 *Europhysics News* "... to blend their scientific activity with

social purpose by working as scientists in the urgent areas identified by the policy makers". They will accept this role all the more eagerly if they can be made to feel a sense of involvement in the policy making.

What is wanted and what I feel could be done in an objective and effective manner under the auspices of EPS, as a body sufficiently detached from the centres of decision making, is a regular and systematic review of science policies and priorities on a European scale which will allow the individual physicist in research, development or teaching to adjust his programme or direction of work to fit in with these policies.

It was the strong feeling on this issue, expressed mainly by the younger members who see a job crisis looming over the Atlantic horizon, which decided me to take the matter to the General Assembly in the form of a hurriedly composed "motion" (see page 6).

Encouraged by the sympathetic interest in my second point at the Plenary Discussion regarding the environ-

mental crisis and the future of Society, I added a second motion (even more hurriedly and imperfectly drafted). These are indeed big issues which should concern us primarily as members of Society rather than as professional specialists. However, many of us are suspicious of political action in any shape or form, highly motivated as it may be, and are reluctant even to contemplate the serious commitment which joining the SSRS (Society for Social Responsibility in Science), or any of the increasing number of environmental or conservationist movements involves, without first knowing much more about it and hearing and working through all sides of the argument. This I feel can best be done among ourselves with the assistance of, or guidance by, colleagues from the environmental or social sciences.

I may be forgiven for ending with the old doggerel "Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis". Times are indeed changing at an alarming pace. Let us progress from the Latin passive with its fatalistic ring : Let us do everything to change ourselves inside and outside EPS !

**E.E. Schneider**, *School of Physics, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England*