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## Press Release of the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

### **Building the Future from History**

#### **Nobel Laureates and excellent young researchers from around the globe celebrate the 60 years tradition of a continuous dialogue between science generations in Lindau**

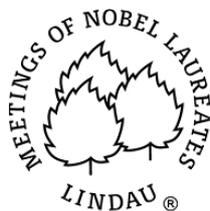
*Lindau, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.* "Young people here should be well aware of the importance of science and the necessity of science to go on. We cannot stop it unless we want to kill *Homo sapiens* themselves." These words with which Rita Levi-Montalcini (101), the Grand Dame of Sciences, addressed her audience in Lindau in 1992, could in this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year well be chosen as the key note for all Lindau meetings since their inception. They have continuously offered a unique platform for an intensive intergenerational dialogue between Nobel Laureates and highly gifted young researchers on pressing problems of the planet: from population growth to peace, from bioethics to biodiversity, from pollution to climate change. This dialogue, whose past and current topics to a great extent are accessible via the newly created Lindau Media Online Library, will continue even more intensively at this year's interdisciplinary meeting when 61 Nobel Laureates in physiology or medicine, physics and chemistry and 650 young researchers from 70 countries will convene at Lake Constance from June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nobel Laureates will present recent research results, reflect on their science careers and float their ideas. They will do this in lectures and profound discussions between the two generations which are a special feature of the Lindau Meetings.

The openness of the scientific debates and solution seeking fosters the specific spirit of Lindau ever since the first meeting in 1951. In 1955, for example, eighteen Nobel Laureates signed the Mainau declaration in which they issued a warning against the use of atomic weapons. The co-founder and spiritus rector of the meeting, Count Lennart Bernadotte (†2004), opened the conference in 1970 with his appeal: "To all scientists in the world, help to re-establish a healthy environment, to care for it and maintain it as a place fit for human life!" Sustainability will again be a core theme of this year's meeting. It will appear from a range of perspectives in numerous lectures, to be finally discussed by a concluding top-class panel on 'Energy and Sustainability' on July 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Isle of Mainau.

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### **Energy and Sustainability**

The role scientists may play for a sustainable world also emerged in the talk on "The predicament of mankind" that Dennis Gabor (Nobel Prize in Physics 1971) gave in Lindau in 1973. Gabor was a member of the Club of Rome and co-author of its study "The limits of growth." The report was based on a computer model that calculated the development of five independent variables, industrialization, population growth, malnourishment, resource use and environmental destruction, until 2100. Gabor outlined the dilemma between mankind's growth and self-preservation and asked for urgent changes in energy mix and consumption. Analyzing different energy sources, he expressed the hope: "We scientists and technologists must create a new technology, one which uses only inexhaustible or self-renewing resources." Ever since that time numerous Laureates have been talking about this topic and discussed different energy sources at Lindau. In recent years, the possibilities and limitations of renewable energies have been on a special focus. In 2007, for example, Hartmut Michel (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1988) discussed "Biofuels – sense or nonsense." In 2009, Walter Kohn (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1998) outlined "An earth powered predominantly by solar and wind energy."

### **Science for Humanity**

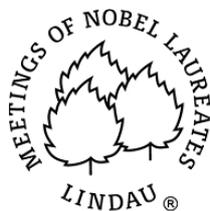
In her "Magna Charta of Duties", a lecture delivered in Lindau in 1993, Rita Levi-Montalcini (Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine in 1986) asked her audience to do their best to help protect the biosphere and develop a world of justice. She underscored the need for immediate aid for the poor from developed countries and plead for a world based on total equality. As scientific criteria lead to better decisions, Levi-Montalcini concluded that it should be specifically a duty of young scientists "to move this beautiful declaration to action." Her great lecture continues to inspire other Laureates who come to Lindau. This year, for example, Richard Ernst (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1991) invites young researchers to "Develop concepts for a beneficial global future;" Robert B. Laughlin (Nobel Prize in Physics 1998) discusses what happens "When coal is gone;" and Leland H. Hartwell (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2001) will talk about "Science for humanity."

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2

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### **A Climate for Change**

25 years ago, the discovery of the ozone hole above the Antarctic by Jonathan Shanklin and his colleagues made waves, as the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere protects us from 90% of the sun's ultraviolet rays. The depletion of ozone would have likely continued until chemists described the possible reactions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other substances with ozone in the 1970s. It has been the findings by Paul Crutzen, Mario José Molina and Frank Sherwood Rowland, who were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995, which led to the Montreal Protocol in 1987. Today, 196 countries have pledged to ban the use of some ozone-destroying chemicals. It is predicted that if these restrictions are followed, Antarctic springtime ozone levels could return to the 1950s levels by 2080. All three Nobel Laureates have been at Lindau several times and will give ambitious lectures again this year. Against the background of their unparalleled success, which showed that scientific knowledge can quickly lead to effective solutions, they will go into deep discussions about the greenhouse effect, climate change, the anthropocene and sustainable development.

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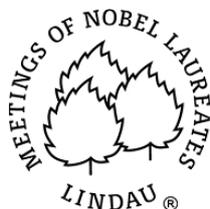
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3

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## Press Release of the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

### Supplementary Material

The Lindau Media Online Library contains valuable audio and video recordings beginning with lectures from 1952.

#### ***Quotes from Rita Levi-Montalcini (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1986) at Lindau in 1993***

<http://lindau-nobel.de/MediaContainer.AxCMS?LaureateID=6874&type=lectures>

23:52 "Scientists we believe are henceforth obligated to pay a third of their knowledge by sacrificing a portion of their careers in order to make an informative contribution to the public debate on wider issues of our times on which depends the survival of mankind."

23:04 "The main thesis is something rather new - that is just for young people: The stipulation of a new moral contract between the older and the younger generations based on the principle of the total equality and not as presently based on a paternalistic or hierarchical system and on a worldwide resolution to uphold this contract in view of the above mentioned obligation."

38:20 "Young people here should be well aware of the importance of science and the necessity of science to go on. We cannot stop it unless we want to kill *Homo sapiens* themselves."

#### ***Quotes from Dennis Gabor (Nobel Prize in physics 1971) at Lindau in 1973***

<http://lindau-nobel.de/MediaContainer.AxCMS?LaureateID=11011&type=lectures>

9:08 "So what we scientists and technologists must create is a new technology. One which uses only inexhaustible or self-renewing resources."

38:37 "We must realize we are living on an earth which is now becoming too small for us. Applied scientists and technologists must radically reverse their priorities. The first priority is to get our civilization going and not to continue with this irresponsible wasting of energy and material resources."

#### ***Last year's lectures covering sustainability***

<http://lindau-nobel.de/publish/MediaContainer.aspx?ActiveID=0&type=lectures&Meeting=275>

F. Sherwood Rowland: *Green House Gases and Climate Change*

Walter Kohn: *An Earth Powered Predominantly by Solar and Wind Energy*

Paul Crutzen: *Atmosphere Climate and Chemistry in the Anthropocene*

Sir Harold Kroto: *Science, Society & Sustainability*

Mario Molina: *Chemistry and Climate Change - is there a solution?*

***and many more...***

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4

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