

Celebrating CERN

50 years at the forefront of science

Les 50 ans du CERN

un demi-siècle à la pointe de la science



CERN 50th Anniversary Celebration
Tuesday, 19 October 2004
Meyrin site

Closing Address

Professor Enzo Iarocci, President of CERN Council

Your Majesty, Mr President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a day that the whole scientific community will recall as a most memorable event, in particular for the many words of appreciation and encouragement from so many eminent persons.

The aim, today, is to throw the spotlight on a unique adventure in the history of Science. Centres of Science open to guest scientists have existed ever since the classical antiquity. Also, since the Renaissance, when modern Science was born, scientists have discussed and cooperated in spontaneous networks, independently from their native countries. But, in CERN's case, it was a group of Governments who, in a vision of excellence, founded a common house dedicated to fundamental Science, open to embrace the widest participation. Such a high goal made it possible to attract the best men and women in the fields of science, technology and administration. These women and men have together established the never-ending cultural tradition that is the cornerstone of the success we are celebrating today.

Close collaboration with scientific institutes and universities in the Member States has facilitated the development of a single coherent CERN community, which goes well beyond the walls of the Laboratory. For larger countries CERN has thus become the bridge towards new forms of international cooperation, while for smaller countries it has simply become the Laboratory, a unique point of access to the big world of fundamental Science.

Then, with the award of Nobel prizes, CERN clearly restored Europe's pre-eminence in the field of fundamental physics, which was the very dream of the founders. The launch of the LHC has consolidated that achievement. In this respect, CERN represents a magnificent expression of the European ideal.

At the same time, one has to point out that the community of participants has gradually extended far beyond the borders of CERN's Member States. In essence, CERN has become a World Laboratory, attracting an enthusiastic and cohesive population of young people, from the four corners of the globe, thus creating an atmosphere that can be compared only to that of the Olympic games - except that here the friendly and loyal competition revolves around thinking fast instead of running fast.

This celebration comes at the crucial time of the final push to complete LHC and its detectors. The Laboratory is setting up an unprecedented instrumental complex, consisting of many pieces of equipment often as large as a house, where one aims for a precision of less than a hair on the details, also at the lowest possible cost and within the tightest of schedules, of course.

The making of the LHC is a truly Herculean task, requiring dedication and sacrifice over many years. For this

reason, everybody involved - the Management, the staff and the whole LHC community - fully deserve the gratitude of the participating Governments.

In the meantime, the Laboratory is also preparing the future of particle physics, unveiling novel accelerator techniques, which promise to be the basis of future frontier projects, over a time scale of decades, taking shape through the discoveries at the LHC.

The future of large Science projects is tending towards ever-widening world cooperation. In this view, our Organization can further develop the role of sponsoring international cooperation that, with such admirable foresight, was laid out in the Convention by its founders.

In short, the brave adventure continues, deserving the full encouragement and support of the Governments. What was true fifty years ago is even more valid in the Europe of today.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the greatest success to the LHC community. What could one wish them to discover? Certainly, the discovery of the Higgs or super-symmetric particles would be a fantastic step forward in our knowledge of the Universe and its history. However, the history of Science teaches that things may go differently. For instance at the turn of the last century, nobody could have envisaged the quantum magic that was to come. So, at the turn of this century, when the LHC is close to unveiling new physics, I think the best wish for the LHC community is for them to discover something completely unexpected, which has never been envisaged, even in the wildest dreams of the most imaginative theorist. In this respect, Science can be very similar to Art, not only in its fundamental objective = "making the invisible visible", as Klee said of painting, - but also in the process of making - Picasso once said, "I do not search, I find".

Finally, Your Majesty, Mr President, Your Excellencies, on behalf of the CERN Council, may I thank you for honouring us with your presence here today and for your encouraging words of wisdom and foresight. Indeed my thanks go to all our distinguished guests, whose presence at today's celebrations demonstrates the high esteem in which CERN is held, both in Europe and across the world.