



**T**he greatest challenges to the advancement of science and research are those related with the supreme human right because this is the prerequisite for the exercise of all other human rights: the right to life. Health, nutrition, access to water, environment, shelter and sustainable energy are the fields in which scientific advancement and timely applications are urgently required. The main obstacle to overcome is an economic global system guided by market laws instead of the universal democratic principles of justice, freedom, equality and solidarity. The present food crisis clearly demonstrates that the transition of an economy of war to a knowledge-based economy to promote human development and capacity-building at world scale cannot be postponed anymore. While daily investments in armament are around \$3bn, more than 60,000 human beings die of hunger. A rapid transition to a global development strategy, with large investments in infrastructures for energy, water and food production, for health diagnosis, treatment and research is therefore a world responsibility of the leadership, in the frame of a reinforced United Nations system. Empowering citizens in order to be able to influence decision-making through the media and the utilisation of the new communication technologies (SMS, internet) can be crucial in the short term to accelerate the way in which human welfare becomes the real core of scientific efforts for the legacy of a less sombre horizon. This we owe to our succeeding generations.

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