

Introductory remarks at the meeting honoring Professor GC. Ghirardi

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I regret that a conflict has made it impossible for me to be at this meeting honoring Professor Ghirardi. It goes without saying that I am unable to make, in person, the introductory remarks as Professor Weber had asked. Instead, my colleague Professor Seif Randjbar-Daemi has agreed to read the text of my remarks. I am thankful to him for this favor.

For several hundred years during which Trieste was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to the zero-th order, its science was dwarfed by Vienna. The city came to Italy only after the First World War and began the task of integrating itself in its new home. The University of Trieste was created in late thirties. Those were Mussolini's times. Immediately after the Second World War, the city was placed under international protectorate, and was returned to Italy almost exactly fifty years ago. This complex and checkered history of the city had made it difficult for the University of Trieste to take off quickly.

A little over forty years ago, the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, or ICTP as we call it, was created by Professor Salam and a few Italian scientists, chief among whom is Professor Budinich. Soon after ICTP was created, the Centre and the Department of Theoretical Physics at the University became very close. In fact, even today, they share this building for their work. The synergy between the two institutions allowed theoretical physics as a whole to thrive in Trieste. It usually takes a few first-rate departments for a university to pull itself together. Today, in part because of the Department of Theoretical Physics, and in part also because of other units of comparable repute, the University of Trieste is among the top ten in the country. This is remarkable for a relatively young university which, despite its youth, still works within a bureaucracy that is almost thousand years old. (Just remember that the University of Bologna is over 900 years old!)

In the interaction between ICTP and the University, there have been a few people whose role has been sustained over the years and, for that reason alone, very important. A

prominent person among them is GianCarlo Ghirardi. Almost since the inception of ICTP, he has been a part of it. He has helped ICTP take shape. In turn, he has been able to use ICTP to foster his research on a strongly upward trajectory. This is an example of the best kind of interaction. GianCarlo's interests in the foundations of quantum mechanics are legendary. In his recent popular book, he has outlined all the principal ideas of quantum mechanics for the layman without sacrificing conceptual rigor.

One of the successful programs at ICTP is its Associates Program. Our Associates, now totaling more than 2000, are scientists from developing countries with sustained research work of their own in their countries. They work at the Centre by visiting here periodically for short durations. This rewarding association is sustained, with each Associate, usually over a period of the order ten years. About 800 Associates are currently enrolled at ICTP. Professor Ghirardi has been heading our Associates Program for some time and is instrumental for its present operation. I value those contributions as well. As the President of the Conzortio, GianCarlo is also engaged in raising money for research institutions in Trieste. He is thus a man of many facets.

On behalf of ICTP, and my own personal behalf, I offer GianCarlo my best wishes for this occasion as well as for the future. May his research work remain undiminished for many years!

I now have the most pleasant task of welcoming you all to ICTP on this occasion, and hope to see you on other occasions as well, especially when I can be around. I am sure that you will enjoy the meeting here as well as in its next stop.