

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen:

Dr. Alessandro Treves asked me to say a few words of welcome. Indeed, welcome to Trieste, to ICTP and to SISSA for this 39<sup>th</sup> EBBS meeting.

If you don't know it by now, allow me to say that ICTP is the institution next door. The acronym stands for Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics---although we do much more than theoretical physics. Let me to take a minute or so to tell you about us.

Abdus Salam was a Pakistani Nobel Laureate in Physics who created ICTP, along with Professor Budinich of Trieste. The Centre was created to serve scientists from disadvantaged countries---and we do it in a variety of ways. It is important to know that we mix scientists from developing and developed countries in roughly equal proportions.

The Centre's main tasks are to

- Foster the growth of advanced studies and research in physical and mathematical sciences, interpreted broadly, especially in support of excellence in developing countries;
- Develop high-level scientific programs keeping in mind the needs of developing countries, and provide an international forum of scientific contact for scientists from all countries;
- Conduct research at the highest international standards and maintain an environment that is conducive for scientific inquiry for the entire community of students, visitors, associates, fellows and program participants.

If you wish to know more about us, please visit our website, [www.ictp.it](http://www.ictp.it). I hope that some of you will be inspired by our Center's mission: it is as much to create new knowledge as it is to disseminate it to those who are scientifically disadvantaged.

May I now say a few words about an aspect that touches your meeting somewhat peripherally? Though I know little about your subject, I envy that you are charting new avenues, and know that, as a result of your work, we will one day understand the brain and ourselves better. I am certain that some new treatments for brain disorders will result.

At the same time, we must consider the likelihood that the brain research will be abused. It had already met that fate in the first half of the twentieth century, even by countries that espouse liberty in the abstract. I have no faith at all that it will not be used for wicked purposes by a powerful few. Just look at what has happened to a lot of our knowledge, especially the fantastic knowledge acquired through nuclear research.

Am I saying that you should desist from further research? Am I saying that you should slow down your research? **Absolutely not:** I am saying that, our enhanced understanding must be accompanied by a stronger ethical dimension within the scientific community. Only when knowledge is forged with a strong sense of ethics can we hope to avoid the abuse of science. Scientists cannot, and should not, say that

ethical issues and the applications of their research is not their domain---but that of politicians and the society at large. We would be dead wrong that way.

Allow me to quote from the former president of the Max Planck Society, Hubert Markl, although I won't take the time to explain the context. He said, "Never forget that there is no goal of research that can be viewed as so important, and high-ranking, that it justifies the complete disregard for another person's dignity or human rights against their will".

I therefore hope that you will evolve the ethical component of your research as seriously as you develop the basic knowledge of the brain.

Once again, I welcome you to Trieste and to this conference. We are very pleased that you are having your meeting here.