



IUPAC 2011 World Congress

by *Gabriel A. Infante*



Gabriel Infante, president of the IUPAC 2011 World Congress Organizing Committee.

The IUPAC Congress that took place 31 July to 7 August 2011 in San Juan, Puerto Rico was one of the major cornerstone events celebrating IYC. Hosted by the Colegio de Químicos de Puerto Rico, the Congress was a unique and exciting forum for meeting the challenge put forth by the event's theme: "Chemistry Bridging Innovation

among the Americas and the World." With around 2800 attendees, 1274 scientific papers, 7 Nobel laureates, and many special events, the Congress was the largest scientific meeting ever held in Puerto Rico.

The Congress included plenary speakers, symposia, oral and poster presentations, workshops, seminars, group meetings, and state-of-the-art scientific exhibitions. For the first time, the Congress featured seven Nobel laureates in chemistry as plenary speakers.

- Aaron Ciechanover (2004), Israel
- Richard R. Ernst (1991), Switzerland
- Ada Yonath (2009), Israel
- Roald Hoffmann (1981), USA
- Mario J. Molina (1995), USA (University of California at San Diego and the only Latin American with a Nobel in Chemistry)
- Richard Schrock (2005), USA
- Robert Grubbs (2005), USA

The scientific program, besides the seven plenary sessions featured:

- three additional invited speakers (Ira Reese, USA, Peter Atkins, UK, and Luis Echegoyen, USA)

- 35 symposia in 93 concurrent sessions
- 55 general oral concurrent sessions
- 22 poster sessions
- 22 continuing education courses

The scientific papers were organized in the following areas:

- Alternative Energy Sources
- Chemistry and the Environment
- Chemistry of Life
- Chemical Education and Heritage
- Industrial and Applied Chemistry
- Materials Science
- Macromolecular, Supramolecular and Nanotechnology
- Chemical Synthesis
- Chemical Analysis and Imaging
- Theoretical, Physical and Computational Chemistry

The Congress offered a number of special activities and events that celebrated the International Year of Chemistry.

- A day-long symposium organized by Ingrid Montes featured internationally prominent chemists speaking on the topic "Are Women Still Underrepresented in Science?" A corresponding award ceremony and exhibit honored 23 Distinguished Women in Chemistry/Chemical Engineering.
- The Festival de Quimica, which was held 31 July and stretched the length of Paseo de la Princesa in Old San Juan, enabled members of the public to participate in chemistry activities run by enthusiastic, young members of local ACS chapters.



Flor R. Mattos de Jesús, President CQPR, welcomes attendees at the Congress Opening Ceremony.

Bienvenidos a Puerto Rico

- Science on Wheels sponsored by UPR, Mayagüez Campus, and organized by Juan Lopez Garriga and Carlos Ruiz.
- A special lecture, the “Homo Sapiens Report: The Future of Humanity,” by Oscar-winning director Michael Wadleigh.

The exhibition hall, one of the largest ever at an IUPAC Congress, featured four islands (Waters, Agilent, Thermo, and Pridco-Puerto Rico Tourism Co.) and 82 other booths from different companies, agencies, and universities.

Another unique activity for an IUPAC Congress was the Special Session of the Puerto Rican Senate that took place in the Capitol on 4 August to recognize the visiting Nobel Laureates, the IUPAC Officers, and the IUPAC 2011 Local Organizing Committee.

Some memorable social activities gave attendees a taste of Puerto Rican culture. The Puerto Rican Night, sponsored and organized by Puerto Rico Tourism Co. included typical local music and food. The highlight of the Opening Ceremony was the Bayamón Symphony Orchestra directed by Prof. Angel Mattos.

This Congress had a record number of latinamerican participants with 262 or 26.7 percent: Colombia 86, Mexico 46, Brazil and Perú 32 each, and 25 Dominican Republic. The largest delegation was from the USA with 293 or 30 percent.

IUPAC 2011 was made possible by the financial sup-



Roald Hoffmann (left) reads one of his poems before beginning his lecture at the symposium on Chemistry and Culture. Peter Atkins (right) discusses “The Limitless Power of Science.”

port and collaboration of the Puerto Rico Legislature, The American Chemical Society, PR Tourism CO., PR Convention Bureau, PRIDCO. The island universities: UMET and Turabo (Ana G. Méndez University System) Caribbean University, Interamerican University, Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, UPR-Mayagüez and Rio Piedras Campuses, Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust. In addition, a number of private companies, including Pfizer, Amgen, Eli-Lilly, Waters, Agilent, and others made important contributions to the Congress. 🇵🇷



www.iupac2011.org

www.chemistry2011.org/participate/activities/show?id=2

The Homo Sapiens Report

One of the more compelling events at the 2011 IUPAC Congress was a special presentation of the Homo Sapiens Report: The Future of Humanity on 31 July. This highly visual lecture by Oscar-winning film director Michael Wadleigh takes a broad look at the complex issues mankind will be facing over the next century.

Michael Wadleigh is an Oscar winning film director and co-founder of The Homo Sapiens Foundation, which is part of an offi-

cial project of UNESCO’s education for sustainable development.

Before his lecture, *Chemistry International* Managing Editor Fabienne Meyers had the chance to sit down with Wadleigh and talk about why he was interested in speaking at the IUPAC Congress.

“Ever single millenium goal is failing,” said Wadleigh. “Political and business systems aren’t able to solve the problems facing

humanity. Therefore, science has to play a leading role.” The question he wants IUPAC members to consider, he said, is “What should science academies and societies do?” According to Wadleigh, one of the most important things scientists could do is to become a stronger voice in the decisionmaking process.



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