



«Towards a Modern Humanism».

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A new summit for the “World Knowledge Dialogue” Foundation Towards integrated knowledge for the 21st century

Geneva, 28th February 2008— CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland is to host the 2nd World Knowledge Dialogue Symposium between 10-13th September 2008. The biennial event is an interdisciplinary discussion forum for three hundred top researchers and policy makers from all over the globe. It aims to give them a broader, shared perspective of our world so they can better contribute to resolving its problems.

This year's dialogue builds on the themes —

**Collective Network Knowledge & Human Individual Intelligence:
Convergence and divergence**

Collaborative Behavior, Altruism & Conflict:

From animal behavior to economics and prevention of violence

— with presentations by invited speakers as well as contributions selected from abstract submissions.

The invited speakers are all renowned as communicators and as pioneers in their fields. They include philosopher **Pierre Lévy** (U. Ottawa), sociologist **Karen Cook** (U. Stanford), primatologist **Frans de Waal** (U. Emory), astronomer **Hubert Reeves** (U. Montreal), ecologist **Raghavendra Gadagkar** (Institute of Science, Bangalore), computer scientist **Wendy Hall** (U. Southampton), systems theorist **Joël de Rosnay** (Biotics International), Nobel Laureates, developmental biologist **Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard** (Max Planck, Tübingen) and geneticist **Sir John Sulston** (Institute of Science, Ethics and Innovation, U. Manchester).

Their task is unusual, to emphasize **what is not known, rather than what is**. The goal is to identify areas of research ripe for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization. The tools, methodologies and language used in each field of research are different. Having to explain ourselves to one another forces us to look at things from different angles. The aim is not to have a juxtaposition of specialist monologues, but a constructive dialogue between the disciplines. That's what generates creativity and innovation. The speakers are role models, all have shown that cross-fertilization of ideas works best when the humanities and social sciences have genuine parity of esteem with the natural and technical sciences.

Harvard's internationally acclaimed naturalist, humanist and Pulitzer Prize winner **E. O. Wilson** is "Scientist in Residence" for WKD 2008. He will ensure that dialogue within the **invited presentation sessions** focuses on links between knowledge and responsibility. The **interactive workshop sessions** which follow then allow participants to pursue specific issues at greater length. As Wilson sees it, *the 21st century is fraught with challenges for humanity. We need to pool our resources to surmount them.*

The Foundation's Director **Francis Waldvogel** thinks WKD 2006 taught some valuable lessons. *There is no single formula for communication between different disciplines. We therefore need to work at developing the metaphors that help us to understand each other. We also need to be open-minded and prepared to have our own views challenged. As the 19th century mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said, "the "silly" question is the first intimation of some totally new development".*

Many WKD participants are established academics at the height of their careers. However, the symposium also attracts talented post-docs and students. Through its **Young Scientist Program**, some of the best obtain financial support to attend. They assist the Scientist in Residence and workshop leaders and receive mentoring. WKD is intergenerational as well as interdisciplinary dialogue.

Annexes:

- Provisional **program**: <http://www.wkdialogue.ch/programme2008.pdf>
- Composition of the **International Scientific Committee**: <http://www.wkdialogue.ch/isb.pdf>
- Register for the **Symposium 2008**: <http://www.wkdialogue.ch/registration>
- Submit an **Abstract**: <http://www.wkdialogue.ch/call-for-abstracts/index.html>
- Sign up for the **Newsletter**: <http://www.wkdialogue.ch/newsletter>

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