

## A Joint Declaration by Four Nation's Chemical Society Presidents

### *Preface*

In this year of International Chemistry Celebration, 1999, the Presidents of the American Chemical Society, The Chemical Society of Japan, the German Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry issue this joint statement on behalf of our science.

In the 20th Century, advances in science and technology have brought prosperity and convenience to humankind and have promoted the progress of civilization. It is also, however, a century in which we have come to recognize that progress is often accompanied by problems. For example, the use of fossil fuels as energy sources has helped industry to prosper but also brought about an increase in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, which may harm the environment. Many of the useful chemicals that make our lives comfortable and healthy can also be harmful if misused.

Before we can achieve a better quality of life for the 21st century society, humanity faces many unsolved problems: a huge population increase, mass starvation and the emergence of new diseases, as well as damage to the Earth's environment, the effects of pollution and the rapid and unpredictable changes in atmospheric composition affecting climate. The time has come when we must unite all of our vast knowledge and the capability and potential of science and technology to solve these vexatious problems. Chemistry is a fundamental science that must take the lead. Progress in biology, medicine, materials science and most branches of engineering depend on chemistry. Chemistry and chemical technology have not only increased food productivity, eradicated or controlled many diseases, maintained health extended lifespans, but are also producing novel materials, improving the quality and quantity of information and alleviating environmental pollution.

Of concern now is the tendency to stress only the negative side of chemistry. The positive side of chemistry is dismissed and antisience -an active aversion against science- is openly prevalent. In recent times the words chemistry and chemicals have often been used to project a negative and frightening image. Failure to tackle this antisience will discourage and silence many chemists and delay solutions to difficulties that we all acknowledge. Let us all, as chemists, be aware of our role and responsibility and act together to advance human happiness, and preserve the security, viability, and vitality of our Earth for all its people.

To this end,

1. Chemists recognize that while chemistry and chemical technology have in the past greatly improved and benefited society, including contributing to human welfare and prosperity, these contributions were sometimes associated with negative and harmful effects such as a waste of natural resources, environmental pollution, and health and safety problems. We must,

therefore, maximize our efforts to minimize these harmful risks and efforts.

2. With a goal of preserving the future human welfare and global environment, we should deal positively and responsibly with the subject of creating a new and better science and technology that will enhance the quality of our lives in the 21st century, in harmony with humankind and the Earth's environment , while remaining true to sound scientific principles.
3. Chemists are responsible for providing clear and accurate information to the public based on objective truth. Chemists must not confine themselves to their research facilities but should willingly and regularly keep people informed of their actions and achievements.
4. Chemical societies must cooperate with chemists worldwide, and work to promote research on environmental, ecology, and security problems by enlightening society, and encouraging/lobbying legislative bodies and related administrative bodies to promote the implementation of these goals.

President, American Chemical Society

President, German Chemical Society

President, Royal Society of Chemistry

President, The Chemical Society of Japan