CHARTER

This document was adopted in July 1987, modified following the work done during the Congress held in 2007 and adopted by the Executive Committee in July 2008.

INTRODUCTION

The promotion of extra-curricular scientific activities has taken place for decades in many countries. Interest in these activities, and in the long term impact on the continuation of science in our society, have been strong enough to foster numerous international exchanges.

This charter was written to provide a framework for the international union of all organizations working with science and young people.

20 years after its adoption, it was slightly modified and amended.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

Foster interest among youth from all countries in science and technology in order to:

- prepare them to better understand the world in which they live and to be more engaged in contributing to its progress;
- increase their awareness of the universal scope of science and of its judicious use as a tool to unite people for peace;
- promote, within a global and transgenerational framework, preservation of the environment and sustainable development.

This Charter makes reference to the reflections and conclusions of the great principles elaborated in the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the UN Millennium Development Goals (2000).

Within MILSET, resolutions have been made following the Grenoble White Book (2001), the Moscow Congress and its Call by Youth (2003), the Tunis Youth Congress held in the framework of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS, 2005), the Congress of Vera Cruz (2006) and the Congress of Marly-Le-Roy (2007).

The four main themes dealt with in the following pages form the foundation of the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (Mouvement International du Loisir Scientifique et Technique - MILSET), which organizations joining MILSET must agree to. The four themes are:

- scientific and technological progress;
- scientific culture;
- preservation of the environment and sustainable development;
- international development and peace.

The themes are discussed following a general description of leisure science activities, and a summary of the characteristics that distinguish leisure science organizations from all those working with science or with young people.

info@milset.org – http://www.milset.org

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, 75930 PARIS cedex 19, France

Tel: +33 6 11 87 96 01- Fax: +33 2 96 23 40 37

CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRESS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES INVOLVING YOUTH

Science and technology play an important role in today's world and offer new perspectives for solutions to the many problems related to health and sustainable development. Young people have an essential role to play, which they must prepare for from their early learning years. The future of science is being prepared now. Encouraging interest in science and technology among young people is an important goal to pursue.

Schooling itself, however, is not sufficient for a person to choose to specialize in sciences. Many myths, most notably about the necessary intelligence, must be eliminated.

The openness and attractiveness of activities promoted by popular science organizations contribute significantly to a positive relationship between youth and science. Although the age of the target group varies from one country to another, most organizations work with young people between the ages of 14 and 21. Some organizations aim to make children aware of science beginning as early as age 6 or 7. Discovery, creativity, flexibility, and participation in individual or group activities give these activities an appeal that standard school programs cannot easily offer.

Leisure science organizations should strive to provide stimulating and open-ended activities for participants, and particularly those who are younger. These types of extra-curricular science programs play a well-established role in encouraging youth to transform a casual interest in science into a scientific career that will impact future society. Scientific progress cannot, however, be measured only by the number of people who choose scientific careers. It must also be evaluated by the general public's ability to understand scientific information. For this reason we must emphasize scientific culture.

MAKING SCIENCE ACCESSIBLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCIENTIFIC CULTURE

Scientific culture can be defined as our knowledge of the elements that make up our surroundings. The sciences help us to understand the rules governing natural phenomena; environmental science helps us understand what makes up our world; human sciences help us understand ourselves and our cultures; technology helps us to create new things from our existing resources. Each field provides a person with references that allow him to solve problems and act in his community.

Bringing science to the people, or the development of scientific culture, is a basic goal for all societies, from developing countries, which are continually working to improve living conditions, to industrialized countries that must promote understanding of the technological changes happening every day. The will to discover and understand scientific phenomena and technology that increasingly affects us should be present in all of us.

Faced with today's high-stakes environmental problems and emerging new technologies, individuals require basic scientific literacy and the ability to be critical of information provided. People must be able to make enlightened judgements of what is said in order avoid believing everything that is claimed to be supported by science.

The development of scientific culture therefore allows people to adapt their lifestyle to the progress of society and to better contend with the challenges of the future.

Organizations promoting extra-curricular science have a special role to play as they are well situated to integrate science and technology with the general culture. In addition, experience shows that a diversity of activities helps to foster new understanding in certain fields and to bring together modern and traditional approaches to science.

Finally, in addition to organizing activities that are accessible to everyone, organizations should work to disseminate scientific information, promote their activities, open them to the public, and participate in activities organized by other groups.

info@milset.org – http://www.milset.org

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, 75930 PARIS cedex 19, France

Tel: +33 6 11 87 96 01- Fax: +33 2 96 23 40 37

ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Ecological, environmental and sustainable development questions are a focus of many organizations promoting popular extra-curricular science. The natural sciences sparked the popular science movement in many countries, and, more than any other field of science, attracted young people to discover the world around them. As in the sixties, when new technologies served to broaden the focus of science organizations, the increasing awareness of environmental problems serves to refocus groups whose activities had been in more traditional fields.

Many groups are presently focused on the environment, informing the public about the protection and improvement of sites, pushing to improve attitudes toward the environment, and working in parks and reserves to make the public more aware of the importance of nature conservation, all to improve the balance and harmony between humanity and the environment.

Organizations promoting extra-curricular scientific activities should therefore reserve a special place for ecology and the environment and should support initiatives that develop public awareness of related questions.

SHARING EXPERIENCES AND WORKING TOWARD INTERNATIONAL *DEVELOPMENT AND* PEACE

Organizations that aim to promote popular activities in science and technology should develop programs that allow them to reach their target groups in their community, region, or country. The characteristics of each country, the prevailing problems, and the solutions developed by each organization serve as an important source of inspiration and enrichment to the community of organizations that share these goals.

For this reason, and to the extent that their resources permit, popular science organizations should encourage international exchanges between two or more countries without restrictions on language, race, or religion.

The goals and impact of leisure science on young people provide an excellent platform for valuable exchanges between representatives of different cultures on a common subject, though viewed from different perspectives. In addition to providing each organization with new ideas for activities for its target group, exchanges promote a better understanding of people and cultures, and bring together representatives who share similar goals regarding science and youth.

The exchange of ideas on scientific questions through leisure activities and discovery leads to interesting opportunities for peace and harmony that help to counter the all too frequent antagonism caused by the irresponsible use of science and technology.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Organizations that work in the area of leisure activities in science and technology have common characteristics that differentiate them from other organizations concerned with science or youth.

It is fundamental that the organizations in question organize or promote activities dealing with science or technology. The activities must be chosen by the participants, and are held in a leisure setting with that provides for flexibility, notwithstanding any restrictions that may be imposed by the need for quality. The activities should encourage discovery and creativity, and may be done individually or in a group.

In addition, the activities offered should incorporate scientific methods, based on observing, QUESTIONING, experimenting, and analysing. A project-based pedagogy is ideally suited to the development of these activities. These are the basic requirements of programs offered by leisure science organizations; however,

info@milset.org – http://www.milset.org

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, 75930 PARIS cedex 19, France

Tel: +33 6 11 87 96 01- Fax: +33 2 96 23 40 37

specific activities will vary depending on the participant's age, level of education, and knowledge of the field in question.

Finally, the activities offered are aimed primarily at youth, without excluding others who may gain from them. They must be open to as many people as possible to promote the development of scientific culture.

info@milset.org – http://www.milset.org

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, 75930 PARIS cedex 19, France

Tel: +33 6 11 87 96 01- Fax: +33 2 96 23 40 37