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BACK FROM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN KOREA

Prof. Elzbieta Czerwosz and Prof. Aleksandra Leliwa-Kopystynska of PPS recently returned from Seoul, Korea. Over 330 scientists from nearly 70 countries from all corners of the world, who registered for the Third International Conference on Women in Physics (ICWIP2008) came to Seoul. Delegates came from African, Asian, European, Latin American, North American, and island nations.

The meeting, held 7 to 10 October was dedicated to celebrating the physics achievements of women throughout the world, networking toward new international collaborations, gaining skills for career success, and aiding the formation of active regional working groups to advance women in physics. Each country presented information about its statistics and its activities to increase women's participation.

Attending this conference has been hugely inspiring to all participants. We met so many women physicists who are incredibly successful. The opportunity to network with potential colleagues has been valuable to us. We hope to collaborate with experts from various countries in research to solve many problems. It was exciting to learn from all the countries at the conference, and to see so many bright young physicists – both women and men – who are passionate about their research and committed to attracting girls to physics and advancing women.

One man participating in the conference said: "I have never been at a physics conference with so many women. I learned a lot and will be helping make physics friendlier for women, because we need their ideas for the field, the country, and the world to thrive."

Worldwide fewer than 15% of physicists are women. More than 80% of the conference attendees were women. It was clear that the scarcity of women in physics, especially in leadership positions, is a problem for many countries. They cannot benefit fully from women's ideas and approaches to improve their economic competitiveness or solve difficult problems, such as energy, health, and global sustainability.

Women, men, institutions, and governments need to work together to encourage, educate, recruit, retain, advance, and promote more girls and women in physics and other science and technology professions. To that end, the conference participants unanimously approved a resolution presented at the 26th General Assembly International Union of Pure and Applied Physics in Tsukuba Japan on 15 October 2008.

Dr. Youngah Park, a physicist who chairs the conference organizing committee, was recently elected to the Korean National Assembly from her district. She told the assembled participants, "I believe the positive effect of ICWIP2008 will go beyond the physics community and will have a strong effect on women leaders in all fields of science and technology."

The First International Conference on Women in Physics was held in Paris in 2002. The Second conference was hosted by Rio de Janeiro in 2005. Since the first conference most countries have made some progress in attracting girls to physics, increasing the proportion of physics degrees to women, and promoting women physicists. However, the proportion of physicists who are women is well below 20% in nearly all countries – too few to have maximum benefit for society.

For more information please contact: prof. Aleksandra Leliwa-Kopystynska

Below is our photo taken in Seoul.



Die polnische Teilnehmerinnen der ICWIP Konferenz bedanken sich bei der Deutschen Physikalischen Gesellschaft (DPG) für die gegebene Möglichkeit an die Konferenz teilzunehmen, dank der Übernahme aller Kosten. Insbesondere möchten wir uns bei Prof. Barbara Sandow für die freundliche Unterstützung bedanken.

Polish participants of the conference ICWIP 2008 thank to German Physical Society for financial support, which gave us the possibility to attend the meeting. In particular we would like to express our gratitude to Professor Barbara Sandow for her friendship and support.