

WCC/Public Opening Lecture by the WCC President Edmond H. Fischer  
Opening words by President Tuula Teeri, Aalto University  
Aalto University Open Innovation House, Sunday Nov 16, 2014

The admirable aim of the World Cultural Council is to build and further relationships with and among prestigious scientific, educational and cultural organisations worldwide, fostering a culture of well-being, peace and fraternity across the globe.

Aalto University is working towards a better world through excellent research and art, interdisciplinary collaboration, pioneering education, tangible societal impact and continuous renewal. We are striving to provide an academic and entrepreneurial environment where talented, passionate professionals and students from all over the world can connect and thrive.

The missions of the World Cultural Council and Aalto University complement each other beautifully. Aalto University seeks to produce new knowledge, technologies, innovation, expertise - and experts that are able and willing to improve the living conditions of people. The World Cultural Council is recognizing such efforts by distinguished scientists, artist and educators, making their achievements visible.

In a sense, both the World Cultural Council and Aalto University build on the well-known maxim often attributed to Sir Francis Bacon: *scientia est potentia*, knowledge is power. This insight to the nature of knowledge emphasises that to acquire new knowledge means that one has the potential and the capacity – the power – to really make a difference. It is important how we use this power; it is a privilege but it is also a serious responsibility.

The World Cultural Council's Albert Einstein World Award of Science is awarded for research which has brought true benefit and wellbeing to mankind. The educators receiving the **José Vasconcelos World Award of Education** are recognized for teaching the underlying basis of our present civilization and **the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts** is for artists contributing to the artistic legacy of the world. These are all noble and worthy goals for all of us.

This understanding of knowledge as the capacity, or indeed power, to make a difference and to bring about wellbeing is also at the core of Aalto University's education strategy. The focus of our teaching effort is the student: our aim is to educate responsible experts, future game changers, who can lead change and renewal. Research-based, new knowledge plays a crucial role in university education, but it is the student as a co-creator and our partner in learning that is in our focus.

Last year I had the pleasure of attending the 2013 World Cultural Council Award Ceremony at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, where Aalto University's Professor Petteri Nisunen and his colleague Tommi Grönlund were awarded the Leonardo Da Vinci World Award of Arts. This highlights yet another parallel in the approaches of the World Cultural Council and Aalto University: both of these organisations believe in bringing research, education and art together in creating a better world.

This year Petteri Nisunen and Tommi Grönlund are presenting their newest creation of art by the entrance to the Price Ceremony. It is a work of art that will bring beautiful light into the ceremony in the beginning of the dark Nordic winter. This, I am sure, will be making the world a little lighter for us all during this prestigious ceremony.

It is a great honour for Aalto University to host the World Cultural Council Award Ceremony. The Award Ceremony shall celebrate scientific and educational breakthroughs and achievements that have already proved their significance and that remain an inspiration for all of us. We are very proud to welcome this year's Laureates, the Delegates of the World Cultural Council, and our many distinguished guests to Finland and to Aalto University!

The program will now be launched by a historical account of one great scientific breakthrough from the distinguished World Cultural Council Honorary President, Professor Edmond H. Fischer. President Fisher will be introduced by Professor Jukka Seppälä who will be chairing this session.

Jukka Seppälä is Professor of Polymer technology and Head of the Department of Biotechnology and Chemical Technology at Aalto University. He currently holds the prestigious Academy of Finland Professorship.

I wish you all a delightful, thought-provoking and enjoyable few days at Aalto University!