

The United Nations Organization has proclaimed 2011 the International Year of Chemistry

The year 2011 has been proclaimed the International Year of Chemistry by the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). In 2011, the centennial of the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Marie Curie for her work on radioactivity will also be celebrated.

According to Jung-il Jin, the president of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the International Year of Chemistry will bring global recognition to the chemical science, upon which our life and our future are based”.

Starting now, Brazilian chemists should initiate projects through their institutions so that, during the whole year 2011, public events can be promoted to make people aware of chemistry’s accomplishments and contributions to the well-being of humanity, as well as its fundamental role in the development of alternative energy sources and food for the world population.

The Brazilian Chemical Society (SBQ) will be organizing, in the International Year of Chemistry, educational events in elementary and high schools, student olympiads, science fairs, thematic expositions and other activities to arouse young people’s interest in chemistry.

It will be a great opportunity for SBQ to promulgate the principles of green chemistry to the students and, mainly, “inoculate” students and professionals with “a green attitude”. Special attention will be given to the formation of chemistry teachers, for it is inconceivable that Brazil, with the second greatest chemical industry on the American continent, behind only the United States of America, accepts the present deficit of high school chemistry teachers.

The success of the International Year of Chemistry depends on all those who are engaged in teaching chemistry and in using it to produce wealth. That is why we call for university and high school teachers, technicians and university-level professionals, entrepreneurs, institute directors, labor union heads, state and national council members to join SBQ in turning 2011 into a great nation-wide happening. Chemistry is life and that was the reason that James Watson, the 1962 Medicine Nobel Prize laureate for having deciphered the DNA structure, said: “Life is simply a matter of chemistry”.

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