**World Science Forum, Budapest, November 2019**

**Opening ceremony address**

**Daya Reddy, President, International Science Council**

Salutations

It is a great pleasure for me to address you on behalf of the International Science Council. The Council, established in July 2018, is the result of a merger between ICSU, the International Council for Science, and the International Social Science Council. So in this 20th year of existence of the WSF series, I am pleased to acknowledge the ISC as the successor to ICSU in its role as partner organization of the WSF.

The vision of the ISC is to advance science as a global public good: a vision of universal accessibility to and sharing of scientific knowledge and expertise; of inclusivity, and of opportunities for scientific education and capacity development.

As part of its mission, the ISC strives to be a trusted voice that, in addition to promoting creativity, research and scholarship, places emphasis on the protection of scientific freedom, and on advocating principles for the ethical and responsible practice of science.

Thus the theme of the 2019 World Science Forum, of Ethics and Responsibility in Science, is one that resonates in a deep way with the mission of the ISC.

The principles, of freedom and responsibility in science, go hand in hand. The right to engage in scientific enquiry, pursue and communicate knowledge, and to associate freely in such activities cannot be separated from the responsibility of scientists to uphold the highest ethical standards when pursuing their work, and to contribute their knowledge in the public space.

The digital revolution has changed irrevocably the circumstances under which news and information are communicated. A particular feature is the growth and dissemination of manipulated or fabricated information, lacking editorial norms and processes for ensuring accuracy of information.

Coupled to these developments are expressions of science denialism, and challenges to the

scientific consensus with the adoption of ideological or anti-scientific positions on topics such as climate change, GMOs, and vaccination.

These developments pose a fundamental attack on the value and values of science. They serve also to highlight the responsibility of scientists to be more than mere brokers of scientific information. We also have roles in the public discourse, often as advocates, particularly on the underpinnings of the consensus views that ought to inform policymakers and society.

Policymakers and civil society are in the best position to understand the threat posed by pseudoscientific views and actions if we as a scientific community recognize and act on our responsibility to ensure that scientific results are made widely accessible, in a comprehensible way.

We must note at the same time the implication here of a social contract that mandates that science and scientists uphold a set of scientific values, become engaged with integrity and honesty, and act ethically.

With such an open and trusting relationship between scientists and broader society, policymakers and the general public are in a position also to engage responsibly and knowledgeably on the consequences of modern scientific developments. I give as an example genome editing, which carries unprecedented potential in agriculture and health care, but which is accompanied also by serious ethical issues. It is vital that broader society be in a position to understand and to engage knowledgeably with the ethical dimensions of such developments.

At any given time issues of ethics and responsibility are central to scientific conduct. But I hope my brief remarks have made clear the particular relevance and importance of these issues in the contemporary context. So it is timely that, as participants from the worlds of science, education, business, and civil society we have the opportunity over the next few days to seek a greater understanding of the place of ethics and responsibility as we strive to advance science as a global public good.

I thank and congratulate our hosts, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, extend my wishes for an extremely successful Forum. Thank you.