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INTRODUCTION

Formal Opening

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Distinguished guests and Participants of The International Astronomical Union Colloquium 148:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to our premises, the campus of the Institute of Technology, Bandung. I cannot hide the proud feelings of our Institute in hosting this important gathering which embraces concern for the future. Vision has always been, and still is, an important ingredient in our efforts to chart our future. Without it we can easily be trapped by transient phenomena which may lead to stagnant, unproductive, activities. It is indeed an unhappy situation if this happens in our scientific undertakings.

We are proud because we know that the colloquium, steered by the desire and wisdom of the scientists, is seeking for better solutions in the science of astronomy. This science has been confronted by a technical challenge, namely by the problems of producing photographic emulsions. The use of photographic emulsions have been inherent with the wide-field recording capability of Schmidt telescopes. To reiterate, if I may, Schmidt astronomy has enjoyed the versatility and variety of photographic emulsion as a panoramic detector. With this type of detector, Schmidt astronomy has contributed profoundly and significantly to many branches of astronomy in the past 40 years or so.

Unfortunately, the production of astronomically useful photographic emulsions is now in danger due to some technological and industrial considerations. As a matter of fact, so I am told, some types of photographic emulsions will no longer be in production. This production line problem is beyond the control of astronomers. For a pessimist character the easiest solution is to refrain from doing anything. However pessimism is no virtue in science, as science, by its nature, has to grow and find alternatives. Such dialectics have always been the trait for science. Its capability to provide better means for the sake of science itself and for humanity is the single, unique, profound effect which science has imprinted in our life.

Here in Bandung you will discuss ways to circumvent one of the technological stresses in order to propel astronomy along the right course. I sincerely hope you will be able to innovate means to prolong the beauty and special features of Schmidt telescopes for fruitful astronomical investigations. The solution may lie in incorporating CCDs, or optical fibres or new chemical technology to make better light-sensitive emulsions for Schmidt astronomy. The present plans for putting into operation a new generation of large telescopes only enhance the need for the Schmidt-type instruments.

We have been trying to serve our nation and science by developing our institute as a breeding ground for new ideas. With our humble existence we have fortunately managed to make it an agent of change, as one might expect from an institute of higher learning. Along with this argument, I can reasonably hope that the results of this colloquium will be able to produce fundamental guidelines in the development and progress of Schmidt astronomy in years to come.

The title of the topics are indeed very impressive, but I was pleasantly surprised to note that young astronomers are attending this meeting. As an educator it is gratifying to learn this fact, as it is a healthy indicator which ensures the continuation and growth of science itself. Implanting seeds for the future is as important as developing the technique for a particular purpose. The transfer of scientific authority would hopefully not only form a simple linear extension of one's own knowledge, but should also serve as a new centre for spin-off ideas.

I think I should stop at this point. In the first place I am really in no position to take much more of your precious time. Ahead of you, from now until this week-end, there are quite a variety of topics and problems to be discussed. Secondly, I hesitate to cross the technical boundary in which you are the masters. I should say that I must learn more from you.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, may I take a few more minutes to express our appreciations to UNESCO and the Indonesian National Committee for UNESCO, who in all these years have encouraged the growth of astronomy in Indonesia. And on behalf of the Department of Education and Culture, I would like to express our gratitude to the Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union for having accepted the proposal to organize this meeting in Indonesia. I express many thanks to the members of Scientific Organizing Committee and the Local Organizing Committee for having worked to prepare this meeting.

I wish you very fruitful deliberations and a nice stay in Indonesia. Now, allow me to declare The International Astronomical Union Colloquium No. 148 officially open.

Thank you very much,

Wiranto Arismunandar
Rector