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From: Aung, Win
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To: 'icee-ineer'
Subject: Dr. Rita Colwell speaks about science policy and role of women at AWIS Conference

FYI...

Dr. Rita Colwell, Director of the U.S. National Science Foundation, delivered a keynote speech on "Science and Policy: New Perspectives for an Era of Angst" on October 19, 2001 in Washington, D.C.

Speaking at the 30th Anniversary Leadership Conference of the Association for Women, Dr. Colwell traced the major milestones in the U.S. support for scientific and engineering research, starting with Jefferson's creation of the Corps of Discovery headed by Lewis and Clark.

Touching on the recent terror attacks in the U.S., she remarked: "Our nation's science policy will once again be framed by the larger context in which it exists. We see clear needs for science, engineering, and technology to protect and prevent."

"We live in exciting times for science and for our society. The expanding knowledge of our research-base and our sophisticated tools empower us to perform the extraordinary. Foremost among them are information technology, genomics, and nanotechnology. They herald new ways to pose and answer questions. We can now frame research questions to anticipate rather than remediate," remarked Dr. Colwell.

On the need for international collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches, she said: "As the world grows smaller and we are increasingly called upon to assist and collaborate in places distant and distinctly different, our inventiveness will be challenged in new ways."

Emphasizing that the science and engineering community should involve more women and minorities, she said: "Far too many girls and women fail to even cross the threshold into science and engineering. We know that obstacles and cultural conditioning begin to appear very early in life."

Dr. Colwell continued: "Part of the problem today lies in what I call the "valley of death" in education: grades 4 through 8, when girls are discouraged-in subtle and not-so-subtle ways-from pursuing science and engineering."

"There is much that women can teach science, the nation, and our culture. It has to do first with thinking of ourselves as leaders, and that can take us anywhere we want to go," concluded Dr. Colwell.

For a full text of Dr. Colwell's speech, go to: <http://www.ineer.org>. On the left navigation bar, click on "Talks/Reports" and then on the first item on the following page.

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