

## The Brazilian Chemistry and the fourth National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation

When the Brazilian government regulated Dec 2004 Act # 10973 by issuing Decree # 5563 on Oct 11, 2005, which established new incentive measures for the scientific and technological research, aiming at qualification, technological autonomy and the country industrial development, it took a great step towards future, in a new stage of actions taken since the 70's.

Thanks to the Innovation Act, as it has been called in the academic and entrepreneurial environment, the universities have been able to share their campi labs, equipments and facilities with national companies and private non-profit organizations dealing with research activities, as long as all the university procedures have been followed. The Innovation Act assures the civil servants of profit shares resulting from contracts of technological transference and licencing and even of payless leave of absence to start an individual or associated enterprise to develop any innovation-related activity, in case they are not in probation. In fact, all this have already been part of the country's universities and research institutes' practice but always subject to questionings, mainly ideological ones. Thus, the new legislation will allow an increasing number of other welcome situations, such as those which have been successful in the three last decades.

Nowadays, many Brazilian universities set up their Technological Innovation Systems in order to manage their innovation policies and local government allocate funding incentives to business incubators in high-technology poles for the development of their cities. The Research and Projects Financing (Finep) also known as the Brazilian Innovation Agency, regularly makes use of Public Notices to support innovation and the National Council for Technological and Scientific Development (CNPQ) has created a grant for the promotion of Productivity in Technological Development and Innovative Extension (DT). These are undoubtedly important actions which show that Brazil has been making great effort to strengthen its industrial sector. The Brazilian position concerning technological innovation outstands in several areas, such as: renewable energy, oil, petrochemistry, food industry, metal-mechanics and transportation equipments. However, in important areas, such as: semiconductors, magnetic materials, lighting and lasers the global levels of innovation and technological competitiveness are still low. These levels can be significantly and quickly improved as the pharmaceutical product sector has shown during the decade.

The world is witnessing an important moment of transition to the twenty-first century economy, with special emphasis to high-tech innovation, green technology and green behavior, in addition to the continuous challenge of education and science and technology. How can the challenge of innovation and the new technological rush be faced knowing that pre-salt oil is of great importance but the future will depend basically on post-fossil energy?

For no other reason have the USA and China, two of the greatest global polluting countries, besides investing on basic science, patented more than 50% of the low-carbon technologies in the last decade.

The fourth National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation, to be held in Brasilia, from May 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 will be a good opportunity for the government, the scientific community, entrepreneurs and university authorities to evaluate the Brazilian innovation present situation and discuss a State policy for the next 30 years that take into account not only pre-salt oil but mainly the development of clean technologies to preserve the environment.

The challenges are of a great number and several connections need to be made, with emphasis to: natural resources use and sustainability; science and education; innovation and science and technology, in addition to the major present challenge of the Brazilian public sector, that is, the governability of the system in all levels, mainly in the Universities.

As always, the greater the opportunities, the bigger the challenges. The National Conference of Science, Technology and Innovation agenda will probably provide generous opportunities to areas in which the virtuous circle formed by education, scientific discovery, technological development and the entrepreneurial activity, such as the Brazilian chemistry and many other areas, can already be noticed. It is time to put an end to the long-enough phase of evaluations and empty-numerology-based initiatives. It is senseless to discuss technology and innovation without taking into account chemists and the Brazilian chemical sector. After all, it is the future that is under discussion.

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