

**WORLD CULTURAL COUNCIL
2023 AWARD CEREMONY
Salutatory Speech Maestro José Estrada**

Friday 3rd November, Great Hall, University of Helsinki, Finland

Honorable Rector of the University of Helsinki, Sari Lindblom, Distinguished President of the World Cultural Council, Sir Fraser Stoddart; His Excellency, Mr. Enrique Rojo Stein, Ambassador of Mexico to Finland, 2023 laureates; dear guests,

I am grateful to all the scientists, educators and artists who have accompanied us, as members of the World Cultural Council. I wish to thank many of our long-standing members who are here with us this evening, but I wish to especially recognize **Professor Carl Gahmberg** who is one of our founding members and has worked with us faithfully since 1982. I am also thankful for all the universities and academic institutions throughout the world, which have year by year hosted these award ceremonies. I convey my warmest appreciation to the Rector, **Sari Lindblom**, and to the faculty and staff of the **University of Helsinki** for accommodating this memorable event.

I extend my deepest admiration and respect to those who have had the vision to grasp the long-term aims of the World Cultural Council. Our wish is to promote and recognize individuals as role models for future leaders. For nearly 40 years we have acknowledged remarkable scientists, educators, and artists who through hard work, persistence and creativity have risen to the top of their professions. At the same time, our laureates have demonstrated that great humanity can co-exist with brilliant minds.

2023 Albert Einstein World Award of Science winner, **Professor Christoph Gerber** is recognized both for his fundamental contributions to nanoscale science research. At the same time the jury recognized his exceptional commitment as a role model in scholarship that inspires future generations through significant and continuous impact. His mentoring is testimony to Albert Einstein's own words that *"Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think."*

The **World Award of Education** is named after **José Vasconcelos** who wrote, *"True education is not complete without the drive that can only be spawned by a great goal, a high ideal"*. This great goal and high ideal are captured in the life's work of our **2023 José Vasconcelos prize winner, Professor Larry Hedges**, who is recognized for his groundbreaking and systematic research in meta-analysis as a means to assess the impact of our education initiatives. As a role model, **Professor Hedges** has worked to promote social equity and has worked tirelessly to bring education to all people regardless of their different cognitive abilities, gender, ethnicity, or social class.

Great goals and high ideals are needed in all our pursuits, but none more than in the need for education. We have seen how history has repeated itself through the ages and continues to repeat itself today. Both local and far-reaching

conflicts are bred by deep ideological differences, centuries-old prejudices, suspicion towards what is different, and ambition for wealth and power.

Crises can only find solutions in wisdom. This is where higher education plays an essential role. By education we do not only mean communicating facts or training technocrats but developing thinkers, humanists, and leaders with high goals and a deep sense of ethics. By wisdom, we mean that one lives consistent with the knowledge that one possesses.

The World Cultural Council exists to promote education as a cornerstone on which a great, progressive society can be built. We also wish to promote the great minds and hearts of our award winners as inspiring role models for today's young people and for future generations.

I wish to convey my personal congratulations and thanks to our 2023 award-winners **Professor Christoph Gerber** and **Professor Larry Hedges**. Your scholarship, achievements, and humanism fill me with great optimism for the future.

I also express my warmest congratulations to the **2023 Special Recognition Recipients**. You have already made significant contributions to Finland and the world in your early careers, and I personally wish you my best in your endeavours.

Thank you very much.

Maestro José Estrada
Founder and President Emeritus of the WCC