Translation of the Speech by H.E. the President of the Republic of Chile, Don Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, at the Inauguration of the Paranal Observatory, 5th March 1999

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great satisfaction for me to inaugurate what is soon to become the most powerful telescope in the world, which will clearly respond to the essential human urge of exploring and learning about the origins and mysteries of the universe.

It will be here, in the middle of the Chilean desert, almost three thousand metres above sea level, that scientists from all over the planet will converge, to investigate the great issues of astrophysics, such as the origin, evolution and future of the universe; the formation of great structures, galaxies, stars and their life cycles, as well as the formation and evolution of planets, allowing us to learn about physical and chemical conditions appropriate for the development of life.

Historically, this northern region of Chile has supplied our major source of wealth, hidden in the entrails of the earth. Courageous copper miners continue, up to this day, to contribute to the development of this country, by supplying the world with valuable raw materials.

As from now, not only will the depths of the earth be explored from this region, but also the skies, thanks to the excellent climate that offers crystal clear skies, ideal for astronomy.

An extensive Association with Europe

Several aspects converge into this initiative, which I would like to highlight:

First, the Government of Chile and ESO have maintained, for over three decades, a relationship of extensive cooperation. As one of the most ambitious scientific projects of the century materialises today, we ratify this permanent vocation for service and collaboration.

This is a concrete example of the fact that the path towards our association with the main European nations is not restricted to financial or commercial issues. It also includes other significant challenges and tasks, which confer a transcendental sense to human beings and to their relation with the world.

Incorporation of Chilean Scientists to Astronomical Observation

Chilean scientists will gain special access to this centre of astronomical observation. This will constitute a substantial contribution to the work of our researchers, who will have the most modern technology at hand, for their studies, enabling their interaction with colleagues from other latitudes, thus contributing to scientific advancement.

Efforts of the Government in Favour of Science

This project is attached to the efforts of my government to promote science in our country. As we all know, we have increased our support to scientific research. We have established the Presidential Chairs, placing our trust in prominent researchers, who have been chosen by a high-level committee. I can modestly say that this initiative, started in this small country, where researchers have entered the home of the Presidents of Chile, with all dignity due to their task, stands out today within the international scientific community.

Before the end of my tenure, this effort will become consolidated and made evident in a transcendental project we call the Millennium Scientific Initiative, which has aroused interest and funding from the World Bank. This effort is designed to ensure that, within the next ten years, this country can incorporate national talents into the world's process of scientific advancement. Chile cannot remain behind. We must innovate our ways of dealing with science, encourage youth and, thus, leave a trail of our own in the world of the next millennium.

From this place, a magnificent evidence of man's capability, I would like to tell all Chileans that the Millennium Initiative has sparked extraordinary interest within the main scientific circles and international agencies. It is considered a prototype for developing countries to address their insertion into one of the most important aspects of globalisation, that is to say, scientific discovery.

Final Words

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to congratulate all those who have made the concretion of this initiative possible, certainly including the Chilean technical and professional staff who participated in the construction of these magnificent facilities. I feel proud, as a Chilean, that this desert-like region of our country will render, to humanity, the possibility of deciphering the countless mysteries that have challenged mankind throughout history.

Scientists will observe, from this desert, these blue, starlit skies. We, Chileans, are opening our eyes and our minds, through knowledge, education and our active participation in the exploration of new frontiers. Let us continue to think big, let us continue to project ourselves into the third millennium, continue our commitment with our educational reform, making decisions in favour of people. This is how the barriers that separate us from development will be overcome.

Thank you very much.

Publications in Refereed Journals Based on Telescope Observations

J. BERGERON and U. GROTHKOPF, ESO

ESO's broad objective is to provide the astronomical communities in the member states with first-class optical-infrared facilities. During the past few years, major efforts were dedicated to the refurbishment and upgrading of all the telescopes at the La Silla Observatory as well as the restructuring of the Observatory in telescope and service teams.

The effectiveness of an observatory can be measured by its scientific productivity. To this end, we conducted a statistical study of the publications based on observations with ESO and other world-

wide major telescopes during the 5-year period 1994–1998. These statistics (see Table below) clearly demonstrate the achievements of the ESO users' community in the use of the La Silla telescopes.

There is a striking increase by about a factor of 2 in the number of publications per year over the least 5 years for the larger La Silla telescopes as well as for the La Silla facilities as a whole. This is the strongest positive trend among all the 4-m-class telescopes, some of which have at best maintained their number of publications. The La Silla Observatory has become the most scientifically productive observatory in the world in terms of publications in refereed journals. The total number of publications per year of the 3.6-m telescope is now as high as that of the 4.2-m WHT, far above any other 4-m-class telescopes. It is expected that in the coming years this will also be the case for the NTT with its first-class instrumentation, since its yearly publications increased by a factor larger than 2 between 1995 and 1997 (results from observing missions conducted before the upgrade project).

Number of Publications in Refereed Journals by Telescope

Telescope	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
ESO 3.6-m		52	85	101	115
ESO NTT 3.5-m		43	77	93	77
ESO 2.2-m		53	59	81	73
All La Silla Telescopes	219	220	367	393	419
AAT 3.9-m (a)		59	87	84	80
CFHT 3.6-m	93	78	74	72	
CTIO 4-m (b,c)		75	91	64	59
All CTIO Telescopes (b,c)		171	194	135	152
HST (excl. HST Archive papers)	158	203	233	250	284
HST (incl. HST Archive papers)	162	217	269	289	344
Kitt Peak 4-m Telescope (d)		74	73	62	52
Kitt Peak WIYN 3.5-m) (d)				13	28
All Kitt Peak Telescopes (d)		276	299	270	270
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ENO William Herschel Telescope 4.2-m	78	90	100	113	118
ENO Isaac Newton Telescope 2.5-m	63	81	84	77	72
ENO Nordic Optical Telescope 2.5-m	18	20	26	36	37
All ENO Telescopes (e)		201	231	239	253

(a) From 1 July previous year to 30 June current year
(b) From 1 August previous year to 31 July current year
(c) Refereed journals and conference proceedings
(d) From 1 October previous year to 30 September current year
(e) ENO Telescopes: Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias Telescopes, Nordic Optical Telescope

Sources

The range of journals screened in order to compile the bibliographies depends on their availability in the corresponding library.

- ESO: Database of publications from the ESO users community (ESO staff and visiting astronomers; database maintained by A. Treumann, atreuman@eso.org). Statistics include only articles based on previously unpublished data.
- AAT: AAO Annual Reports 1994/95–1997/98. Statistics include also articles based on previously published data.
- CFHT: CFHT Web pages at http://www.cfht.hawaii.edu/Science/Publications/ Statistics include only articles based on previously unpublished data.
- CTIO: CTIO publications statistics as listed in the Annual Reports to the National Science Foundation; figures provided by Elaine Mac-Auliffe (mac@ctios1.ctio.noao.edu). Statistics are compiled by checking conference proceedings and those journals subscribed to by the observatory. Statistics include only articles based on previously unpublished data.
- HST: Statistics provided by STScI librarian Sarah Stevens-Rayburn (library@stsci.edu). Statistics include only articles based on previously unpublished data (except line "incl. HST Archive papers").
- Kitt Peak: Lists received from Kitt Peak librarian Mary Guerrieri (maryg@noao.edu). Kitt Peak includes all articles that explicitly mention use of one or more KPNO telescopes. Statistics can include articles based on previously published data.
- ENO: Isaac Newton Group papers provided by Janet Sinclair (jes@mrao.cam.ac.uk). IAC publications: lists available on the WWW (http://www.iac.es/gabinete/inves/publica/pi99.htm), further explanations received from Monica Murphy (mem@iac.es), Judith Araoz (jav@ll.iac.es) and Tanja Karthaus (tanja@ll.iac.es). NOT: Nordic Optical Telescope Triennial Report (1995–1997) and Annual Report 1998.

ESO at the Hannover Fair

C. MADSEN, ESO

The Hannover Fair is the world's largest industrial fair. Each year more than 300,000 visitors from all over the world attend this major event which occupies 30 large exhibition halls. This year, about 7300 enterprises from 63 countries demonstrated their latest products and services, either at individual stands or within 'national' information stands.

Every year, one country is awarded a special status as the "Partner Country" of the Fair. In 1999, Chile enjoyed this status and this country presented itself and its achievements in a 1700 square metre 'pavillon' inside of Hall 4.

Figure 1: Ms. Edelgard Bulmahn, German Federal Minister for Education, accompanied by her aides, during the visit to the ESO exhibition.