



Welcome from the AAAS Chair, John P. Holdren, and the CEO, Alan I. Leshner

AAAS continues to work intensively on a wide range of issues to both advance science and to help address global societal problems that have science and technology components at their core. Ongoing initiatives focus on securing adequate funding and infrastructure support to further the scientific enterprise, and providing policy guidance on topics ranging from global climate change and energy requirements, to embryonic stem cell research, to ensuring science literacy for children everywhere.

In April 2007, for example, the AAAS Board of Directors called for increased support of Earth observation satellites when U.S. federal funding cutbacks threatened research related to weather forecasting, hurricane warning, and global climate change. Belt-tightening within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) could cause “major gaps in the continuity and quality of data gathered about the Earth from space,” the AAAS Board warned. We were pleased when the House of Representatives subsequently outlined an initial plan to restore funding for a satellite network, and although most of the additional support had been red-lined by the year’s end, AAAS is continuing to push for a balanced federal R&D portfolio.

Another AAAS Board statement generated significant visibility for the issue of global climate change in February, as part of a town hall-style event for some 1,200 participants in San Francisco, California. Global climate change is sure to take an increasing toll on vulnerable ecosystems and societies if greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation go unchecked, the Board cautioned. The AAAS statement — released shortly after the Intergovernmental Panel on Global Climate Change confirmed the connection between global climate change, fossil-fuel burning, and deforestation — was communicated through media outlets including the Associated Press, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Kansas City Star*, and *New Jersey’s Star-Ledger*. The goal of all such efforts was to strengthen the case and political momentum for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

AAAS also contributed to public discourse as well as science-based policy through testimony, op-ed articles in regional newspapers, and nearly two-dozen Capitol Hill technical briefings by U.S. and international experts who shared objective, non-partisan expertise. James Acton of the Centre for Science and Security Studies at King’s College London, for example, assessed Iran’s potential to build a nuclear weapon,



JOHN P. HOLDREN



ALAN I. LESHNER

and with another expert, he described emerging technologies for on-the-ground detection of uranium-enrichment plants. The Association’s growing alumni of Science and Technology Policy Fellows, meanwhile, increasingly made their mark, especially in December when three of the program’s 35th class participated in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali. AAAS worked to increase support for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, too, by issuing a statement decrying the President’s second veto of the initiative, which had twice passed in the House and Senate, with votes from Republicans and Democrats alike. Association staff later teamed up with stem-cell pioneer James Thomson to publish an op-ed that appeared in the *Washington Post* and at least nine other newspapers.

Additional 2007 activities focused on sustaining and diversifying the science and technology workforce. A conference organized by AAAS and related to the National Science Foundation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP) drew some 700 attendees, as described on page 8. An equally successful event on K-12 science curricula, hosted by Project 2061 at AAAS, prompted laudatory comments from U.S. Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers (R-Mich.), a member of the House Committee on Science and Technology (page 9).

The most urgent challenges of our age — improving the lives of the world’s poor; competition for natural resources; imperiled oceans; the energy crisis; and alleviating the threat of nuclear weapons — all hinge upon science and technology. Through its many programs and communications efforts, AAAS is seizing opportunities to mobilize the power of science to help ensure sustainable human well-being.

John P. Holdren
AAAS Chair (2007–2008)
Director, The Woods Hole
Research Center, and Teresa and John
Heinz Professor of Environmental
Policy, Harvard University

Alan I. Leshner
AAAS CEO and
Executive Publisher,
Science