I would like to begin this editorial by sincerely thanking all those who have sent us numerous messages of solidarity and condolences following the tragic events in Paris on 13th November 2015. Despite this tragedy, France has successfully hosted and chaired the 21st session of UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, concluded with the signature of a universal agreement on climate to keep the global warming below 2°C. Another major highlight of this conference was the International Solar Energy Alliance that was launched by India & France on the inaugural day of COP21.

In this 20th edition of our newsletter, we would like to update you with recent events and programmes organized by the Service for Science and Technology – especially the ones addressing climate change. It also is the occasion to congratulate the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) for its 60th anniversary and the Indo-French Centre for Ground Water Research (IFCGR), Hyderabad for its 16th anniversary, amongst other key achievements of the Indo-French S&T cooperation.

Finally, and to give you a flavour of what the 2016 year will look like, it is my pleasure to announce the Indo-French workshop entitled “Innovation from a Franco-Indian perspective: technological, political, and societal dimensions” that will be co-organized by Collège de France (Paris), the Service for Science & Technology of the French Embassy to India (SST, Delhi), the Centre for Social Sciences & Humanities (CSH, Delhi) and the National Institute of Advanced Research (NIAS) on 24th and 25th February 2016 in Bangalore (see page 6).

Overall, 2015 turned out to be a very successful year for the Indo-French cooperation in science and technology, with the signing of many agreements and the launch of new collaborative programmes, Indo-French joint projects, seminars and bilateral scientific exchanges. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you for your continued support and to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. The SST team looks forward to work with you in 2016!

Bonne lecture !

Dr. Philippe Arhets,
Science Counsellor
Results of the "Water, Megacities & Global Changes" Challenge

The Science and Technology Service of the French Embassy in India, in collaboration with the Organizing Committee (UNESCO and ARCEAU IdF) of the International Conference on “Water, Megacities and Global Change”, launched a call for applications to give a unique opportunity to a young Indian PhD Student to attend an all-expense paid International Conference in Paris from 30th November to 4th December, 2015. The SST received 14 outstanding applications from PhD students from various institutes of Higher education in India. After a tough deliberation, the Scientific Committee finally chose two winners: Ms. Ruchira Ghosh from The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) University. Her PhD research topic is “Water system planning in megacities using urban metabolism approach”; and Ms. Rinan Shah from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) was selected as the second winner. Her research topic is “Water issues as a factor of sustainability in the peri-urban and urban areas in the Eastern Himalayas.”

Ruchira and Rinan reached Paris on 30th November, 2015. The Conference began with an ice breaking event, a night prior to the Official Inauguration of the Conference. The next morning, the International Conference on “Water, Mega Cities and Global Change” was inaugurated by Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of the UNESCO, at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. This was followed by keynote addresses by eminent speakers like Cynthia Rosenzweig, Co-Director of UCCRN, NASA Columbia University; Arjun Thapan, President of Waterlinks; Maude Barlow, President of Canadians Council and Daniel Zimmer, Innovation Director of KIC-Climat. The session was chaired by Jacques Olivier, General Director of SIAAP.

They brought up the issues and challenges of water resources and their management that mega cities of the world are currently dealing with. The conference aimed at creating a global alliance among the megacities of the world with water as the common link.

Ruchira Ghosh says: “The conference was a well-timed opportunity for me as my doctoral thesis focusses on water system planning in megacities using urban metabolism approach. It provided me with a useful network and a knowledge exchanging platform, where I could communicate with experts working in this area. On-field experiences of the experts helped me to reinvigorate paradoxes of urban sustainability and water resource management. Also, the discussion forum on vacuum in responsibility for planning urban sanitation between bilateral and multilateral organizations widened my horizons and helped me to better understand global water issues. Further, the exposure has helped me to understand how megacity alliance can pave the way towards collaborative solutions. This Conference has provided me with a better future outlook towards research and serving in agencies dealing with water related issues in growing megacities.”

Rinan Shah says: “The conference gave us a platform to be much more than an audience. We were able to tap into the research and ground work for water going on all around the world and meet people who were the driving forces behind such initiatives. We clarified our doubts and had conversations with a variety of speakers. Overall, it was a remarkable experience. Thank you all for adding such an educative, fun-filled and memorable experience to our lives.”

Call for Proposals DST/SST on Water - Results

The French Embassy in India and the Indian Department of Science & Technology (DST) launched a joint call for Indo-French scientific network projects in the field of water treatment on 15th May 2015 through CEFIPRA. The priority fields for this call were waste water treatment (Industrial/ Domestic) & natural water treatment systems. At least two French partners and two Indian partners were to be involved in the projects, as well as at least one industrial partner to encourage academia-industry partnership for technological developments towards sustainable solutions. Ten projects involving 47 partners were received, out of which two projects were selected: “Swachh Neer – Une vie meilleure, Combating Water Issues through Indo-French Networking” and “Network on Decentralized Grey/Waste Water Treatment & Recycling.”

Seminar on “Space and Climate: How Space Assets Contribute to Tackling Climate Change”

In the run-up to the Paris Climate COP21 and on the occasion of the visit to India of Dr Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), the Embassy of France in India in partnership with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) organized an interactive discussion on Monday, 23rd November at the Residence of France, on “Space and Climate: How Space Assets Contribute to Tackling Climate Change”. The speakers were Dr Jean-Yves Le Gall, President - CNES and Dr A S Kiran Kumar, Secretary - Department of Space, President - Space Commission and Chairman – ISRO.
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE OF PONDICHERRY, AN INSTRUMENT FOR INDO-FRENCH SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

The Institut Français de Pondichéry (IFP) or French Institute of Pondicherry celebrated its 60th anniversary on 18th November 2015. The IFP is a research centre under the joint supervision of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). It forms part of the research unit “Savoirs et Mondes Indiens” of the CNRS along with the Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (CSH) based in New Delhi. Over the years, the IFP has found its place and asserted its role in the field of scientific cooperation between France and India. It has three main missions: research, expertise and training. Its research interests cover South and South East Asia.

The IFP has three research Departments

- A Department of Indology whose current research orientations are: Indian Analyses of Sanskrit Language and Literature; History of Religions; Tamil Studies; Archaeological Heritage of South India.
- A Department of Ecology whose current research orientations are: Forest Ecology and Botany; Palaeoecology and Palynology; Biological Conservation and Ecosystem Management; Bioinformatics and Modelling of Ecological Systems.
- A Department of Social Sciences whose current research orientations are: Health, Medicine and Societies; Urban and Environmental Dynamics and Policies; Economics, Finance, Debt, Labour and Mobility; Anthropology of Law, Ownership.

The IFP also aims to promote scientific knowledge (through publications, expertise, scientific events, etc.) and to impart training to students at different levels (masters, doctorate, professional). The Institute houses a rich collection of documentary resources that includes:

- A library collection with 66,000 books, 360 theses, over 1,600 articles, 440 reports and 800 journals;
- A manuscript collection of 8,187 palm-leaf bundles, 360 paper codices and 1,144 recent paper transcripts, which is the largest of its kind in the world and which is included in the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Register;
- A photo archives with more than 160,000 photographs.

In addition to the documentary collections, the IFP also houses a herbarium that contains over 24,000 specimens belonging to 268 families and 4,659 species and a collection of pollen reference slides of nearly 15,500 plant species mainly from tropical India (collection ca. 22,000 reference slides).

FIRST AIIMS-FAM PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL INNOVATION FORUM

The Fondation de l'Académie de Médecine (FAM-Medical Academy Foundation) of France, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Embassy of France in India jointly organized the first AIIMS-FAM Public Health and Medical Innovation Forum (the fourth such FAMx conference globally), at AIIMS-New Delhi on 19th & 20th November 2015. This two-day AIIMS-FAMx Forum focused on four areas: excellence and progress of Indo-French medical cooperation, prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease, developments in cancer and skin pigmentation treatment, innovation in teaching and research. In addition, FAM, AIIMS & French National Academy of Medicine signed an agreement to promote Indo-French cooperation in the field of medical sciences.

The event involved twenty-eight speakers (13 French and 15 Indian) who shared the floor and interacted with the public participants. With the participation of 500 attendees each day of the conference, the program was streamed live on the YouTube channel of Fondation de l’Académie de Médecine (www.youtube.com/famx). The L’Oréal Group, a founding member of the FAM, also hosted a satellite symposium on 20th November, which focused on research in pigmentation and dyschromias in India.
16 YEARS OF THE INDO-FRENCH CENTRE FOR GROUND WATER RESEARCH, HYDERABAD

The Indo French Centre for Ground Water Research (IFCGR), Hyderabad is a joint laboratory between the CSIR - National Geographical Research Institute (CSIR- NGRI), Hyderabad and the French Geological Survey (BRGM), France. IFCGR celebrated its 16th anniversary on 20th November 2015 at Hyderabad in presence of the Consul General of France in Bangalore Mr. François Gautier and Dr. Ch Mohan Rao, Director CSIR-NGRI.

On this occasion, a one day workshop was organized with the representatives of Telangana State Government on 19th November 2015. IFCGR discussed and presented its project proposal on Integrated Water Solution for Telangana State through Scientific Approach to the State groundwater authorities in view of Mission Kakatiya and Water Grid Project.

INDO-FRENCH WORKSHOP ON REMOTE SENSING

A one day Indo-French Workshop on “Remote Sensing for Water & Agriculture: Current & Future Possibilities” was organized by the Indo-French Cell for Water Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on 17th November 2015. This was a follow-up of a workshop funded through IFWN in 2013. The workshop discussed various aspects of Remote Sensing applications for agriculture and hydrological studies as well as soil moisture studies. The participants included experts from French Space agency CNES, Indian Space agency ISRO, National Remote Sensing Centre Hyderabad, French Research Institute for Development IRD, French National Institute for Agricultural Research INRA, Indian Institute of Science, French National Centre for Scientific Research CNRS and Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun.

INDO-FRENCH SEMINAR ON ‘NEW PERSPECTIVE ON COLOUR AND LIGHT: SCIENCES, ARTS AND HUMANITIES’

CEFIPRA funded a two day workshop addressing the key areas in color and light at University of Jadavpur, Kolkata on 12th and 13th November 2015.

Chief guest of the workshop, the Consul General of France in Kolkata Mr. Damien Syed inaugurated the workshop. This workshop had participants from fourteen public institutions and three industries from France and India. It offered an interdisciplinary forum on color and light new technologies and their impact in society with an aim to foster Indo-French collaborations across academic and industrial sectors. The four major areas addressed by this workshop included Nano-engineered colors, Lighting: new technologies and aesthetics, color management, and technical applications and color in Art and Communication.

56TH SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL AND 27TH INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE OF CEFIPRA

The CEFIPRA Scientific Council is comprised of eminent scientists from France and India to guide the scientific programmes. The Council meets twice a year, once in India and once in France. This time a meeting of the Scientific Council was held in Bangalore from 14th to 16th November 2015. Out of sixty four scientific proposals, eight were selected by the Council for funding through CEFIPRA. In addition, one new Indo-French seminar was selected by the Council (out of 6 submitted) and will be organised in 2016. This meeting was followed by the 27th Industrial Research Committee of CEFIPRA on 17th November 2015, which selected one project (out of two submitted) and nine concept proposals (out of sixteen). On this occasion, two scientific talks and student interactions from two of the French members of council, Prof. Alain Fontaine (Director of the Fondation Nanosciences, Chairman of the French Physical Society Grenoble, France) and Prof. Erick Dufourc (Director of the Institute for Chemistry & Biology of Membranes & Nanoobjects, Bordeaux, France) were organized at IISc Bangalore.
THALES-CNRS-IISc MoU

In an effort to further strengthen Indo-French scientific cooperation, a MoU for a PhD fellowship programme was signed on 30th October 2015, between the Thales Group and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore. The Thales Group is a French multinational company that is involved in the design and production of technologically innovative systems and equipment for combat aircraft, unmanned air vehicles (UAVs), special-mission aircraft, helicopters and naval platforms, and provides a complete range of through-life support services. Under this programme, the selected IISc student will spend a part of their PhD period in France. Thales will fund the full PhD fellowship for 5-6 years, provide mobility support to Indian and French supervisors and funding for the research projects and consumables. The first PhD student selected in this new programme will go to the Lab-STICC in France and, as such, a second MoU was signed between IISc, the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Telecom Bretagne, The Université de Bretagne occidentale and other French partners.

INAUGURATION OF THE SCHNEIDER ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICAL LAB IN MUMBAI

The fourth Indo-French Training Centre for trainers in electrical trades was inaugurated on 2nd December, 2015 in Mumbai at St Joseph ITI (Industrial Training Institute), an institution of the NGO Don Bosco. This center is part of a Schneider Electric’s ambitious program and fits with the “Skill India Initiative” of the Government of India.

This is the result of a partnership between Schneider Electric Foundation, the French Ministry of National Education, the state of Karnataka which houses the main center in Bangalore, and the Don Bosco NGO for secondary centers. The Schneider Electric Foundation finances and provides technical platforms; the French Ministry of Education brings its expertise in vocational training programs design; the state of Karnataka for the main center in Bangalore, and the Don Bosco NGO provides logistics (buildings, electricity, internet access, etc.) to the secondary centers.

The Attaché for Science and Technology based in Mumbai spoke at the inauguration, recalling the issues of vocational training in India (Skill India), welcoming the synergies developed by the tripartite partnership model and quoting some key figures of the Indo-French cooperation in higher education, research and innovation.

Vocational training is today a main issue in this country of almost one billion three hundred million people, of which 600 million are under 25 years. This challenge has not escaped the government of PM Narendra Modi, who made professional training one of its major projects (“Skill India”) in the service of its flagship program "Make in India". Schneider Electric’s Centre is a classic example of the value of French expertise and calls for similar steps in other professional sectors.

VISIT OF PROF. ETIENNE HIRSCH

Prof. Etienne Hirsch participated and delivered a talk at the international conference on Neurodegenerative Diseases that was held at the Centre for Brain Research, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore from 16th to 18th November 2015. Prof. Etienne Hirsch is the director of the Institute for Neurosciences, Cognitive sciences, Neurology and Psychiatry at INSERM and the French alliance for life and health science Aviesan. During his stay in Bangalore, he visited the Bangalore Biocluster and discussed the future possibilities of Indo-French collaboration in the field of Neurosciences with the faculty members.

EURAXESS SCIENCE SLAM

EURAXESS Links India (an initiative of the European Union) in association with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and IndiaBioScience and with the support of Alliance Française de Bangalore, Finnair and Philips Innovation Campus organized the EURAXESS Science Slam India 2015 on 30th October 2015 at the Alliance Française de Bangalore. This competition was organized as part of the 3rd global EURAXESS Science Slam taking place in the ASEAN, Brazil, China, India, Japan and North America. Out of the six finalists, Souvik Mandal from the Indian Institute of Science was declared winner for his slam "Finding the Way Back Home" on how wasps find their way back to their nests after foraging. Souvik will be visiting Brussels in the spring of 2016 with Finnair and EURAXESS to meet European Commission representatives and attend science communication training.
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INDO-FRENCH COLLÈGE DE FRANCE INNOVATION WORKSHOP
“Innovation from a Franco-Indian perspective: technological, political, and societal dimensions”

Wednesday 24th & Thursday 25th February 2016
At the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), JRD Tata Auditorium, on the IISc Campus, Bangalore (INDIA)

OPEN TO ALL

The Collège de France (Paris), the Service for Science & Technology of the French Embassy to India (SST, Delhi), the Centre for Social Sciences & Humanities (CSH, Delhi) and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) are organizing an Indo-French workshop on 24th and 25th February 2016 in Bangalore, under the framework of the Collège de France Lecture Series in India.

The Collège de France Lecture Series in India intends to spread scientific knowledge and culture, and to share views on activities from fundamental research to social sciences and humanities research in different fields of science. This Lecture Series falls within the long tradition of scientific collaboration between France and India, and aims to strengthen this collaboration by generating new projects and budding new research partnerships.

The central theme of the COLLÈGE DE FRANCE WORKSHOP IN INDIA will deal with INNOVATION in all its aspects – whether it be social, cultural, political or scientific and technical. This multidisciplinary event will gather professors, scientists and researchers from both countries, and we hope to have many attendees from different backgrounds.

E-MAIL: collegedefrance.india2016@gmail.com

LATEST CALLS

- EUPHRATES Erasmus Mundus Mobility Call
  Application deadline: 7th January 2016
- Eiffel Scholarship 2016, Application deadline: 8th January 2016
- BIRAC-CEFIPRA Call for Proposals on Red Biotechnology 2015,
  Application deadline = 15th January 2016
- Valeo Innovation Challenge 2015,
  Application deadline: 15th January 2016
- BIRAC-CEFIPRA-Bpi-France Call for Proposals on Digital Health
  Application deadline: 16 February 2016
- CEFIPRA: Collaborative Scientific Research Programmes, Industry Academia R&D programme, CEFIPRA Seminars/Workshop
  Application Deadline: 1st April 2016
  Weblink: http://cefipra.org

www.frenchscienceindia.org

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