



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

# **Science Centre Leaders Collaborate at the 5th Science Centre World Congress in Toronto**

*The Ontario Science Centre welcomes counterparts to discuss the power of  
Science Centres as Agents of Change*

Toronto, Ontario, Canada -- June 16, 2008 -- Over four hundred delegates from six continents are converging at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from June 15 to 19, 2008 for the triennial 5th Science Centre World Congress, hosted by the Ontario Science Centre. The world's top science centre leaders along with colleagues from academic institutions, corporations and government are meeting to explore the theme of Science Centres as Agents of Change.

"The Congress theme, *Science Centres as Agents of Change – Locally, Nationally, and Internationally*, addresses the role science centres play around the world to inspire and actively engage people in new ways of seeing, understanding, and thinking about themselves and the world around them," said Lesley Lewis CEO of the Ontario Science Centre and Congress Chair. "To stimulate our thinking we have invited respected international leaders, from within and outside our field, to provide insight and inspiration."

The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Aileen Carroll, Ontario Minister of Culture, and Deputy Mayor of Toronto Joe Pantalone joined Ontario Science Centre CEO Lesley Lewis to officially welcome delegates from 51 countries at the opening ceremony. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Honourable John Wilkinson, Minister of Research and Innovation, both out of town, sent greetings via video.

"The Ontario Science Centre and Science North are two of the world's leading science centres," said Ontario Culture Minister Aileen Carroll. "The McGuinty Government is proud to foster a culture of innovation by sponsoring the first Science Centre World Congress in North America. I warmly welcome the delegates and hope they take the time to discover Ontario while they are here."

### **Keynote Speakers**

Each day, the congress will host provocative keynote and plenary sessions uniquely designed to stimulate discussion. Keynote speakers are selected from outside the science centre field while plenaries involve leaders within the field responding on the same topics.

One of the conference highlights is an address on *Social Responsibility and Science Centres* by Stephen Lewis, former United Nations Ambassador, and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Considered one of the world's most influential speakers on international development, human rights and social justice, Lewis was named by TIME magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2005, sharing company with such figures as the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela. He is also a Companion of the Order of Canada, the country's highest honour for lifetime achievement.

Other keynote speakers at this congress include:

- Jennifer Corriero, an Ontario Science Centre School alumna, is co-founder and executive director of TakingITGlobal, a non-profit organization that provides an online portal for young people to find inspiration, access information and get involved in improving their local and global communities. Her topic: *Creating the Future*. Corriero was named “Youth Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum, and was identified as one of the 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada by the Women’s Executive Network in 2005.
- Dr. Mohamed H.A. Hassan, Executive Director of the Academy of Science for the Developing World, and Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Inuit leader, advocate/activist Arctic climate change and 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nominee. They will be speaking together at a session entitled: *Planet Earth: Living on It, Changing It, and Sustaining It*.

At the Congress participation by science centre leaders from every continent will provide new insights and opportunities for learning and ongoing collaboration. Science Centres stimulate curiosity and develop enquiring minds. They change people's lives, influencing their attitudes and thinking. They foster positive attitudes towards science, help people to appreciate the context of scientific advances and understand how science affects their lives.

At the end of the congress, a new benchmark for Science Centre World Congresses will be established. For the first time, the global science centre community will make a shared statement of beliefs and commitment. The Toronto Declaration will review the role of science centres in the world today and set an inspirational agenda for the future. The Declaration will be signed at the Congress by the leaders of regional science centre networks on every continent. As delegates leave the Congress, they will be invited to add their signatures; science centre leaders who were unable to come to Toronto can signal their support through the congress website. At the next World Congress, to be held in South Africa in 2011, delegates will assess progress towards the goals of the Toronto Declaration.

### **A Green Congress**

The Ontario Science Centre has made a commitment to environmental sustainability by delivering a green congress. Registration fees include a “green levy” to be applied to the cost of carbon offsetting. Congress organizers chose Offsetters Climate Neutral Society, a Canadian non-profit organization that invests in projects using the next generation energy sources. Projects include the replacement of charcoal burning stoves with solar powered ones in West Africa; building geothermal heat pumps to produce energy at a school in the Secwepemc territory of British Columbia; and using waste wood to fuel an energy efficient boiler to heat a green house--the amount of Co<sub>2</sub> emitted into the air is equal to what would be released by natural decomposition.

Other measures include extensive use of electronic communications, post-consumer paper goods and vegetable inks, and selection of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, a facility designed for energy efficiency and waste reduction, and situated near public transit, as the venue. For further details visit the congress website [www.5SCWC.org](http://www.5SCWC.org).

### **Sponsors**

The government of Ontario is the lead sponsor of this congress. Other partners come from an impressive range of leaders in innovation, including Presenting Sponsors Nortel and Siemens Canada; Plenary Sponsor Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada; and IMAX Corporation as Sponsor of the Keynote speech *Creating the Future*.

**About the 5<sup>th</sup> Science Centre World Congress**

The Ontario Science Centre is hosting the 5th Science Centre World Congress from June 15 to 19, 2008 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in Toronto. Themed *Science Centres as Agents of Change-Locally, Nationally and Internationally*, this is the first time that the congress is being held in North America. This triennial international congress brings together CEOs and senior decision makers from the world's leading science centres to discuss issues and opportunities in the field, and the central role science organizations play in increasing the public's engagement with science.

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