

New York, October 30th, 2014.

Carol,

It is an honour to salute you today, as you step down as director of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies. You have been its anchor since its very inception, working tirelessly to achieve its goal to promote good science and fundamental human rights.

It is challenging and time-consuming to make an international organization function, especially so, if this is engaged in human rights work. I never understood why it should be so difficult, but this appears to be the case across the board also for academies. Everyone endorses the significance of the cause, but one would wish that more people took action. I mention this because it makes your contribution the more important and remarkable. You have what it takes to make things happen, dear Carol, and you know how to deal with the complex situations of grave human rights violations, political pitfalls, fear and passivity. Your integrity, professionalism and compassion have made the Network go a long way. You have ensured that our work is based on solid information and knowledge; that our reports rely on solid research and are trustworthy, and that the Network's 'Action Alerts' can be argued for and are important. For these reasons the Network has established a name for itself and become respected for its integrity and work. Danish Ambassadors, for example, will bring the alerts to the attention of the governments in the countries where they are based for that very reason.

Last but not least you have been a driving force in the successful growth of the Network from a time when it consisted of but a few European Academies, who had joined forces with the NAS till today. Because of your dedication to the cause, diligence and insight into what it takes to work internationally, bridging cultural and political diversities, the Network now includes close to sixty academies represented by highly respected scientists. It has thus come a long way from the days when a handful of Nobel Laureates decided to use their influence and stand up for academic freedom and against violations of fundamental human rights. The fact that the Network now includes Academies in countries still struggling to build up higher academic institutions and research with respect for human rights is a major achievement.

I have followed your work, dear Carol, ever since we met for the first time, just a small group of scientists and you, at a meeting at the Academy in Stockholm. I know how much work and dedication you have put into the cause of promoting good science and human rights within the framework of the committee and the international network. You have offered strategic advice, inspiration, solid knowledge and a lot of good cheer, without which work becomes so much harder. It has been both interesting and wonderful to work with you for so many years. I am truly grateful to you personally, and I salute you for your contribution to the cause of the Network.

Ida Nicolaisen

The Royal Danish Academy of Arts and Science