

### **3 Forword by the President of the Humboldt Cosmos Multiversity being NETTIES host in 2015**

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The definition of a “Multiversity” was first formulated in 1963 on the occasion of a speech given at Harvard University by Clark Kerr, having been the long time president of all Californian State Universities. He explicated that “the idea of a university was a village with its priests”, whereas “the idea of a ‘modern university’ was a town with an intellectual oligarchy”. Instead, “the idea of a Multiversity is a city of infinite variety...This city is more like the totality of civilization as it has evolved...and movements to and from the surrounding society”. In today’s terminology we may speak of “citizens’ science”, and indeed, universities are no more considered to be ivory towers rather that they are open agoras to which citizens are invited to contribute to their own and the universities’ advancement. In my experience, indeed, I would like to confirm that the intellectual capital hidden in society is a treasure still to be lifted, especially in human and social sciences. I have deliberately chosen Alexander von Humboldt as the patron and eponym of our institute: Not only that he started his first scientific excursions, before he departed for his grand adventure to South America, in Tenerife, investigating every geological object and every plant which he found on his way when he climbed up mountain Teide in 1799, he also serves as one of the great role models of a universal scientist, today even more than at his time. He not only made hundreds of discoveries on his own, he also collected the (natural science) knowledge of his time gained by correspondences with all great brains of his period, and integrated and documented it first by giving public lectures, then subsequently, already in his sixties, he started to document his complete view on the world in his famous oeuvre with title “Cosmos”. Thus he proved, that also in a late phase of life – he compiled his book until he was nearly ninety years old - a curious spirit can be highly productive independent from age.

Humboldt Cosmos Multiversity’s (HCM) “philosophy” is that it shall serve as a think tank and workshop platform approaching important questions of our time and by different methods and by combining different disciplines, thus not only be devoted to multidisciplinary, rather than also identifying transdisciplinary methods leading beyond the horizons which we could have seen so far (which may also be a metaphor for the geographic position of the Canary islands, from where world changing trips have had their beginning, as e.g. Columbus’ excursion to discover a new world, or Humboldt’s discoveries in the nature of this new continent). The key method for making new discoveries which HCM tries to apply has been inspired by one of its founding patrons, The New Club of Paris, which also was parent founding an innovative “Campus for Societal innovation” installed at Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland, therefore its acronym is ACSI. This campus is based on the idea of applied diversity of its members: in age, profession, education, experience, cultural and ethnic background. HCM explicitly invites members from different communities to contribute to its discourses, believing that involving many

different perspectives creates a better understanding of the subjects under discussion and thereby to better outcomes.

In this spirit the IAFeS, the International Association for eSciences, was most welcome when it decided to hold its 2015 NETTIES (Networking Entities) conference at HCM on questions of current technological and societal importance such as on Big Data and Smart Cities. Participants of more than 12 nations and of different ages assembled in the smallish and inspiring ambience of “La Casona”, the convention house of the NCP, a refurbished and modernised historic building in Canary style located in the “wine town” of Tacoronte.

As these proceedings of the NETTIES conference demonstrate, both the scope of themes and

the diversity in discussing them conforms to the spirit laid out above. I am perfectly sure, that NETTIES 2015 will be followed by some consequences effectuating the development of the island. Some contributions in this book from authors with a strong affinity to Tenerife make evident, that there is an intense will to catalyze the emergency of the island’s development gaining a profile also as a knowledge and education location.

