April 27 Afternoon Round-Up

Today's sessions of the Nobel Prize Summit "Our Planet, Our Future" brought together Nobel Prize laureates and other esteemed leaders in science, policymaking, and the arts to explore how to put the world on a more, sustainable, more prosperous future for all.

The following are selected quotes reflecting on the summit's themes from today's discussions and remarks. Registered press can view recordings from the day's main stage sessions after they conclude by logging in to your registration link.

Welcome

"We'll be looking at how science across disciplines and across borders can help solve the planet's pressing problems at the speed required and at the scale required. We know the truth about the state of our planet — that's a baseline drawn by science. Advancing from that baseline is not least the domain of political decision-makers." — ***Vidar Helgesen, executive director of the Nobel Foundation***

Together We Stand: A View to the Future

"We must invest in scientific education at all levels. We must help our children understand the pandemic — how it started, and how we can stop it. We must help them understand how our planet works, and how to save it, with climate education in every school. A widespread scientific culture is the only antidote against a mentality that sees conspiracies everywhere. So yes, our democracies need science. And yes, we need a new enlightenment." — ***Ursula Von der Leyen, president, The European Commission***

A Pandemic Guide to Solving Problems with Science: A Panel Discussion

"Sometimes the science leads to inconvenient truths that make people uncomfortable, and you just have to make up your mind that the most important thing to do is to maintain your own integrity and the integrity of the science. The lesson is: Speak the truth, and just stick with the science." ***— Anthony Fauci, chief medical adviser to the U.S. president and director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases***

"The CRISPR system is programmable. So bacteria program these CRISPR proteins to find specific viruses. We imagine that we can use it in a diagnostic setting in the same way. You can imagine programming it to, at the same time, give you a readout about the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus — the virus that causes COVID-19 — but also influenza, other coronaviruses, and potentially even other types of infectious agents … I think that's where we're going to see the real impact of CRISPR in the current pandemic, is as a diagnostic tool." ***— Jennifer Doudna, Nobel Prize laureate and professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the University of California, Berkeley***

"In Australia … while we've been able to activate an enormously successful and coordinated response to COVID, we haven't been able to do that with the question of how we generate energy and diminish greenhouse gas issues because we are a fossil fuel-producing/exporting state … The fact that we've done so well with COVID-19 reflects decades of research, which have been greatly supported in the U.S. through the NIH and even across the planet." — ***Peter Doherty, Nobel Prize laureate and patron of the Doherty Institute at the University of Melbourne***

Listened: Learned

"We're good at reacting to crises, but we need to learn. We're not as good at that. We need to understand why this virus is killing us and the long-term effects of COVID-19 … In a way, we're part of this big, global experiment. COVID-19 has upended all aspects of society, from health and medicine, to education, to food, work, you name it. We need to understand lessons learned from all these aspects." ***— Victor J. Dzau, president of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine***

Hard Problems: Science Solutions

"We all know that we have to quickly cut down our carbon dioxide emissions to net-zero by year 2050. But how? 2050 is less than 30 years away, but we still have a long way to go. To achieve net-zero, we need to invest in science and technology to solve some hard problems … All these efforts require scientists, engineers, and the rest of the societies of the world working diligently and collaboratively to realize ideas and generate new ones." — ***James Liao, president of Academia Sinica***

We Are the World

"We really need a concept of oneness of 7 billion human beings. We all live on one planet. Our basic way of life is the same … We should think more of 'We, humanity' — no longer saying 'my nation, my country.'" — ***His Holiness, The 14th Dalai Lama***

Toolbox of Truth

A discussion to introduce "The Oedipus Project: A Special Performance and Global Discussion," featuring acclaimed actors such as Bill Murray ("Lost in Translation"), Frances McDormand ("Nomadland"), Jeffrey Wright ("Westworld"), and Frankie Faison ("The Wire"), which concluded today's events.
"By giving people a chance to feel through their emotions, it often opens them up to being able to then stop and actually think rationally as well. You need one in order to open up to the other." ***— Saul Perlmutter, Nobel Prize laureate and professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley***

"I would argue that these plays are about watching people make choices that ultimately inscribe their characters, that write their fates. But they're choices. And watching people make choices when the stakes are of life and death — well, that seems like an appropriate thing to be doing right now at this critical juncture in our planet's history, and for our humanity." ***— Bryan Doerries, artistic director, Theater of War Productions, The Oedipus Project***

If you are not already registered, you may register now to tune into the remainder of the summit.

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