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The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada
Les Académies des arts, des lettres et des sciences du Canada

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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For immediate release

Canada Co-Chair of a Prestigious Global Science Network

OTTAWA — At its Conference and General Assembly of December 1-5, 2006, held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt, the InterAcademy Panel (IAP) on International Issues elected Dr. Howard Alper, Past-President and Foreign Secretary of RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada, as IAP Co-Chair for a three-year term. China serves as the other Co-Chair.

IAP is a global network of the world's science academies. The IAP, which comprises Academies of Sciences from 90 countries, provides science advice to governments on international science based issues. Most global issues are science based, whether related to health, environment, agriculture, natural resources, or other. The IAP issues statements to governments on pressing matters. The IAP has programs, activities, and initiatives including, amongst others, natural disaster mitigation, water management and research, women's health and education, biosecurity, science education, and access to scientific information. Capacity building is a major thrust of the IAP. The IAP Executive Committee was elected at the General Assembly, and has members from eleven Academies in addition to the Co-Chairs. The Secretariat for the IAP is located in Trieste, Italy.

This appointment of Howard Alper as Co-Chair of the IAP places Canada in a leading role in a global science-based organization. Heather Munroe-Blum, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University said: "I can think of no one more superbly qualified to serve as co-chair of the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues than Dr. Howard Alper. Dr. Alper is a distinguished Canadian scientist who has shaped science policy, conducted outstanding research, and traveled extensively to engage in collaborative scientific undertakings. His work has contributed to the development of public policy relating to research, in the developing world as well as in developed countries. His scientific leadership uniquely qualifies him to serve in this role, and is a source of pride for Canada." Joseph Rotman, Chair of Roy-L Capital Corporation and a member of national and international public bodies noted that, "As usual, Howard Alper is out front leading Canada in the global context."

RSC President Dr. Patricia Demers adds that “Dr. Alper, an exceptional ambassador for RSC, continues to bring us acclaim and promote our aims on an international stage.” The appointment is also a testimonial of the reputation of RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences of Canada (formerly known as the Royal Society of Canada) as a top notch Academy globally.

RSC: The Academies is Canada’s national academy dedicated to the promotion of exceptional learning, research and accomplishments in the arts, humanities and sciences. RSC consists of approximately 1800 Fellows: men and women from across the country who are selected by their peers for outstanding contributions to the natural and social sciences and in the humanities.

A biography of Howard Alper is attached.

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HOWARD ALPER

Howard Alper is currently Visiting Executive at the International Development Research Center (IDRC), and Distinguished University Professor at the University of Ottawa. The basic research Alper has been pursuing spans organic and inorganic chemistry, with potential applications in the pharmaceutical, petrochemical, and commodity chemical industries.

He has discovered new reactions using homogeneous, phase transfer, and heterogeneous catalysis (e.g. clays, dendrimers). He has also used chiral ligands in metal catalyzed cycloaddition and carbonylation reactions, and succeeded in preparing valuable products in pharmacologically active form. He has published 490 papers, has thirty-seven patents, and has edited several books.

Alper has received a number of prestigious Fellowships including the E.W.R. Steacie (NSERC, 1980-82), Guggenheim (1985-86), and Killam (1986-88) Fellowships. Major awards to Alper include the Alcan Award for Inorganic Chemistry (1986), Bader Award for Organic Chemistry (1990), Steacie Award for Chemistry (1993), all of the Canadian Society for Chemistry. The Chemical Institute of Canada has presented Alper with the Catalysis Award (1984), the Montreal Medal (2003), and the CIC Medal (1997), its highest honour. He also received the Urgel-Archambault Prize (ACFAS) in physical sciences and engineering. In 2000, the Governor General of Canada presented him with the first Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal in Science and Engineering. The following year, he was given the National Merit Award for contributions to the Life Sciences. In 2002, he received the Le Sueur Memorial Award of the Society of Chemical Industry (U.K.), and the award of Officer, National Order of Merit by the President of the Republic of France. In 2004, he was made Honorary Fellow of the Chemical Research Society of India, and in 2006, Honorary Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada.

He has served on a number of NSERC committees (e.g. Committee on Research Grants), and as Chair of the Partnership Group for Science and Engineering (PAGSE).

He chairs the Steacie Prize committee (NRC), and is a member or chair of several corporate boards. He represents Canada on the NATO Science Committee. Alper was appointed as a Titular Member of the European Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities (1996), and as an Officer of the Order of Canada (1999). He was named President of the Royal Society of Canada for a two-year term commencing November 2001. In 2004, he was elected for a three year term as Co-Chair of the Inter-American Network of the Academies of Sciences (IANAS). In December 2006, he was elected Co-Chair of the InterAcademy Panel (IAP) for a three-year term.

He is passionate about Canada, research and chocolate.