

Message of the President

For more than 80 years the International Foundation High Altitude Research Stations Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat HFSJG has had the privilege to serve the international scientific community with two unique high alpine research infrastructures. This is both an honour and a commitment, since maintaining and strengthening the leading role as centers of scientific excellence with global reputation is a permanent challenge.

The following key assets are essential for the continuing success of the Foundation HFSJG in mastering this challenge:

- *The close collaboration with locals.* The collaboration and partnership between locals (e.g. the Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat railways, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt) and the scientists has always been very close and to the mutual profit of all partners.

- *The internationality.* Since the very beginning the Foundation HFSJG has been based on a partnership between national and international organizations, fostering Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat as unique high altitude sites for research of highest standards as well as lively meeting places for established scientists, students, and the public, in the spirit of the motto „Science has no borders“.

- *The loyalty of the supporters.* The stable long-term financial support demonstrated toward our Foundation by all our member institutions and funding bodies, in particular the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Bern, is crucial. It is therefore highly appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. But we are equally thankful for the significant direct and indirect support by the Jungfrau and Gornergrat railway companies, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, and the Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT.

In consideration of these assets, the year 2015 was again a good one, and my sincere thanks go to all those involved, in particular to the HFSJG management and staff, and to the dedicated work of the science teams.

As documented in the detailed report of the HFSJG Director, Prof. Markus Leuenberger, our research platforms are as much in demand as ever. Activity in 2015 was again high and of excellent standard.

Within the Foundation HFSJG several milestones could be reached, and most of the “construction areas” and work in progress mentioned in my message of last year could be completed. The year started with a highly appreciated new three-year grant of the Swiss National Science Foundation. The “White Paper”, worked out in collaboration with the Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT, defining the strategy for the future development of the High Altitude Research Station Jungfrauoch, was finally published. In agreement with the proposed actions to consolidate Jungfrauoch as a European key infrastructure of worldwide significance, first environmental reference measurements were started at the Jungfrau East Ridge. Also, international networking was promoted, in particular in the context of the project “Virtual Alpine Observatory VAO” initiated by our colleagues from the Umweltforschungsstation Schneefernerhaus at Zugspitze, Germany. Thanks to good weather conditions, the new protection roof of the Research Station could at last be completed. At Gornergrat, with a signed memorandum of understanding between the main partners involved, the project “Stellarium Gornergrat” started the transition from the development to the operational phase. Finally, the meeting of the Board HFSJG at Grand Hotel Zermatterhof in Zermatt was held in a good spirit and was followed by the traditional excursion to Gornergrat. On behalf of the Board of the Foundation HFSJG, I would like to express my sincere and cordial thanks to all those who contributed to the accomplishments of 2015.

This is my last foreword of a HFSJG activity report, since I decided to step down as the President of the International Foundation HFSJG as of 29 February 2016.

It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I look back to six years of continued excellence in scientific achievements and continued endeavour in pursuing the challenging goals of the Foundation.

Handing over the honourable duty of the presidency HFSJG to my successor, Prof. Silvio Decurtins, I seize the opportunity to thank all those whom I had a chance to meet and who supported me and our Foundation during the many years, in a constructive spirit of mutual respect and friendship: the distinguished members of the Board HFSJG and of the Jungfrauoch Commission SCNAT, the representatives and staff of affiliated and supporting institutions, and the scientists. In particular I thank our Director Prof. Markus Leuenberger, Mrs. Claudine Frieden, Dr. Rolf Bütikofer, and Dr. Stéphane Affolter, as well as our custodians at Jungfrauoch, Joan and Martin Fischer and Maria and Urs Otz for their dedicated work. But I would also like to thank our Honorary President, Prof. Hans Balsiger, for his unbroken interest in the affairs and the well-being of our Foundation, as well as our treasurer, Mr. Karl Martin Wyss. Last but not least I thank my wife Rosmarie for sharing the HFSJG experience with me for more than forty years. The uniqueness and the internationality of the high alpine research sites Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat, the many personal contacts, and the inspiring cross disciplinary discussions about science as well as science policy are the most precious and enjoyable reward I will take along into the new phase of my life.

Wishing the International Foundation HFSJG and its new president, Prof. Silvio Decurtins, its staff, the researchers, all colleagues and friends, the very best for a bright future, I remain

yours sincerely,



Erwin O. Flückiger

Bern, February 2016