



Centro Latinoamericano de Física
Centre Latino-Américain de Physique
Centro Latino-Americano de Física



CLAF-MCTI High-Level Seminar (05/12/2025)

OPENING ULISSES BARRES DE ALMEIDA

Your Excellencies,

Mr. Guillermo Daniel Raimondi, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic,
Mr. Sebastián Depolo Cabrera, Ambassador of the Republic of Chile,
Mr. Norman Lizano Ortiz, Ambassador of the Republic of Costa Rica,
Mr. Carlos Eugenio Garcia de Alba, Ambassador of the United Mexican States,

Your Excellency Ambassador Eugênio Vargas Garcia, Director of the Science and Technology Department of Itamaraty,

Ms. Isa Assef dos Santos, Undersecretary for the Research Units of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Brazil,

Prof. Olival Freire Junior, President of CNPq,

Mr. Carlos Matsumoto, Head of International Cooperation at MCTI
(Federal Deputy Professor Ricardo Galvão.)

The diplomatic representatives of Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Peru, Uruguay, and Portugal; representatives from UNESCO

And all the authorities, scientists, and CLAF delegates.

It is an honor to have the presence of all of you in this event.

I would like to thank all those who have preceded me with their introductory words.



It is an honor to have the opportunity provided by this High-Level Seminar, jointly organized with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Brazil, and kindly hosted by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, to present and debate with you about the Latin American Center for Physics, its history, and its role and mission in the context of the Latin American Scientific Cooperation in Physics.

As you will have the opportunity to testify from the presentations and discussions that will take place today, CLAF is a singular institution in the scientific and political system of our region. Thanks to its unique intergovernmental status and its long and pioneering history as **the** scientific center of regional reach, CLAF is, and has always been, much larger than its “institutional size.”

Since its foundation in 1962 under the auspices of UNESCO, the mission of CLAF is that of “promoting the development of Physics in Latin America.” And this mission should be understood in the broadest possible sense, which goes beyond the essential contributions it has given to the training of young researchers in physics and the support of regional research programs and activities.

CLAF enjoys an unparalleled nature among the scientific institutions of our continent, which carries a dual capacity. From one side, it is the physics center for Latin America, maintaining historic and extensive relations with a countless number of institutions, groups, and communities of physics from virtually every country, and for that reason possessing a profound knowledge of the region’s context and state in the field and a unique capillarity within its scientific system.



On the other hand, it is an intergovernmental organization, the only dedicated, specialized instrument of the Latin American states to promote multilateral cooperation and coordinated actions for the promotion of physics research in the region.

As a metaphor with the city we are in, a capital created out of the “solitude of the desert”, the landscape of Latin American physics today is not anymore that of a few scattered islands of research, encountered by CLAF when it was established precisely to expand its horizons to new countries and regions. Latin American physics today is marked by a growing number of centers that, even if plagued by inconstancy in policies and funding, are able to train people and sustain research of a good — and oftentimes world-class — level.

And we are here in this room today, after 60 years of history, because I believe we are in a new beginning. A new beginning where the same elements that previously justified the creation of an institution like CLAF in the sixties equally justify its existence and sustain the necessity for its strengthening today.

But differently from the past, where integration drives logically from dependency, the state of Latin American physics today is strikingly marked by a lack of integration and insufficient regional cooperative actions - which can also be understood from the fact that after some development naturally follows a certain level of autonomy. But without integration, without the emergence of a Latin American Physics, it is difficult to believe how our region can successfully respond to the opportunities and challenges of the waves of transformation that physics research is and will unleash in the world and our societies: artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, nuclear fusion, just to mention those few that on their own are so disruptive that from each an entire new world can emerge.



The recent scenario of Latin American physics is one where we frequently see much stronger collaboration ties with the Northern Hemisphere than within the continent. Although such North-South collaborations were and are very effective in developing local capacities, they leave behind a narrower footprint of regional impact, which in turn limits the developmental outcomes of the research.

I believe, therefore, that this new beginning we are facing, or the next step for the development of physics in Latin America — and for that matter, the mission ahead of CLAF today — is precisely that of promoting a greater regional integration through coordinated multilateral collaborative actions that can further expand the breadth of regional impact of scientific research in the region. And why coordinated? Because doing so is the only way to transform simple regional scientific cooperation actions into real and effective instruments for the development of the states, like, for example, Europe was successful in doing in the past several decades succeeding the Second World War.

And in this scenario, CLAF can be a crucial multilateral actor for the physical sciences in the region. By putting itself at the service of the scientific communities and the states of the region — and with the help of UNESCO - it can actively and effectively contribute to help generating and sustaining this multilateral dialogue and encounters, so essential for the future of the scientific development of our continent.

That is why the conclusion of this meeting will be the proposal for the establishing of some form of discussion tables or forum, like we are piloting today, dedicated to strategic themes of physics research, where representations of the Latin American scientific communities, institutions of the region, and governmental actors can discuss together and identify where lie the opportunities for regional multilateral actions that can be of impact to the region,



and where joint coordinated actions can be effective and make a difference in the future development of physics for the benefit of the entire region.

In the context of what is commonly referred to today as “science diplomacy”, this seminar will therefore look into the various aspects of scientific cooperation in physics in Latin America, with the purpose of presenting the scenario to start such discussion, and to clearly delineate what role CLAF can play as an instrument of the member states to promote regional scientific cooperation in physics research — for the development of a Latin American Physics and the construction of a shared future for our region.

Thank you, and let us proceed with the programme.