

The Robert Merton Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Sociology of Science and Technology

Awarded by the Research Committee 23 (RC23) of the International Sociological Association

Recipient of the 2017 award: Dr. Francisco Sagasti

For nearly half a century Francisco Sagasti has been one of the leading scholars and policy makers in the field of social studies of science and technology, particularly with reference to developing countries. Since he published his first monographs and academic papers in the early 1970s, Dr. Sagasti has made significant conceptual and policy analysis contributions to the better understanding of the relations between science, technology and society in developing countries. In addition, he has played important roles as policy maker at the national and international levels, using his theoretical and historical insights understand better the role that knowledge plays in the process of development.

His first papers, written in 1970-1972, focused on the application of the systems approach to science and technology policy making and planning, on technology transfer and on planning methods for scientific research and technological development in developing countries. During this time, he worked on technology transfer and technology policy issues at the Organization of American States and Andean Pact Secretariat, and advised several national research councils in Latin America.

During 1973-1979 he coordinated the first large scale comparative policy research project on science and technology policy implementation in ten developing countries, the STPI project. He developed the research methodology, coordinated the country teams, wrote the synthesis report and organized dissemination activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Based on the results of the STPI project and on his own research on the social role of science and technology in development, he prepared the background report of the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, held in Vienna in August 1979. At this conference, Dr. Sagasti was a member of the Peruvian delegation and one of the two lead negotiators for the Group of 77 of developing countries. In parallel with his academic activities, Dr. Sagasti was vice-chairman of the board of the Industrial Technology Institute during 1972-1977, and published several papers on the situation of technological research and development of industrial firms in Peru.

In 1980, together with two other Peruvian colleagues, he founded GRADE (Group of Analysis for Development) and directed it during seven years. GRADE is now the leading social science and policy research think-tank in Peru, and was the first to focus on the behavior of the Peruvian scientific community and to conduct empirical research of the technological behavior of Peruvian enterprises. During the

early 1980s, while he was a member of the National Science and Technology Council board, he began a long-term program of research and studies to redefine the concept of development from a science and technology perspective, which led to numerous publications, lectures, conferences. At this time, he also began teaching what was the first course on technological behavior and innovation at the Universidad del Pacifico, and gave lectures in several American universities as a Distinguished Fulbright Lecturer. In 1981 the Fondo de Cultura Económica, the leading Latin American publishing house in social sciences, published seventeen of his essays in the prestigious “Lecture Series” of books, which usually published readers with contributions from many different authors.

Dr. Sagasti became the Silberberg Visiting Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in the academic year 1986-1987, and then joined the World Bank as Chief of the Strategic Planning Division and Senior Advisor, positions he held till 1992. At this time, Dr. Sagasti contributed to focus World Bank research and lending on science and technology for development issues, and in 1989-1990 became Chairman of the United Nations Advisory Committee on Science and technology for Development.

Academic and research activities continued for Dr. Sagasti during this period and he published numerous papers and books on social studies of science and technology, including on technological self-reliance, the state of science and technology in Latin America, reinterpreting development from a knowledge perspective, the role of university research, and similar subjects.

After returning to Peru in the early 1990s Dr. Sagasti continued contributing to the field of social studies of science first at GRADE, and then at FORO Nacional Internacional (FNI), a policy-oriented and advocacy think tank. At FNI he directed Agenda: PERÚ, a program of studies on development strategies, institutional reforms and democratic governance, which put science, technology and innovation as one of the main pillars of Peruvian development. He continued to publish papers on the history of science and technology in Latin America, the role of science and technology in international relations, science and technology policies in developing countries and edited with Jean-Jacques Salomon and Celine Sachs, *The Uncertain Quest: Science, Technology and Development*, a sourcebook published by UNESCO in three languages.

As of 2000, Dr. Sagasti continued to work on science and technology issues, although he also focused his research activities on development finance issues. He helped to prepare the first loan for science and technology that Peru received from the Inter-American Development Bank, published a number of papers on the subject, and became chairman of the Board of the Science and Technology Program at the Office of the Prime Minister of Peru, a position he held for five years, with a brief interruption. In parallel he became a member of the board of the Canadian International Research Centre that support the development of science and technology

capabilities in developing countries, a member of the board of the International Institute for Environment and Development, and a member of the Advisory Committee of The Lemelson Foundation that supports invention and innovation in the US and developing countries.

In 2011 the Fondo de Cultura Económica published Dr. Sagasti's book *Science, Technology, Innovation. Policies for Latin America*, the first comprehensive assessment of the evolution of science and technology policies in the region, which is used as textbook in graduate courses (a second edition was published in 2014). During the 2010s he was appointed member of a Presidential Committee to propose a new science, technology and innovation policy for Peru, member of a high-level committee to propose measures for improving the quality of higher education, and member of the juries of the MIT Review Innovators under 25 prize and of other research competitions and awards. Dr. Sagasti continued to lecture on science and technology issues, published papers on the long-term evolution of the relations between knowledge and progress, returned to teaching at the Graduate School of the Universidad del Pacífico, and his latest book on science, technology and innovation policies in Perú during the 21st century will appear in December 2017 under the imprint of the Fondo de Cultura Económica and the Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica.

Dr. Sagasti has combined academic research with policy practice throughout his academic and professional life. In addition to his multiple contributions in the field of social studies of science and technology, he had covered a broad range of research interests. He has worked on national development planning, management sciences in developing countries, peace and conflict prevention, human rights, higher education, international relations and development cooperation, fields in which he has published numerous academic papers. For additional information on his past and current activities, please see: www.franciscosagasti.com.