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## Keynote Address - Dr. Placid Rodriguez, President - NWS'95

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(This lecture was delivered by Dr. Placid Rodriguez, President - IIW during the Inaugural Ceremony of the National Welding Seminar held at Cochin during 23-25 November, 1995.

I am extremely happy to be present here on the occasion of the National Welding Seminar-1995 organized by the Cochin Branch of IIW. This is the fourth NWS over which I am presiding a record for a President which is my fortune more by default and accident rather than by design. In 1992 at Calcutta as the then President had to go to Germany, in 1993 at Bhilai, 1994 at Jamshedpur and 1995 at Cochin as the AGM for this year has got delayed. This prestigious event presents me with another opportunity to share my views and thoughts with a large gathering of IIW members, to interact with specialist scientist and engineers and to discuss with them the latest developments in the field of welding science and technology. As I have done in the previous two National Welding Seminars, this year also I shall provide an update on the progress made by various Committees and constituents of IIW. I shall also briefly touch upon the latest challenges in the field of welding.

But before I begin let me convey my deep sense of appreciation to the Organizing Committee of NWS-95 for coming forward to hold this annual event of IIW. I am sure this is going to be another highly useful and informative meeting for all of us. I and other colleagues in the National Council wish to congratulate the members of the Cochin Branch for hosting the NWS-95.

The Science and Technology of welding has undergone rapid changes in the international scene in the past few years and these changes have had a positive impact on the Indian scenario as well. We have witnessed a dramatic increase in welding related activities in our country and an event like NWS is proving to be highly inadequate to accommodate the ever increasing information generated every year in this multidisciplinary field. That is why it became necessary to introduce parallel technical sessions at Calcutta during NWS-92 and a poster session during NWS-94 at Jamshedpur. These changes

were received very well by our members and this year also a poster session has been organized to accommodate the papers. In addition to the National Welding Seminar, the National Welding Meet was also revived to focus attention on specific topics important to the Indian industry. After the NWM held at Bangalore last year on "CO<sub>2</sub> Welding", this year the Meet was organized by the Vizag Branch on "Repair Welding and Certification of Welding Personnel". The Vizag Branch and particularly its dynamic Chairman, Dr. S. R. Gollapudi is to be congratulated for conducting the Meet in a highly professional manner.

The Indian Institute of Welding will be completing three decades of its existence next year. The National Council has decided to celebrate this occasion by organizing an International Welding Conference at Mumbai in 1996. The venue and timings of the IWC-96 have been chosen with great care and after prolonged deliberations. Mumbai, being the commercial and financial capital of India, became the natural choice for the International event to be conducted for the first time by IIW. The dates for the IWC-96 are December 5-7, 1996 and have been selected so as to fall in between two other international events namely : Golden Jubilee Celebration of IIM in November 14-18 and the 14th World NDT Conference starting December 10th. This has been deliberately done to attract participants from abroad who may wish to couple two Conferences while they are visiting India. I am happy to report that preparations are in full swing to hold this Conference and the first circular has already been issued. A comprehensive second circular will be issued shortly. A number of world-renowned professionals have received our proposal for IWC-96 with enthusiasm and have agreed to be associated with the Technical Committee. I had the opportunity to represent our Institute at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Romanian Institute of Welding and Testing. At Romania and afterwards at the Institute of Welding and Quality

Control in Portugal which also I visited, I have established contacts with a large number of welding professionals who are all quite optimistic about our Conference. We expect a total of 600 delegates including 50-100 from abroad to attend this Conference.

The Tiruchirapalli Branch of IIW and WRI are completing 25 and 20 years of service to the welding community respectively. All of us are proud of their achievements and wish them continued success in the years to come. The celebrations commenced with a National Workshop on Trends in Resistance Welding in Indian Industry which I had the privilege to inaugurate. The main event will be SOJOM-96 next year (12 September 1996).

Recognizing the importance of education and training in the fast changing industrial scene, IIW has taken steps to conduct courses in Welding Metallurgy, Technology and Quality Assurance. The faculty has been drawn from various institutes with expertise in different disciplines of welding. This is the first major step taken by IIW to fulfill the mandate of training manpower to meet our present and future needs.

Since the cessation of our membership of the International Institute of Welding, vigorous efforts were made to enter into bilateral agreements with national professional bodies. These steps were initiated so as to open new information channels in the rapidly changing field of welding and with an express purpose to make available the latest information to our members. Agreements for professional co-operation between the Indian Institute of Welding on the one hand and the American Welding Society and the Singapore Welding Society on the other hand have been approved by the National Council and the Agreement papers have been signed by us. A Memorandum of Understanding between IIW and The Welding Institute, Abington, UK to jointly conduct various certification courses in India is in its final stages and will be signed very soon. After these collaborations come into effect and the training programmes begin, our welding engineers and technicians will be able to compete for jobs throughout the world. Needless to say that such trained manpower will also benefit the Indian industry in a big way.

I had already mentioned about my visit to the Institute of Welding and Material Testing, Romania for participation in their Silver Jubilee. An International Conference entitled "Achievements and Perspectives Concerning Welding and Material Testing" was held then. I delivered two invited talks on this occasion and also explored the possibility of collaborative arrangements with some of the other Institutes. In this Conference delegates from 17 countries participated and all the nations with the exception of Germany belonged to the erstwhile Soviet Block. I had wide-ranging discussions with the delegates and presented a proposal to form a consortium between the erstwhile eastern block European countries and a few Asian countries including India for information-sharing in the field of welding and testing. The proposal was well received by all and further efforts are underway to give a concrete shape to this idea. The advancements made by the erstwhile Soviet Block countries in the area of welding have been spectacular but has remained largely unknown to the outside world (except for the famous Paton Institute, Kiev, Ukraine) because of certain political compulsions. It is strongly felt that our alliance with these countries will be of immense benefit to IIW members.

On invitation from the Institute de Soldadure e Qualidade, Portugal, I also visited Portugal. There is a good possibility to evolve a collaborative arrangement between IIW and Portugal Welding Society in near future.

With sustained efforts by the National Council Members and active cooperation from the Branch Office bearers, various Committees and Sub-Committees of IIW have been functioning smoothly. The financial position of the Institute, which was a serious cause for concern a few years back, is now under control. Efforts by the Membership Sub-Committee to enroll new members are yielding good results and IIW activity is being initiated in the North-East region also. The long standing demand from IIW for recognition of its AM-IIW Exams. by the Government of India is finally going to materialize. This will help us to encourage more number of students to appear in the AM-IIW Exams. The Indian Welding Journal has a new Editor and it is hoped that once again regular publication will start after a brief interruption during the transition period. This year we could not hold

our Annual General Meeting in time as one of our Branches could not submit its audited accounts before the deadline. That also explains why I am delivering this Presidential address, the privilege of which should have gone to the new President.

As you are aware that the best technical papers in different categories presented during the National Welding Seminars are given various awards. The award money remained unchanged during the years though there was a considerable erosion in the value of rupee in this period. The National Council decided to approach the sponsors of various awards to raise the award money from this Seminar onward. I am happy announce that our appeal has met with success. The award money for the I.T. Mirchandani Memorial Research Award has been increased from Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/-, for the Modi Award it is increased from Rs. 3,000/- to Rs. 5,000/- and for the Mrs. D.M. Panthaki Award it is raised from Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 2,000/-. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors for readily agreeing to our request. We are still awaiting the response from the sponsors of the remaining awards. I am hopeful that they will also oblige us. From this year onward there will be two additional awards namely, Eutectic Reclamation Award of Rs. 5,000/- for the best paper on Reclamation Welding and Weldmen Award worth Rs. 2,000/- for the best poster paper. It is heartening to note the positive attitude shown by the Indian industry in encouraging welding science and technology by instituting awards for best papers which have helped in catalyzing R&D activity in India.

The field of welding science and technology is expanding rapidly with new products, materials and techniques being developed and commercialized at ever increasing rate. This also means that the obsolescences of technology is also taking place at a faster pace than was the case in the past. This calls for a sustained effort by all of us to assimilate the information generated and select appropriate technologies for our needs. Subsequent to technology absorption it is important to graduate to the next step of technology innovation in order to remain competitive and also to export equipment and value-added products. I mentioned about the Workshop on Resistance Welding at Tiruchirapalli, at that Workshop, in

the Presidential address, Shri S.N. Krishna, ED, BHEL pointed out that the annual production of resistance welding equipment in our country is only Rs. 30 crores which compares poorly with that of Japan which is Rs. 1,200 crores. If you take the total welding equipment also the situation will be similar. With globalization and liberalization of trade the import of welding equipment, accessories and consumables has picked up appreciably. This is increasingly becoming a cause for concern for the Indian welding equipment and consumable industries which are finding it more and more difficult to compete with large influx of imported products in the market. The day is not very far when the consumer of welding goods, driven by his own constraints of meeting stringent quality control requirements, will demand state-of-the-art products from the Indian manufacturers. With the ensuing boom in various sectors of the Indian industry like automobile, petrochemical, power generation etc. and the involvement of multinational companies in all these areas the demand for automation in the welding process is imminent. This will generate a huge demand for suitable power sources, consumables and other accessories. A major portion of this requirement, as it appears today, will be met by imports. This challenge should be welcomed by us and must be converted into an opportunity for upgrading the existing technology. We must exploit the vast reservoir of trained scientists and engineers available with us who can be trusted to deliver the goods. Over the years we have set up laboratories whose facilities and scientists are at par with the best available anywhere in the world and the Indian industry should not shy away from using these Centers of excellence for developing need-based technology. The Indian Institute of Welding can effectively liaise between industry and laboratories to achieve our goals. In this context, I can see a crucial role for our Institute as a provider of services like training, education, certification and acting as a source of latest information on welding science and technology.

I would urge that during deliberations in this Seminar these points should be discussed and proposals invited from the floor to clearly define the future role of our Institute in meeting the challenges that are emerging and will arise in future. I wish the National Welding Seminar all the success. Thank you.