



Press release

'Best of British' meets 'Best of Dutch' at Wageningen University and Research Centre

Next Generation Science meeting 12-14 October 2006

International collaboration and excellence in science will be showcased at the **Next Generation Science** programme, a British Council Netherlands project in collaboration with Platform Bèta Techniek. Eminent professors and talented young science professionals from the Netherlands and the UK will come together to give school students a glimpse into the world of scientific research and to actively engage them in scientific issues which affect their own lives. Through Next Generation Science we encourage people to think and talk about science, and demonstrate the connection between science, technology and society. Next Generation Science was launched in 2005 and the project has now been brought to Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR) at the request of Professor Rik Leemans from the Environmental Systems Analysis Group.

The meeting in Wageningen takes the twin themes of 'Food in the modern world' and 'Coping with the changing environment', scientific areas for which Wageningen University is internationally renowned. Students and teachers from schools in the Wageningen and Durham areas will meet at the University to take part in lectures, experiments, creative workshops, and demonstrations. These activities will demonstrate to students that careers in science are exciting and empowering; and allow them to make an informed choice about their own futures. The event has been organised in close collaboration with VWO-campus, the outreach office of Wageningen University, and Professor Leemans, who is an author of the pivotal Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. As well as drawing upon the talent from the internationally renowned WUR, the event has attracted notable researchers, policy experts, and business leaders from the Netherlands and the UK including top science

communicators Toby Murcott and 'Punk Science', the London Science Museum's theatre group.

One key strand of the Next Generation Science programme is the creation of international networks; this includes linking the universities of Wageningen and Durham and networks of teachers, researchers and young people. These links will be strengthened next year when all the students and teachers meet again at Durham University, where the theme of the gathering will be 'Cosmology'.

Next Generation Science gives all involved, from students to professors, the opportunity to learn from each other. By working together for a common goal, players from the UK and the Netherlands can ensure that science is valued and integrated into our modern society. Next Generation Science builds lasting relationships and networks between science teachers and established and future scientists.

Notes to Editors

For more information about the British Council Next Generation Science programme please contact : Joanna de Jong-Keogh, joanna.dejong-keogh@britishcouncil.nl tel: 0611385187

- Next Generation Science is an ongoing programme of science activities and links between the UK and the Netherlands. The current partnership includes Wageningen University and Research Centre, Durham University and the following schools: Christelijke Scholengemeenschap Het Streek, Ede; Pantarijn, Wageningen; Stedelijk Gymnasium Arnhem; Gymnasium Apeldoorn; Kandinsky College, Nijmegen; King James 1st Media and Arts College; Park View Community School; Spennymoor School; Durham Gilesgate Sports College & Sixth Form Centre; Durham High School for Girls.

- For more information please visit our website www.nextgenerationscience.org

- **Contributors to the Wageningen programme include:**

Professor Rik Leemans, Environmental Systems Analysis Group, WUR

Dr Jeroen Bordewijk, Unilever

Dr Karen Bultitude, Research Associate in Graphic Science, University of the West of England

Ir Florrie de Pater, Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences, Free University Amsterdam

Kate Hampton, Policy Advisor, Climate Change Capital

Dr Jeff Harvey, Senior researcher, Department of Multitrophic Interactions,
Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW)

Dr Wendy Howie, Solar Cell Team, University of Bath

Dr Lisette Klok, Climate Analysis Division, Royal Meteorological Institute
Netherlands (KNMI)

Professor Martin Kropff, Rector Magnificus, WUR

Dr Toby Murcott, Leading UK science communicator

Nicole Towler, Advisor British Council Science

- **Partners in the programme include:**
Platform Bèta Techniek
Wageningen University and Research Centre
Durham University

About the British Council

- The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.
- We operate in 233 towns and cities in 109 countries and territories worldwide.
- We build relationships and understanding between people in the UK and other countries and increase appreciation of the UK's ideas and achievements overseas.
- The areas we focus on are learning, creativity and society. We aim to make connections between science, technology and society and to stimulate debate about the impacts of science on people's lives.
- We are a non-political organisation which operates at arm's length from government.
- Our income in 2005/06 is expected to be £501 million, of which our grant-in-aid from the British government is £184 million.

About Platform Bèta Techniek

The Platform Bèta Techniek has been commissioned by the Dutch government, education and business sectors to ensure sufficient availability of people who have a background in scientific or technical education. The aim: to achieve a structural increase of 15 per cent more pupils and students in scientific and technical education and to use existing talent more effectively in businesses and research institutes. The aim is not just to make careers in science more appealing, but also to introduce educational innovations that inspire and challenge young people.

About Wageningen University and Research Centre

Wageningen University and Research Centre (Wageningen UR) provides education and generates knowledge in the field of life sciences and natural resources. Wageningen UR aims to make a real contribution to our quality of life. To us, quality of life means both an adequate supply of safe and healthy food and drink, on the one hand, and the chance to live, work and play in a balanced ecosystem with a large variety of plants and animals.

Wageningen UR is a collaboration between Wageningen University, Van Hall Larenstein School of Higher Professional Education and the specialised former research institutes (DLO) from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. This combination of knowledge and experience enables Wageningen UR with its 6.000 staff and more than 9.000 students to contribute actively to solving scientific, social and commercial problems in the field of life sciences and natural resources. Wageningen UR approaches these national and international issues from the perspectives of various disciplines, with an integrated approach and in close collaboration with governments, companies, stakeholder organisations, citizens, and other knowledge institutions. We pay attention to the balance between three priorities in society: economics, culture and nature.