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Representing ACS during the International Year of Chemistry was quite an adventure. My job at Sandia requires me to travel internationally and work with chemists in the Middle East and Asia, so although the expenses for many of my international trips last year was paid for by my day job, I was able to represent ACS wherever I went. I attended chemical conferences in the Philippines, Jordan, Malaysia, Brazil, Canada, Qatar, and Israel. I attended an African regional meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa and an Asian regional meeting in Bangkok. I attended the IYC opening in Paris at UNESCO headquarter, and I attended the IYC closing ceremony in Brussels, where there was so much conflict between the Europeans regarding the planning of that ceremony that I gained a new appreciation of what a miracle the European Union is. I also went to many wonderful places here in the US – Oklahoma, Rochester, Stony Brook, Georgia... far too many to mention here.

I want to share with you the top ten things I learned during the international year of chemistry.

**\*\*Number 10:** The term “chemical free” is used globally for items that are filled with “chemicals” such as filtered water, meat and even vitamins. (e.g., chimique libre, libre de quimicos, kimia free, kiyasalsiz...)

**\*\*Number 9:** In the Middle East, there are significantly more women than men studying chemistry these days at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

**\*\*Number 8.** Young people all over the world want to grow up and make a difference – help the poor, reduce pollution, enable sustainability, and a lot of times these young people don’t realize that chemistry and other sciences and engineering can be the route to making an impact.

**\*\*Number 7.** Every developing country I have been to seems to understand that government investment in science, engineering, STEM education, and research is the route to economic development and growth.

**\*\*Number 6.** A deeply disturbing number of U.S. Congressional members and voters don’t understand that federal investment in fundamental research is a required investment for long-term economic growth for our country.

**\*\*Number 5.** The rest of the world, particularly much of the developing world, is investing heavily in science and research and the quality and quantity of science from around the world is very much on the rise.

**\*\*Number 4.** The U.S. is the only country in the world where global climate change is widely considered a political issue.

**\*\*Number 3.** American culture is exceptional at enabling innovation. The trait that enables our remarkable innovation is our belief that science should be a meritocracy – only the best science should be rewarded regardless of age, gender, race, religion, and scientific reputation.

**\*\*Number 2.** The U.S. still has the best science in the world.

**\*\*And Number 1:**

A remarkable and inspiring number of chemical scientists dedicate so much of their lives to the betterment of others – as educators, volunteers, mentors, researchers, and advocates – that it has been humbling and uplifting to spend my year among so many people, many in this room, whom I consider heroes.

Thank you.