The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is awarded the ICPE Medal for the year 2008 in recognition of its efforts to promote physics education, especially active learning, in the developing world. For many years UNESCO has supported participation of physicists from the developing countries in a variety of physics education-related conferences. It has also supported educational activities through the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. It was a major sponsor of the World Conference on Physics and Sustainable Development at Durban in 2005. It subsequently supported the implementation of the Action Plans that emerged from that Conference, which began ongoing collaborations among many physics educators. Most recently, it provided funds to develop and deliver the workshops on Active Learning in Optics and Photonics. Thus, the organization has provided a variety of efforts to promote physics education.

This award is a befitting tribute to UNESCO’s long-term association with ICPE. The International Commission on Physics Education was established as Commission 14 of the International Union for Pure and Applied Physics soon after the first ever IUPAP sponsored International Conference on Physics Education was held at the UNESCO House in Paris towards the end of July 1960. The Paris conference formulated a number of resolutions that formed the basis of the current mandate of our commission. Since inception, our Commission’s ties with UNESCO have been very strong.

For almost 50 years UNESCO has supported the development and dissemination of physics education throughout the world. For this continuing effort to improve physics teaching and learning, the International Commission on Physics Education is pleased to present UNESCO with its 2008 Medal.

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Prof. Pratiha Jolly
Chairman of ICPE