

WELCOME REMARKS

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In a thought-provoking essay, on his reminiscences of Albert Einstein, written a decade ago, Gerald Holton, Professor of Physics and the History of Science at Harvard University, wondered what “free play with concepts” really means. To him, there is only one justification for such thoughtful play—and that is the development of testable ideas or hypothesis. He says:

“There is only one justification: that it [“free play with concepts”] can result, perhaps after much labour, in a thought structure which gives us the testable realization of having achieved meaningful order over a large range of experience, which would otherwise seem separate and unconnected.”

During this week we scientists, working in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, are gathered together for the first time to discuss our research advances in the natural history, biology, plant-host/insect relations, and pest management of the wide-ranging group of stem-borer species belonging to the genus *Chilo*.

We are all convinced that by the end of our presentations and discourse this week that we will have achieved a better measure of this major pest of cereal and graminaceous crops in the tropics and subtropics. If we do achieve this goal, then we will have reached a more productive platform from which to ask ourselves what we should next try to achieve. Let us be determined to have a long-term view of our responsibilities in this task of major proportions.