Jean-Pierre MULLER

Director of the French Institute of Pondicherry

… brief CV

Dr. Jean-Pierre Muller, Ph.D., D.Sc., Director of Research, is the Director of the French Institute of Pondicherry (http://www.ifpindia.org).

Born in 1946, Jean-Pierre Muller studied at the National Institute of Agronomy, Paris, before joining ORSTOM (see below) in 1969 as researcher in Soil Sciences. His work was first devoted to soil inventories as well as to expert assessment in Gabon and then in Cameroon. He later carried out research at the "*Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris*" (http://www.ipgp.jussieu.fr/index2.html) on Laterites, which are soils common in the tropical regions: he contributed to the reconstruction of their evolution based on the information collected on the clay minerals contained therein. These researches won him a Ph.D. in the field of Earth Physical Sciences.

From 1987, at the Laboratory of Mineralogy-Crystallography of the universities of Pierre and Marie Curie (Paris VI) and Denis Diderot (Paris VII) (http://www.lmcp.jussieu.fr/), he participated to the development of cristallochemistry, a branch of mineralogy that was then emerging, at the interface of physics of materials and geochemistry of the environment. He conducted research on the relations between the structure of clay minerals of tropical environment and their properties. These works and the methodological and technical developments that they entail, led to a number of applications: tracing the weathering and erosion processes at the Earth surface, industrial use of geomaterials, and protection of the environment.

From 1993 and during four years, he directed a research unit on the geosciences, composed of 85 persons within ORSTOM (see below). The focusing of the research programmes on soils and sedimentary records of the tropical environment that he undertakes, leads to a marked reinforcement of partnership with southern countries and the national scientific community.

In 1998, he is nominated as the Director General of ORSTOM (French Institute of Scientific Research for the Development in Cooperation), a public scientific and technical institution of 2300 persons, placed under the tutelage of both the Ministry in-charge of Research and that of Cooperation, and which carries out research, assessment and training activities on the environment, the management of living resources, the development of societies and health in the inter-tropical and Mediterranean zones (Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania). Jean-Pierre Muller leads an in-depth reform of this Institute, which has now become the IRD (Institute of Research for Development; http://www.ird.fr). The reformulation of regulatory documents, the creation of research and service units, the setting up of new processes for evaluation and forecast, the launching of an ambitious modernization and administrative simplification plan, and a master plan of the information systems, made it possible for the institute to adapt its structures and operating modes to the modern world and reaffirm its aims for development-oriented research.

Jean-Pierre Muller has authored nearly 250 scientific publications of which several dozens in international journals. He has organized various seminars on clay minerals and their use as markers of the environment, and has coordinated many national and international programmes on the mineralogical and geochemical tracers of the tropical environment. He is member of around 15 Learned Societies, Scientific Councils and Review Committees in France and the United States.

Jean-Pierre Muller was honored *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur,* the highest civil distinction awarded by the French Republic.

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