

OBITUARY

István Láng (1931-2016) agrochemist, soil scientist and environmentalist has passed away



István Láng (source: mta.hu)

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” István Láng was a scientist working hard on man-and-biosphere issues. His whole life was dedicated to scientific research in favour of building an environmentally sound coexistence on our planet.

István Láng was born on the 26th December 1931 in Mohács, Hungary. By profession he studied chemistry and agriculture and graduated as an agrochemist and pedologist. He started to work at the Institute of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1955. During the next eight years he was engaged in various research programmes. Also, this was the time when he began experiments in sandy soil research, and founded the Nyírlugos long term trial which contributed to novel scientific results in the field of acidification of sandy soils.

In 1963 he was appointed by the Academy for certain tasks of science administration. He started a life-long service during which period he was governing the research network of the Academy first as a deputy, later as the general secretary. He was a responsible and a wise leader of the Academy for almost a quarter of a century. His contribution to the development of the scientific network is remarkable. During his leadership numerous national and international research institutions have been founded and many nationwide scientific programmes were managed.

He was founder and later president of the National Scientific Research Fund (OTKA). He was a member of the National Council of Environment Protection. He was also an active expert in various international scientific missions with the UN. His participation in the work of the Brundtland Committee was a most remarkable task for him as well as for the scientific community.

Milestones of his scientific career: he defended his CSc degree in 1961 and the DSc degree in 1973, after which he was elected to be the corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Since 1985 he was full member of the Academy. From 1993 he was acting as a university professor. Also, his international activities were appreciated. He was member of several foreign

academies - the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Russia, the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Romania, and last but not least the European Academy of Sciences and Art.

His personality was remarkable as well. Apart from being a talented and highly educated person he had special characteristics and attributes. His work and lifestyle both were driven by accuracy and a restless diligent manner. He was a wise man with good skills in leadership. All along his life, even during the periods of carrying a bureaucratic burden, he remained an open-minded scientist participating in field work with a strong bond to nature and the environment. Also, he was fond of outdoor activities such as hiking and bird watching.

István Láng has passed away. An exceptional scientist left us. However his mental heritage will contribute to the success of environmental research on a long term. Professor Láng, rest in peace!

Márton Jolánkai