

Rome, 26 November 2008

**Finmeccanica sponsors the Conference “Science 400 years after Galileo Galilei. The value and ethical complexity of contemporary scientific-technical research”**

As part of its 60th anniversary celebrations, Finmeccanica today hosted a Conference entitled **“Science 400 years after Galileo Galilei. The value and ethical complexity of contemporary scientific-technical research”**, at the Complesso Monumentale S. Spirito in Sassia, Rome.

The conference stemmed from the Group's wish to host a cultural initiative on themes connected to the scientific revolution brought about by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), and kicks off a series of events that will be held in 2009, which has been declared International Year of Astronomy by the UN's General Assembly. Next year is also the 400th anniversary of the first astronomical observations with a telescope by Galileo Galilei which led to the discovery of other worlds and to the birth of modern science.

The Conference - held in the presence of *S.Em. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone*, Secretary of State of His Holiness - was opened by *Pier Francesco Guarguaglini*, Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica and included contributions from *Prof. Ugo Amaldi*, President of the TERA Foundation (for Oncological Hadrontherapy), *Prof. George V. Coyne, SJ*, Director Emeritus of the Vatican Observatory, *Prof. Edoardo Vesentini*, an Italian mathematician and *S.E. Mons. Gianfranco Ravasi*, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture. The value, future prospects and ethical complexity of contemporary scientific-technical research were the topics of a debate moderated by *Riccardo Chiaberge*, editor of “*Domenica*” supplement of *Il Sole 24 Ore* newspaper.

“The relationship between science and religion” - commented *Pier Francesco Guarguaglini*, Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica - “has always attracted considerable public interest, especially among those who, like me, are believers and devotees of science. The need to know, to understand and to investigate is part of man's most intimate, rational and transcendental longing, and research has shown us the only way to discover the complexities of the physical, material and natural world in which we live. This conference on Galileo Galilei, sponsored by Finmeccanica on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, seeks to consider the relationship between science, which through reason, perception and technical knowledge verifies what is possible and what is impossible in nature, and the spiritual realm, which accompanies man in his pursuit of the good both for himself and humanity. Today's initiative springs from my personal belief that we must build on those areas where frank and sincere debate between science and religion is welcome, in an attempt to give a response to the issues and problems thrown up by the ethical complexities of contemporary scientific-technical research”.

To acknowledge the revolution brought about by Galilean science, and more importantly, the profound impact it has had and continues to have on culture, quality of life and traditional values, Finmeccanica - believing that innovation and technology are the cornerstones of its success and investing the equivalent of 14% of its revenues in Research and Development - has decided to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy with an event of important cultural value.

The surprising developments in contemporary science, and more particularly the speed of progress in the last few decades - especially in biotechnology research and testing - have raised numerous complex questions and issues that are not just scientific and technological, but also philosophical, moral, religious, political and social. Scientific-technical research is increasingly at the centre of ethical

and philosophical debate, given its clear and growing anthropological and social impact. It therefore merits a much closer examination.

This year Finmeccanica has promoted several cultural initiatives as part of its 60th anniversary celebrations. The Group was founded on 18 March 1948 when Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI) created Società Finanziaria Meccanica Finmeccanica. The initiatives held during the year included: a concert at the Auditorium Conciliazione in Rome in the presence of leading representatives of Italian Institutions; a touring photographic exhibition, looking at the crucial periods in Finmeccanica's history up to the present; a book on the history of the Group from 1948 to today; and the project *Le Vie Francigene del Sud*, promoted by Associazione Civita in cooperation with Banco di Napoli, which aims to rediscover and promote the pilgrimage routes from southern Italy to Jerusalem, and to lay the foundations for the creation of a network of religious, cultural and tourist itineraries.