

# CHANGE OF DIRECTOR

## Message from Judith Rees

**I**t is with mixed feelings that I write to introduce myself to you all as director of the School. I am acutely aware of the responsibilities involved and greatly appreciate all the support that has been offered by so many colleagues.

I agreed to become interim director following the resignation of Howard Davies in March, as the links between LSE and Libya became headline news. These links are now the subject of an inquiry under Lord Woolf and I have no intention of pre-judging that – indeed, at the time of writing I have no idea when Woolf will report. We must await the report, absorb its findings and act on any recommendations in a completely transparent way.

I simply wish at this stage to say that the Libyan affair must not obscure Howard's many achievements for the School. Peter Sutherland, our chair of Council, provides an overview of Howard's tenure at LSE (see opposite). As he makes clear, it has been an impressive eight years, with success in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise matched by new developments in teaching and the opening of our New Academic Building. He is going to be a hard act to follow.

We must now undertake the search for a new director and, as I have already made clear, I will not be applying for that

post. My priorities will be to ensure that the School gets back on an even keel. We must concentrate on ensuring that students continue to get the first-rate teaching they deserve, staff continue to produce internationally recognised research, and our preparations for the Research Excellence Framework run smoothly. It is also important that the efforts being made to improve the School's estate, teaching facilities and the general working environment do not slacken. And then, of course, there are all the day-to-day activities we pride ourselves on: our public events and our engagement with different audiences around the world, from policymakers to prospective students, from alumni to fellow academics.

We need to remind ourselves that what has been lost in all the noise of recent months is what a wonderful and stimulating place LSE is. I was a student here back in the 1960s, doing my BSc (Econ), an MPhil and finally my PhD. In 1969 I joined the staff as the most junior of lecturers and apart from two relatively short flirtations with Wye College and the University of Hull have been here ever since. Much of this time was spent in the Geography and Environment Department, which I headed briefly between 1996-98 before becoming deputy director of the School from 1998-2004. This was an interesting period, working with two very different directors, which hopefully has given me a good insight into what the coming year or so is likely to bring. Since 2008 I have been director of both the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and of the ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, working closely with Nick Stern and a great team of researchers to further develop the School's policy-related research in this critically important area.

Suffice to say, I hold huge affection for the School. In my 40 years of involvement I have particularly valued LSE's engagement with the outside world. As social scientists, LSE academics tackle some of the most challenging issues of our time. In the last few months alone, LSE academics have published research on health expenditure, local government finance, the music industry, teenagers and the internet, maps to improve responses to disaster in Pakistan as well as the carbon tax and European greenhouse emissions. In early February, Professor Julian Le Grand, Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy, was appointed to lead a new taskforce to drive reform at the centre of government.

I mention all of the above as they happened in February and March, at a time when we were fully caught in the Libyan whirlwind – and reflect the quiet determination to continue business as usual at the School.

