



MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional offices will help ICSU pursue science for sustainable development

Paris, France – At its recent General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, members of the International Council for Science (ICSU) gave the Executive Board a clear mandate to set an international research agenda for the future that focuses on science for sustainable development.

“Following what was, for many, the disappointing political outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), it is very exciting for this international body of scientists to reach agreement on the need to roll up our sleeves and generate an action plan for science for sustainability,” says Professor Jane Lubchenco, ICSU’s new president. “Our top priority is to take an integrated approach to addressing the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development.”

In order to achieve this, Professor Lubchenco says ICSU must focus future research efforts on the local level and then take on the challenge of linking local research to regional and global issues.

As the lead organizer of the science and technology community for WSSD in Johannesburg, ICSU has already made a strong commitment to the UN regarding science for sustainable development. Because of its broad membership, the Council is well positioned to create multidisciplinary teams that can plan for a new, exciting international effort.

In addition, ICSU has taken a strong stand in support of strengthening links between modern science and traditional knowledge. This commitment will encourage dialogue between the scientific community and local peoples, thereby facilitating the development, application and adaptation of new information and technologies to address local issues in areas such as agriculture, biodiversity and traditional medicine.

ICSU will further underline its commitment to this new initiative—and to ongoing projects associated with environmental change, science education and capacity building, and freedom in the conduct of science—by establishing regional offices in Asia, Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean, and the Arab Region. These offices will support the work of ICSU members and partner organizations by strengthening regional collaboration and ensuring that scientists from the regions are fully involved in the many international science efforts.

“These regional offices will enable ICSU to collect information on priority needs, and to draw on traditional knowledge and scientific expertise to address local problems,” says ICSU President-Elect Professor Goverdhan Mehta, Director of the Indian Institute of Science

(Bangalore). “At the same time, they will act as clearing houses that transfer knowledge from the national level back to the global scientific community.”

These exciting outcomes of the 27th General Assembly will allow ICSU to broaden its scope to include science for sustainable development while also refining its focus on specific issues and facilitating the global exchange of knowledge.

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Founded in 1931, the International Council for Science (ICSU) is a non-governmental organisation representing a global membership that includes both national scientific academies (101 members) and international scientific unions (27 members). Drawing on this wide spectrum of expertise, ICSU addresses major international, interdisciplinary issues typically beyond the scope of individual organisations. The Council also builds on this expertise by initiating, designing and coordinating major, multidisciplinary research programmes, particularly in the areas of global environmental change.

ICSU acts as a focal point for the exchange of ideas, the communication of scientific information, and the development of scientific standards and networks. The Council also establishes policy and advisory committees to address important matters of concern to scientists, such as education and capacity building for science, access to data and information, science in developing countries, and freedom in the conduct of science. By harnessing the power of a network that connects hundreds of thousands of scientists around the world, ICSU is actively *strengthening international science for the benefit of society*.

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