



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

ICSU/CODATA launch online forum for World Summit on the Information Society

11 February 2003 (Paris, France) – The International Council for Science (ICSU) and the Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) today launched an ‘open access’ online forum to generate discussion from the international science and technology community in the lead-up to the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

“The overall aim of the forum is to solicit input from all sectors of the S&T community,” says Dr. Carthage Smith, ICSU Deputy Director. “Ultimately, we’ll use that information to engage in dialogue with other stakeholders in the information society, including governments, business and industry, and civil society.”

The forum, which can be accessed from the ICSU home page (www.icsu.org), is organized along four themes:

1. Scientific data and information for decision-making and better governance
2. Ensuring universal access to scientific knowledge internationally
3. Scientific data and information as a global public good
4. Using Scientific data and information to improve all levels of education and training

To initiate discussion, an informal background paper outlining issues related to each theme has already been posted. Participants are invited to respond to the initial Topic, or to generate new topics under one of the existing themes.

The forum will be moderated by Subhash Kuvelker, president of Kuvelker Associates and of Kuvelker Law Firm. Mr. Kuvelker previously served as manager of the Advanced Technology Program of the US Government, and is now a consultant in projects involving science, technology, economics, and law to the National Academies and other organisations.

The forum will remain active until Friday, 28 February 2003, after which the information will remain available for reference. The information collected will feed into a joint ICSU/CODATA/UNESCO workshop on 12 March 2003 (Paris), in which experts from the international S&T community will collectively distil key messages. A brief summary document for each theme will be made available in print and online, and will be widely disseminated amongst WSIS stakeholders.

For more information on WSIS, please visit: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>

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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 multidisciplinary research programmes, particularly in the areas of global environmental change and sustainable development.

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 addresses 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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