

# press release

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## International Council for Science (ICSU) launches an Agenda for Action – ‘Science in the Information Society’ - and invites governments to endorse it during the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003)

Following a meeting of leading scientists from around the world and representatives of international organisations in March 2003, an agenda for action - Science in the Information Society - has now been released by the International Council for Science. The formal documents for the World Summit on the Information Society will be negotiated by governments during an Intercessional Meeting that will take place on 15-18 July (Paris, Unesco House) and during PrepCom III (Geneva, 15-26 September). The agenda for action from the international scientific community should provide important input to these negotiations and subsequently to the Summit itself.

Universal access to scientific knowledge, decision making and governance, policy issues for scientific information and improving education and training are the four key themes, which were chosen by the scientific community in developing its agenda for action. The science perspectives in relation to each of these themes is summarised in a series of four published brochures, which are available in English, French and Spanish. For each theme, the key principles, the challenges, the actions required, as well as examples of best practice, are highlighted. Examples can be found on water management, weather prediction, health surveillance, science communication and capacity building for research.

A very strong message to governments is the need to strengthen the public domain for scientific data and information and ensure equitable access to this. As Professor Jane Lubchenco – ICSU President - states: “Scientific knowledge carries enormous potential for helping the world address the UN Millennium Development Goals, and the use of Information and Communication Technologies opens up unprecedented opportunities to accelerate this process. At the same time, scientists and governments must work together to address the very real risk that the so-called ‘digital divide’ will continue to expand and reinforce the division between rich and poor, North and South.”

ICSU’s mission is to strengthen international science for the benefit of society. In partnership with its specialized Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) and the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), ICSU is working to highlight the importance of science in the developing information society. Further information can be found at [www.icsu.org](http://www.icsu.org).

Information on the ‘Science in the Information Society’ meeting in March and the Agenda for Action can be found at [www.icsu.org](http://www.icsu.org) as well as the text (PDF Format) of the four published brochures. The brochures themselves can be obtained from [herve@icsu.org](mailto:herve@icsu.org).

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Founded in 1931, the International Council for Science (ICSU) is a non-governmental organization representing a global membership that includes both national scientific bodies (101 members) and international scientific unions (27 members).

Through this international network, ICSU coordinates interdisciplinary research to address major issues of relevance to both science and society. In addition, the Council actively advocates for freedom in the conduct of science, promotes equitable access to scientific data and information, and facilitates science education and capacity building.



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