

Inaugural General Assembly of the International Science Council (ISC)

Paris, 4 July 2018 - In a historic meeting, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) merged today to form the International Science Council, a unique global non-governmental scientific organization representing both the natural and social sciences. The meeting opened with addresses from Catherine Brechignac, Secrétaire Perpétuel of the French Academy of Sciences. In her speech, Brechignac, who is a former President of ICSU, emphasised that the “natural sciences should no longer dictate the Earth system sciences research agenda, social sciences should be at least as important.” Prince Albert II of Monaco welcomed the participants of the ISC General Assembly in the the “Maison des Océans”.

The main item of business for the meeting was the election of a Governing Board to lead the Council. Representatives of the Council’s members elected Daya Reddy, a mathematician from South Africa, to be the first President. Peter Gluckman, the former Chief Science Adviser to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, became the President-elect, and will assume the Presidency at the next General Assembly in 2021. The further officers of the Board are Elisa Reis (Brazil) Vice President, Jinghai Li (China-CAST) Vice President, Alik Ismail-Zadeh (Russia/Germany) Secretary, and Renée van Kessel (The Netherlands) Treasurer.



The newly elected Officers of the International Science Council: (from the left to the right) Jinghai Li, Daya Reddy, Renée van Kessel, Elisa Reis, Peter Gluckman, and Alik Ismail-Zadeh (Photo: Simon Cassanas for ISC)

The ordinary members of the Board will be Geoffrey Boulton (UK), Melody Burkins (USA), Saths Cooper (South Africa), Anna Davies (Ireland), Pearl Dykstra (The Netherlands), Sirimali Fernando (Sri Lanka), Ruth Fincher (Australia), James C. Liao (China-Taipei), Natalia Tarasova (Russia), and Martin Visbeck (Germany). In his acceptance speech, the incoming president, Daya Reddy, spoke about the importance of inclusiveness, of involving all regions of the world in the work of the new Council. He called for the involvement of early career scientists in partnerships and agenda setting. “We have set ourselves an ambitious goal to be a powerful, visible, credible voice for science. There’s no time to waste. Let’s get to work!”

Participants were also able to vote for the location of the next General Assembly of the Council, choosing between two bids, one from Montreal, Canada, one from Oman. The bid by the city of Muscat, Oman, carried the vote and it will host the 2nd General Assembly in 2021.