



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF BELGIUM TO THE UN



PERMANENT MISSION
OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Official Launch of the Group of Friends on Science for Action

13 April 2023 – Press release

On 12 April 2023, the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Ambassador Philippe Kridelka, India, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, and South-Africa, Ambassador Mathu Joyini, announced the creation of a Group of Friends on Science for Action in presence of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Csaba Kőrösi.

The announcement was made in the midst of the second scientific briefing organized by the President of the General Assembly. The Permanent Representatives also thanked the International Science Council for its support of this Group of Friends initiative.

Science is a key element in addressing today's interconnected challenges. Preventing and responding to global pandemics, tackling deepening inequalities, reversing the loss of nature, addressing climate change and water emergencies, harnessing technological change for the public good and other challenges require ambitious global cooperation and robust scientific information. The United Nations and its Member States stand to benefit from a stronger and more flexible interface between science, policy and society.

The SDG Summit in September will mark the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but there is regrettably slow progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, science needs to be mobilized to inform our decision making and action at the different levels of the UN. Echoing the call from the UN Secretary-General in his report *Our Common Agenda*, now is the time to "develop a common, empirically backed consensus on the public good of facts, science and knowledge". This is also reflected in the Motto of the 77th session of the General Assembly: Solutions through science, sustainability and solidarity. Science is a powerful tool to support multilateral cooperation and diplomacy; and multiple success stories from around the world exist upon which to build. To achieve the 2030 Agenda Science, Technology and Innovation needs to flourish in all countries.

The Group of Friends on Science for Action will provide an important impetus to create and nurture a culture and practice of science informed deliberations and cooperation in the UN, building on on-going efforts. In particular the Group of Friends on Science for Action will:

- provide an informal forum for debate and open exchange between countries that take leading roles in using science in policy and decision-making to support peer-learning, exchange of good practices, and create opportunities for bilateral collaborations.
- Provide a platform to explore ways of mainstreaming science, technology and innovation in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.
- provide an informal forum for dialogue with scientists on key questions of issues relevant for ongoing or upcoming negotiations and deliberations in NY where scientific information, synthesis and advice are needed and create a demand-led scientific engagement.
- provide an entry point to support a better and more targeted mobilization and engagement of the scientific community based on the needs and priorities identified by participating countries and the work program of the GA.
- provide a platform for members to liaise with global networks and communities of practices (nationally, regionally and internationally) that support exchange on the use of science in advancing national and multilateral objectives.

We are committed to ensuring that the Group of friends on Science for Action adds value and collaborates with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Executive Office of the Secretary General and other UN bodies, and Groups of Friends. It will be an informal forum for Member States to discuss the place of Science in the UN, reinforcing the access of Member States to scientific briefings relevant for UN negotiations and their access to relevant scientists.

All Member States who see value in enhancing science for action at the UN are invited to join the Group so that we can start sharing information and exchanging views.

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