

PRESS RELEASE

Leading scientists from around the world gather in Auckland for key strategy summit of global scientific organizations

Gathering in Auckland for the tri-annual General Assembly of the International Council for Science (ICSU), the representatives of the scientific community will take key decisions that define the direction of international science for the coming years.

Auckland, New Zealand (August 31) – New Zealand Prime Minister John Key opened the 31st General Assembly of the International Council for Science with a speech stressing New Zealand’s unique environmental challenges and its contributions to international research..

Outgoing ICSU President, Nobel Prize laureate Professor Yuan-Tseh Lee in his speech paid tribute to the achievements of the global environmental change research programmes which will soon merge into Future Earth. “Without them, we would hardly understand so much about our changing earth,” he said.

“Let us remember why we are here,” he urged, “It is to strengthen international science to help humanity cope with global challenges and achieve sustainable transformation.”

The meeting is hosted by New Zealand’s Royal Society, whose President David Skegg noted that of the previous ICSU General Assemblies only three had been held in the southern hemisphere and this was the first in the South Pacific.

Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, made a keynote speech in which he warned that researchers had to respond to the challenge of responding to disruptive changes that were underway in science.

“The rise of open science and the massive expansion of the scientific endeavour accompanied by the rise of the celebrity scientist and the very individualistic reward system of public science has exposed a number of issues about the integrity of the science system itself.”

Gluckman stressed the importance of public trust in science – which is essential for solving the key challenges society faces in the 21st century. “Science systems are changing rapidly, and if we do not manage these changes properly, they can contribute to loss of public trust,” he said.

Over the course of the next three days, delegates from ICSU’s national members and unions will discuss priorities for international science in the coming years, vote in a new leadership including its next President-elect and Executive Board and will consider an official statement on open access to scientific publications.

Media enquiries

Denise Young, Head of Communications ICSU email: denise.young@icsu.org

Johannes Mengel, Communications Officer, ICSU email: johannes.mengel@icsu.org

About ICSU



Founded in 1931, ICSU is a non-governmental organization with a global membership of national scientific bodies (120 Members, representing 140 countries) and International Scientific Unions (31 Members). The Council's activities focus on three areas: planning and coordinating research; science for policy; and strengthening the Universality of Science. ICSU is frequently called upon to speak on behalf of the global scientific community and to act as an advisor in matters ranging from the environment to conduct in science. www.icsu.org