



Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy

25-26 MARCH 2025

*Science Diplomacy in a Rapidly Changing World:
Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women*

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris





GLOBAL MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE ON SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

Science Diplomacy in a Rapidly Changing World: Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women

CONCEPT NOTE

25-26 March 2025, UNESCO HQ, Paris

BACKGROUND

We live in a world where geopolitical complexities are deeply intertwined with rapid technological advancements. Tackling global challenges, ranging from pandemics and climate change to the peaceful management of transboundary resources, requires not only science-based solutions but also the steadfast commitment to upholding the human right to share in scientific advancements and their benefits. As stated in the *United Nations Pact for the Future*, science, technology and innovation have the potential to accelerate the realization of the United Nations' aspirations across all three pillars of its work - sustainable development, peace and security and human rights. Science and technology issues are becoming integral to public policies, foreign policies and multilateral relations.

As countries increasingly explore the connections between scientific advancements and diplomatic efforts, the concept and practice of science diplomacy is gaining new momentum, with scientific information becoming intrinsic to diplomatic relations and political choices.

There is raising recognition of the need to strengthen science diplomacy as a more collaborative multilateral approach to tackle grand societal challenges and promote evidence-based decision making at the global scale. The focus of science diplomacy is expanding to embrace its competitive and collaborative advantages, and to serve both national and international interests.

As the United Nations agency established to “build peace in the minds of men and women around the world through science, education, culture and communication”, science diplomacy has been a part of UNESCO's DNA since its inception. Using scientific and technological collaborations as tools to improve relations between its Member States, UNESCO has been at the forefront of flagship initiatives that have profoundly marked the international science diplomacy scene.

However, the current interplay between geopolitical, socioeconomic and technological realities, not least as artificial intelligence evolves in our digitalized world and distrust between nations grows, requires us to rethink the existing science diplomacy mechanisms and to develop innovative approaches that bring together international scientific collaborations and diplomatic efforts. These frameworks and approaches should be characterized by their flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, inclusivity to ensure that all voices are heard, a commitment to addressing existing knowledge and capacity asymmetries, and a focus on building trust and mutual understanding.

Within the framework of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, UNESCO, is enhancing its action on science diplomacy as an important tool for building dialogue among nations including in times of crises and conflicts.

As the first step, UNESCO is organizing the *Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy* to advance an international reflection on a new global framework for science diplomacy in response to the needs of our contemporary societies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GLOBAL MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

Part of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, the Dialogue aims to:

- i) Foster high-level commitment to science diplomacy as an instrument for promoting dialogue and peace;
- ii) Explore innovative science diplomacy initiatives through exchanges between ministers, scientists, diplomats and experts to contribute to peace building and human right protection;
- iii) Agree on a common framework to advance shared goals through science diplomacy; and
- iv) Highlight ongoing initiatives and opportunities in science diplomacy.

To address evolving global needs, the Dialogue will focus on several priority areas at the nexus of science and diplomacy:

- 🌀 leveraging science and diplomacy to effectively respond to growing number of crises and their impacts on the science systems and their capacities to provide knowledge for response and recovery in affected areas;
- 🌀 ensuring that global agreements and frameworks are based on scientific evidence, to address global challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, water scarcity and increasing natural disasters.
- 🌀 peaceful management of joint transboundary natural resources;
- 🌀 ensuring the transition to open science that balances international scientific collaboration with protecting sensitive information;
- 🌀 exploring the role of science diplomacy in the development and responsible use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, bio, neuro, and quantum technologies

OUTPUTS

The key output of the Ministerial Segment will be a joint Ministerial Statement on *Science Diplomacy in a Rapidly Changing World: Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women* and announcements, as appropriate, of concrete science diplomacy initiatives.



GLOBAL MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE ON SCIENCE DIPLOMACY
**Science Diplomacy in a Rapidly Changing World: Building Peace in
the Minds of Men and Women**

PROGRAMME

25 March 2025, UNESCO HQ, Paris, Room II

2025 Multistakeholder High-Level Conference on Science Diplomacy

9:30-10:00 Opening remarks

*Master of ceremony: **Shaofeng Hu**, UNESCO*

Lidia Brito, Assistant Director General, Natural Sciences, UNESCO

Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Union Commissioner for Start-ups, Research and Innovation

Speaker TBD, Africa Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

10:00-10:15 Keynote

Tshilidzi Marwala, Rector of the United Nations University and Representative of the UN's Secretary General's Science Advisory Board

10:15-10:45: Coffee break

10:45-12:00: Plenary session and open debate

New Science Diplomacy to Tackle the Challenges of the 21st Century

*Moderator: **Ezra Clark**, UNESCO*

Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council

Ana Maria Cetto, UNESCO Chair on Science Diplomacy and Heritage, Professor at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Jan Marco Müller, Team Leader Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue and Science Diplomacy at the European Commission

Daan du Toit, Deputy Director-General of International Cooperation and Resources at the South African Department of Science and Innovation

Zakri Abdul Hamid, Founding Director of the International Institute for Science Diplomacy and Sustainability, Malaysia

Kimberly Montgomery, Director, International Affairs and Science Diplomacy, American Association for the Advancement of Science

12:00-13:00: Roundtable session

The role of Science Diplomacy in Promoting Openness while Ensuring Security in Scientific Research

*Moderator: **Ana Persic**, UNESCO*

Rémi Quirion, Chair of the International Network for Government Science Advice, Chief Scientist of Québec

Jeremy Farrar, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization

Geneviève Almouzni, Member of the Human Cell Atlas coordinating committee, Research Director, CNRS and Institut Curie

Speaker TBD, World Intellectual Property Organization

13:00-14:30: Lunch

14:30–15:45: Roundtable session

The role of Science Diplomacy in Fostering Equitable Collaborations for the Development and Responsible Use of New and Emerging Technologies

*Moderator: **Amal Kasry**, UNESCO*

Maricela Muñoz, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator

Ayumi Moore Aoki, Founder and CEO of Tech Diplomacy Forum, Founder and CEO of Women in Tech Global

Sandro Scandolo, Head of Research and Partnerships at Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)

Speaker TBC, Google AI in Ghana

Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Jiaofeng Pan, President of Institutes of Science and Development, Chinese Academy of Sciences

15:45-16:15: Coffee break

16:15-17:30: Roundtable session

The role of Science Diplomacy in Ensuring Peaceful Management of the Shared Resources and Common Goods

*Moderator: **Abou Amani**, UNESCO*

András Szöllősi-Nagy, UNESCO Chair on Water Conflict Management, Professor at Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary

Speaker TBD, Report from the FRIEND-NILE meeting

Aarti Holla-Maini, Director of UN Office for Outer Space Affairs

Rolf-Dieter Heuer, President of the Council, Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East

Olivier Rukundo, Head of the Peoples and Biodiversity Unit at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

18:00: Closing remarks

Lidia Brito, Assistant Director General, Natural Sciences, UNESCO



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PROGRAMME

26 March 2025, UNESCO HQ, Paris

2025 Global Ministerial Segment

9:00 TO 9:30: OPENING

9:30 TO 9:50: KEYNOTE

9:50 TO 10:20: COFFEE BREAK

10:20 TO 11:50: MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE #1
Science Diplomacy for Shared Natural and Scientific Resources

11:50 TO 14:00: MINISTERIAL LUNCH
Science Diplomacy for Times of Crises

Please note this session is by invitation only.

14:00 TO 15:30: MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE #2
Science Diplomacy in a World of Disruptive Technologies

15:30 TO 16:00 : COFFEE BREAK

16:00 PM TO 17:30 PM: MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE #3
Science Diplomacy to Advance Secure and Open Science

17:30 TO 17:50:
ADOPTION OF THE JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

17:50 TO 18:00: CLOSING REMARKS

18:00 TO 19:30: NETWORKING RECEPTION