

**Statement delivered on 01 July 2014 at the High Level Political Forum by
Professor Gordon McBean, President-elect of the International Council for
Science**

I am pleased to report on the meeting this morning of His Excellency Martin Sajdik, with the scientific community to discuss the opportunities to strengthen the interface between science, policy and society for achieving sustainable development. This session builds on a side event organised by ICSU, DESA and UNEP yesterday

The environmental, social and economic challenges we all face range from the local to the global scale. Science has provided major contributions to our understanding of these challenges, and their interlinkages. The contribution from science needs to be strengthened to provide the evidence base for deciding on new development pathways, and implementing effective responses to existing and emerging risks and challenges. To do that, science needs to work in close partnership with policy-makers and stakeholders to identify the key questions that need to be answered, to help explore the range of policy options and solutions that can put us on the right track. How can we make science demand driven with a shift from conversation to consultation to include society in outputs and applications?

One major step in this direction is the Future Earth initiative, which was spurred by the SDGs, aims at co-designing and co-producing research with stakeholders to deliver the knowledge we need to inform policies and come up with the right solutions for sustainable development. Future Earth is an initiative to break up the silos in science and develop dialogues and collaborations not only to point out the problems and the risks, but also to identify the opportunities and the solutions for sustainable development. The initiative provides an opportunity to collaborate with civil society, policy makers and scientists to ensure that scientific input is continual throughout the sustainable development processes and beyond.

Sustainable development agenda is a transformational agenda, tackling issues such as water, energy and food, which cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. To respond to these interlinked needs, scientific findings must be

evidence based, un-biased, and honest, but relevant, and easy to understand in accessible language with the help of new information technologies. We must also use these findings to address the specific needs of smaller countries who face major developmental challenges.

Science and assessment processes must work together to identify whether we are actually making progress, or whether we just think we are making progress.

We must also strengthen institutions and illustrate relevance of research and the developmental goals of one's country to see increased support for scientific research by governments at the local, regional and national level. Return on investment in science can be very high, but these need to be in our dialogues.

The HLPF can play a significant role in achieving partnerships and increased integration between the science, policy and society nexus. It must involve these three communities in the agenda-setting and not just means of implementation, but implementation itself with a "yes we can" approach to integrating science, policy and society. We welcome this opportunity provided by the President of ECOSOC to the Major Groups, and other stakeholders to provide inputs into the HLPF. We hope to continue being associated to the critical work of the HLPF to contribute our expertise and experience as scientists and practitioners.