

**The 26th UNEP Governing Council and
12th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and**

Statement from the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group

There is clear scientific evidence that humanity has reached a point in history at which a prerequisite for development and human well-being – the continued functioning of the Earth System as we know it – is at risk.

However, despite this clear scientific evidence, the implementation of sustainable development has so far failed to a large extent. The Scientific and Technological Community urges renewed political commitment to sustainable development goals. Rio+20 represents a critical opportunity for policy makers to agree on strong strategies for sustainable development.

At all scales, scientific knowledge and appropriate technologies are central to resolving the economic, social and environmental problems that make current development paths unsustainable.

Green Economy

The Scientific and Technological Community welcomes the Green Economy initiative. In order to make it a success, there needs to be substantial scientific input into its conceptualization and implementation, and in monitoring its progress and impacts. National, regional or international research programmes on Green Economy should therefore be created and strengthened, building upon existing networks of research institutes.

Research on the Green Economy will require attention across the complex and interlinked social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, including issues of earth system processes, human behaviour and environmental governance processes, to name just a few. It therefore requires a truly transdisciplinary approach to ‘scientific’ research, with all disciplines across the social sciences, natural sciences, health and engineering, economics and humanities involved from the outset.

To ensure the relevance, transparency and credibility of all research, collaboration is essential between researchers, policy makers, business and civil society (Major Groups). These collaborations must be integral to all stages of research, from defining agendas to drawing conclusions and formulating policy options.

During the Green Economy transition, environmental change, societal change and adaptation will largely play out at the local scale. This is also where science can be weakest. There is therefore an urgent need for local scale research, particularly onto impacts and adaptation as they relate to groups such as small rural communities, indigenous peoples and women, and the poor urban

population. Working with local and indigenous knowledge will be essential if environmental and social change and adaptation are to be understood at local levels.

Scientific capacity building and education should also be built into research activities, particularly in developing countries and among young scientists. Participation by developing countries should be ensured in research efforts.

There is a need to establish and strengthen mechanisms at multiple levels to support exchange of knowledge expertise, technologies, financial resources, good practice, and partnership. In this context, transparency of scientific research and development, and access to research and development in all its phases from inception and framing to results, is key. Data and information gathered during research processes must be freely accessible to all, and governments should actively enhance access to environment-related information for its citizens. Current protection of intellectual property rights should therefore be revisited.

Early assessment of emerging technologies should become standard practice in a Green Economy.

Research for the Green Economy should therefore be transdisciplinary, issue specific, solution-orientated, regionally balanced, inclusive and transparent. It should also facilitate capacity building and education. We invite UNEP to support such activities, and to advocate for funding for such efforts.

International Environmental Governance

The Scientific and Technological Community Major Group compliments UNEP for steering the work on international environmental governance. We attentively follow and actively participate in IEG discussions including the Civil Society Advisory Panel on IEG. We believe that IEG work must be spearheaded with sound assessment on policy and institutional performance in the environmental area at the international level.

The Scientific and Technological Community Major Group invites UNEP and stakeholders to reach out to this community to better utilize scientific analyses on IEG issues. We would like to highlight that there is a large amount of analysis and policy relevant scientific research already existing, in particular within the social sciences, which should be harnessed to inform this process. The studies include functions of environmental governance, multi-level governance, as well as options and implications for the reform of international environmental governance, including its linkage with sustainable development governance (SDG) and gaps between functions and existing governance architecture.

For example, there is an on-going 10 year activity, called the ESG project, under the International Human Development Programme, which is sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the United Nations University, which involves a network of over 300 researchers.

The Scientific and Technological Community invite UNEP to collaborate more closely with the science community and to use its knowledge base. We also invite two-way dialogue between the science and policy communities and other stakeholder groups on this issue.