



Key Take Away Messages – Science, Evidence and Citizens’ Awareness for Change at the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

Title of your session:	Science, Evidence and Citizens’ Awareness for Change
Date and Venue:	Tuesday 5 December 2017 (11.20-12.) Conference Room 1
Organizer:	Science Division
Speakers:	H.E. Mr. Lamin B. Dibba (Gambia, Minister of Environment); H.E. Mr. Yasuo Takahasi (Japan, vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs); Mr. Enrique Lendo Fuentes (Mexico, Head of International Affairs, Ministry of Environment) Dr. Maria Neira (Director, WHO); Dr. Joao Rando (InpEV/ Brazil); H.E Mr. Harsh Varadhan (India, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change); Ms. Cristiana P. Palmer (UN Assistant Secretary General and Executive Secretary, CBD); Ms. Inger Andersen (IUCN, Director General); Mr. Wayne Balta (IBM, Vice President of Corporate Environmental Affairs). Mr. Roald Lapperre (Director General for the Environment and International Affairs, The Netherlands); Mr. Yonglong Lu, Co-Director Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences (RCEES), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).
Please summarize the key messages from your event or session (maximum of 350 words):	<p>This session discussed the potential for harnessing science and technology to catalyze and drive forward a critical step-change toward policies and solutions. Distinguished speakers highlighted several existing and future opportunities that are gaining traction across their respective countries, contexts and constituencies. Several recurring and prominent themes emerged in the session including the need for knowledge integration; strengthening partnership and collaboration with business sector/ private enterprise and public policy/ decision-making entities; the need to simplify and mainstream science, data and environmental information; the need for real-time dataflows including monitoring systems; the need to realize the critical link between health and environment.</p> <p>The main take away messages of this session include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Science-based decision making remains the best approach for developing response options and mitigating problems; deployment of solutions has at its core technology and innovation which are enabling new ways for tackling complex problems (i.e., A.I. systems); (2) Growing awareness of the nexus between health and environment— in large part driven by advancements in science and technology – has



	<p>revolutionized how decision-makers characterize and respond to complex environment pressures; there is growing appreciation that the price of pollution is ultimately paid for in human lives, the extent to which health benefits generated by interventions can offset their costs remains highly underappreciated.</p> <p>(3) Despite massive proliferation of (big) data and the advancements in data analytics/ computing, getting information to our citizens and particularly the most vulnerable (with enough time and at a cost they can afford) in ways that offer true utility, remains a key barrier;</p> <p>(4) Technology/ science and innovation are making important strides to improve early warning systems; proving critical as our populations become increasingly concentrated and exposed (i.e., urbanization)</p> <p>(5) Mainstreaming science and making tech/ innovation not just available, but accessible is a critical next step;</p> <p>(6) It's imperative for the collective 'environmental' community to think about new ways to engage and include youth and to bring together science and private industry/ business; they are playing a more important role than ever before in leveraging technology and pushing innovation toward solutions.</p>
<p>Please highlight and specify any voluntary commitments made from Government/private sector/civil society during your session:</p>	<p><i>Note:</i> The following were not expressed as specific "commitments" as such, but were offered as new actions being taken to address various issues related to pollution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Government of Gambia</u> has implemented a real-time system for the detection of wild fires; • The World Health Organization is committed to near-real time data provisioning; has released a map that connects urban pollution levels with their related health impacts; • <u>Government of Japan</u> is systematically promoting Education for Sustainable Development across the country; • Government of India has approved an act against smoking in public spaces and launched a targeted campaign to mainstream awareness about health and the environment; • The <u>Netherlands</u> have established a legally independent agency for environmental assessment of policy and a Global Centre of Excellence for Climate Change Adaptation together with UN Environment for sharing knowledge; • IBM is using advanced big data analytics and AI to improve the environmental sustainability of its business; • IUCN has created a global register of introduced and invasive species in collaboration with CBD • In Brazil, the InpEv has put in place a system for addressing the environmental impacts of the pesticides industry that includes 100% of manufacturers.