



**International
Science Council**

The global voice for science

Statement for the Special Session to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the UN Environment Programme

By Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council (ISC)

As president of the International Science Council, I'm delighted to join in recognizing the 50th Birthday of UNEP. The ISC, as the only international Non-Governmental Organization bringing together the natural and social sciences, has been very active on global environmental change research for many decades.

COVID has shown that the international science community can come together quickly to cooperate even when the multilateral system's performance has been suboptimal. Where the partnership between the science community in the multilateral community is strong, much can be achieved. Nothing demonstrates that better than the success of the Montreal Protocol.

Scientific knowledge allows us to understand the multi-faceted relationship with our environment. Governments in the multilateral system must put that knowledge at the centre of their decision making and strengthen the collaboration across science, policy, and stakeholders. We are hopeful that the United Nations Secretary General will, as suggested in his recent report Our Common Agenda, now rebuild a much more effective and meaningful science advisory mechanism, properly engaging the broader scientific community.

We all know that 50 years after Stockholm our problems have cascaded. We no longer have but one hole in the ozone layer, there are many metaphorical holes in the many layers of our planet.

There's an urgent need to commit to support the development of the scientific capacities in all parts of the world, to advocate for more open scientific practices, to champion science as a global public good, to increase international interdisciplinary scientific collaboration, and to enhance the uptake of knowledge into public policy at every level.

The 50th anniversary of UNEP is a moment to reflect and acknowledge the organization's many contributions. UNEP prompted the creation of a significant body of international environmental law, has provided scientific rigor, evidence, and engagement, has motivated national and international action, and has encouraged the forging of partnerships in environmental stewardship.

Only through a renewed and shared sense of urgency and partnership among scientists, government and citizens, will humanity be able to solve today's environmental and related existential crises. UNEP@50 is therefore a crucial moment not just to reflect but to demand reinforced scientific and policy interactions, increase multilateral cooperation, and inspired collective action. The ISC looks forward to a strengthened and renewed partnership with all the UN family but particularly with UNEP.

The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental organization with a unique global membership that brings together 40 international scientific Unions and Associations and over 140 national and regional scientific organizations including Academies and Research Councils