



PRESS RELEASE

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Largest Ever Science Gathering In The Middle East

Over 2,500 Science Leaders from over 120 Countries Gather at the World Science Forum 2017 Jordan Calling for a More Responsible and Ethical Use of Innovation to Address the Social & Economic Relevance, Influence & Responsibilities of Science

Arab Region To Explore Establishing A Regular Open Science Forum

Budapest, Hungary to Host WSF 2019

Who? Royal Scientific Society of Jordan (RSS); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA); American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); World Academy of Sciences (TWAS); European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC); International Council for Science (ICSU); Inter-Academy Partnership (IAP); International Social Science Council (ISSC) + Science Counsellor representatives of the G77.

What? World Science Forum, King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre, Dead Sea, Jordan, 7-10 Nov.

SCIENCE FOR PEACE

At the Opening Ceremony of World Science Forum (WSF) 2017 under the theme of ‘Science for Peace’ a panel of global thought-leaders declared renewed intent to fight poverty and promote just, equitable and inclusive social development based on the restoration, protection and sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems to promote greater peace and social harmony. His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Patron of WSF 2017 opened four days of plenary sessions, short seminars and individual lectures, addressing a large audience of diplomats, global science stakeholders and key influencers.

His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein called upon delegates to do more to accelerate the accumulation, use and diffusion of scientific knowledge and its application in technological innovations capable of reshaping our world for the better. Accentuating the positive, he remarked that: *“Today, our future depends more than ever on scientists working together in a spirit of tough inquiry and mutual respect; for a resilient, sustainable future demands science at its innovative best. Jordan is proud to host the World Science Forum, an accelerator of global scientific collaboration, opportunity, and peace”.*

During the Opening ‘Science for Peace’ Plenary, South African Minister for Science, Naledi Pandor warned against complacency: *“No country, no region can afford isolation. Our problems are also our neighbour’s problems. HIV-Aids, malaria and tuberculosis are on the rise in regions previously considered to be safe from their disease burden, whilst non-communicable including lifestyle diseases now have a devastating impact in the developing world. More than ever we need greater global solidarity to confront rising, unacceptable and very dangerous inequalities. Science has a crucial role to play in our responses to all these societal challenges and strong international cooperation will be essential. The World Science Forum is a critical platform to foster intensified collaboration, also ensuring the science contributions from developing countries play their much needed, rightful part.”*

DELEGATES FROM OVER 120 COUNTRIES, SPEAKERS FROM OVER 50

WSF 2017 sets new standards in igniting self-critical conversations about the applications of science for all of society. Perhaps the most representative of the flagship global generalist conferences, every effort is made to ensure that all regions are represented and that all voices are given the chance to be heard. Not only are panels comprised of the talking heads of the world's large research infrastructures and membership bodies, science ministers and their advisers, but experts from academia, entrepreneurship, civil society, young researchers and media are equally invited to discuss critical global issues. Several speaker organisations also use WSF as a platform to announce the latest findings in environmental and health sciences.

This year's programme offers 8 plenary sessions: a main theme throughout all discussions is a '*sustainability development goals update & critique*', bringing together leading decision-makers to take stock of progress made towards the UN's 2030 Agenda. In this regard, two plenaries deal with '*the energy/water nexus: intelligent management for sustainability & fairness*' and '*science & food security: how to feed the world sustainably & equitably*'. What is new in 2017 is a strong focus on science business and the innovation ecosystem to bring about the SDGs where the views of innovators, educationalists and economy-watchers collide. For example, plenaries on the '*opportunities & challenges of digital transformation*' or '*building resilience in an inter-connected world*' bring these discussions to the fore. Confidence in science and communicating with society remain a backbone of WSF meetings where issues of ethics and scientific integrity are hotly debated. '*Promoting inclusion through science education, outreach and engagement*' is tackled, alongside a mini-Gender Summit as a first for WSF. A timely discussion on '*rebuilding broken societies through reconstruction & recovery*' is expected to capture the mood of this year's gathering. The end of conference plenary brings together well-known funders and the 'suppliers' of public research to examine the pros and cons of '*science diplomacy to strengthen governance & build enduring relationships*'.

This year's programme offers 15 thematic sessions: over 150 organisations were invited in to enrich questions and answers style-debates with delegates on a broad range of topics. From '*fighting resistant bacteria & global pandemics*'; the latest in '*food & nutrition*' or '*disaster risk reduction at heritage sites*' and '*science for cultural relations*'; to insights into '*the journey of refugee scientists*', '*brain drain in developing countries*' or '*science advice & alternative facts*', a truly who's who of experts are on-hand at WSF 2017. Details of all presentations and announcements, plus recordings of keynote addresses, are made publically available on the conference site below.

This year's programme offers over 20 special sessions: a particular feature of WSF is its readiness to engage and encourage third-party groups to maximise its unrivalled meetings opportunities. For example, three separate regional panels are being held at ministerial and science-led, civil-society level covering Latin America & the Caribbean, the Africa-55 nations and the Arab region. From the latest on '*artificial intelligence and future healthcare systems*' and '*development aid versus own resources*' to '*combating extremist ideology*', '*using science for peace in the Middle East*', or '*talking science to non-scientists*', few other platforms offer this depth and range of expertise to interrogate the true value of science, society and policy and the inter-play between them.

More side-events and high-level meetings than ever-before being facilitated: similarly, WSF is acting as a catalyst for meetings of global *science policy practitioners*, offering unprecedented support to *early career researchers* and is hosting a *Forum of Global For a*, bringing together the organisers of the world's largest science conferences to share updates and best practices. Everything is being done to ensure that the next generation of decision-makers are at the heart of discussions in Jordan. For example, to help promote science communication, science media grants have been offered to 25 promising journalists to join their peers at the conference. In this way, specific scientific or diplomatic networks, established projects or emerging forces can broaden their visibility, appeal and memberships.

A CONFERENCE DECLARATION TO BE RECKONED WITH

It is expected that the legacy of WSF 2017 will be an unequivocal wake-up call to scientists and diplomats to better understand the impacts their findings and policies are having on the natural and social systems of the earth. In this regard, the conference will make a special plea that despite clear advances in a number of emerging economies and societies in transition, the knowledge and economic divide is widening, thus curbing the potential of science and technology to contribute to global human and economic development.

Secondly, conference leaders will call for a greater application of scientific solutions in areas of disaster risk reduction and resilience building to natural and human made disasters, particularly in areas of dense populations.



Thirdly, conference leaders will applaud and support recent global trends towards a more pronounced use of science in policy-making and the efforts to bridge the difficulties inherent in the roles of scientists and policy-makers which must allow for greater stakeholder inclusion. Civil society involvement cannot be an add-on option.

Fourthly, conference leaders will call for more to be done to tackle inequalities between countries and regions. WSF welcomes the strong participation of delegates from many African, Asian and Latin American countries here to promote cooperation and integration to build and accumulate capacities to harness and govern modern sciences.

Finally, in deciding to host WSF 2017 in Jordan after a successful event in Brazil in 2013 and looking forward to going outside Europe again in 2021, the organising parties are building knowledge and facilitating integration in those countries and regions that need it most.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Conference site, presentations & speaker lists: www.worldscienceforum.org
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