



**International  
Science Council**

The global voice for science

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Political leaders, scientists, and influential personalities issue emergency warning on sustainability inaction, establish a Global Commission to mobilize a \$100 million a year global fund for Sustainability Science Missions**

**Commission members include former NZ PM Helen Clark, former UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova, film producer James Cameron and philanthropist Julie Wrigley**

***9 December 2021 Paris, France: The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental organization with a unique global membership bringing together over 200 international scientific unions and associations, plus national and regional scientific organisations, academies, and research councils. Today in Paris, its new President, Peter Gluckman, former Chief Science Adviser to the government of New Zealand, announced the ‘Global Commission on Science Missions for Sustainability’ with the sole purpose of pressing the reset button to accelerate the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).***

The Commission, co-chaired by Irina Bokova, former Bulgarian Foreign Minister and Director General of UNESCO, and Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and previous administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, is tasked with co-designing and mobilizing support, aiming for a global fund of \$US100m per year<sup>1</sup> for mission-oriented science as part of a decade of action.

The Commission, backed up by the recent ISC report titled ‘**Unleashing Science**,’ makes the compelling case for stepping out of our business-as-usual approaches towards structuring science, funding science, and doing science. While science has done a lot to advance the human condition over the last hundred years, science now needs a quantum shift in how it works together with society and policy on the many issues that need to be addressed with urgency.

The report calls for an ambitious approach – a concerted effort to produce actionable knowledge through a defined set of Sustainability Science Missions in the critical areas such as food, energy and climate, health and wellbeing, water, and urban areas. Delivering these missions will require a common pool of science funding and a support system that allows scientists to work on these key issues without distractions and to produce urgent usable knowledge to achieve real policy outcomes. It will also require bold and strategic action from governments, policymakers, science funders, scientists, philanthropy, the private sector, and civil society.

Speaking at the announcement, ISC President, **Peter Gluckman** said: “*The world faces many urgent challenges – while science has already contributed much knowledge, what has been lacking is coordinated focus on actionable science that is needed. The global community has supported big science approaches in basic science, such as at CERN, now is the time to do so for those existential and urgent issues affecting humanity and the planet. The pandemic illustrates that both the natural and social sciences working together and operating globally and inclusively is essential to effective progress.*” He added that: “*As the global NGO and voice for science, and working with our members and the broader science policy community, we need new processes to identify priorities and design operating and funding mechanisms to accelerate progress. We are honoured that so many*

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<sup>1</sup> Unleashing Science: Delivering Missions for Sustainability, page 35 [https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/202108\\_Unleashing-Science\\_Final.pdf](https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/202108_Unleashing-Science_Final.pdf)

*internationally respected figures have agreed to assist us in building a needed additional toolkit so that science can further contribute to urgently needed global solutions”.*

Commission Co-Chair, **Irina Bokova** stressed that: *“Science is a critical lever for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To make the societal transition towards sustainability, we need to unleash the full potential of science.”* Commission Co-Chair, **Helen Clark** added that: *“Covid has shown what the science community can do when it comes together and focuses on a mission. We need a mission-led approach to science and to accelerate progress on many aspects of the sustainability agenda. The ISC has understood the need for change, and I am delighted to assist them in the critical endeavour. The global community must work together to support this effort.”* She further added that: *“The ISC has identified a credible path forward: we can make the necessary changes happen. Let’s just get going.”*

The Commission is made up of more than twenty committed experts, from former ministers and financiers to research leaders and film makers, and aims to build actionable mission-led pathways in the face of existential risks to humanity.

### **Key Assets**

1. Website: <https://council.science/Commission>
2. Report: <https://council.science/Commission/Report>
3. Global Forum of Funders: <https://council.science/science-funding/>
4. List of Commission members: See below and [full information online](#)

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### **Commission Co-Chairs:**

Helen Clark  
Irina Bokova

### **Commission members:**

Abdulsalam Al-Murshidi  
James Cameron  
Jeremy Farrar  
Peter Gluckman  
Heide Hackmann  
Guo Huadong  
Thomas Hughes-Hallett  
Macharia Kamau  
Hiroshi Komiyama  
Yuan T. Lee  
Maria Leptin

Pamela A. Matson  
Naledi Pandor  
Martin Rees  
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Bernard Sabrier  
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Magdalena Skipper  
Izabella Teixeira  
Albert Van Jaarsveld  
Beatrice Weder Di Mauro  
Julie Wrigley