

# From Science to Practice

## Strengthening Research Uptake to Achieve the SDGs

**A VIEW FROM INTERNATIONAL GENEVA**

With the generous support of



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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who participated in the two-day conference and shared their inputs throughout the proceedings. A special note of gratitude to all conference speakers, rapporteurs and chairs for their invaluable expertise. The participation of many distinguished speakers, including Swiss Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva Valentin Zellweger and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Tatiana Valovaya, demonstrates the importance of science-policy interaction within International Geneva and far beyond.

Significant substantive and organizational efforts were made by the organizing committee—individuals from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) and its Global Governance Centre, Think Tank Hub Geneva, the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the UN Library Geneva, the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Switzerland (SDSN) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)—to ensure the smooth running of the conference.

The conference would not have been possible without the generous financial support provided by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as the rooms and infrastructure provided by the World Meteorological Organization.

Finally, the conference built on earlier initiatives of the United Nations University and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies' Programme for the Study of International Governance, co-organizers of the 2016 "Strengthening the UN's Research Uptake" conference, as well as the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, whose engagement on the topic of science-policy interaction paved the way for these discussions.

This report was drafted by Maggie Carter, rapporteur of the conference, and designed by Sergio Sandoval.

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March 2020

# From Science to Practice

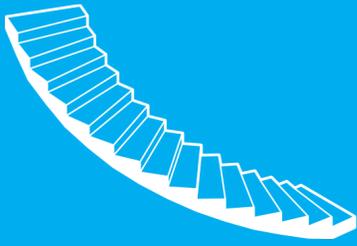
Strengthening Research Uptake to Achieve the SDGs



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In the face of compounding global challenges and the pressing and ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the need for evidence-based policy making informed by rigorous scientific research has never been greater. It is in this context that a consortium of research institutes, think tanks, governmental bodies and international organizations committed to strengthening International Geneva convened a two-day conference to explore the possibilities for improving research uptake in policy and decision making in the UN system. Drawing on Geneva's rich landscape of research and policy institutions, the conference brought together key actors in a collaborative format to discuss the barriers to research uptake and identify possible pathways to a transformed science-policy interface.



**T**HE WORLD IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE. The gap between the rich and the rest is growing as wealth concentrates at staggering rates in the hands of the few, draining public resources for social development. Conflict, natural disasters and economic instability are reshaping our cities and communities, which are struggling to find a balance between inclusion, growth and sustainability. At the same time, climate change threatens the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat, degrading our quality of life, health and well-being. Recognizing the immediacy of these issues and the many other challenges that our planet faces, as well as the need to address them through an integrated approach, 193 countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which sets 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This ambitious effort to build a better world and “leave no one behind” seeks to tackle global challenges through a global partnership for action that recognizes these challenges as deeply interconnected.

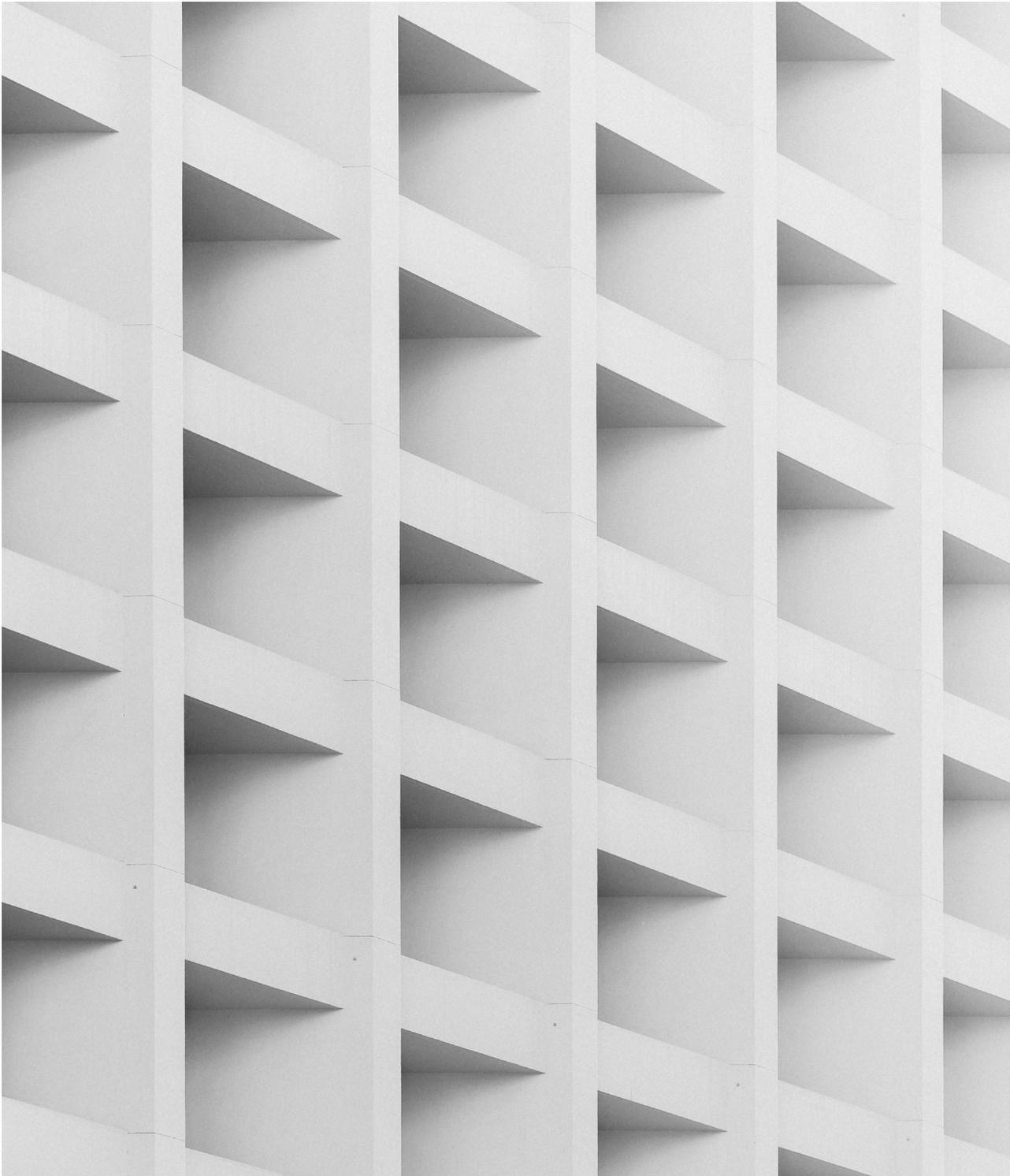
While this task is a daunting one, fortunately there is an abundance of knowledge available to help solve many of these issues. The field of scientific research continues to expand, methodologies for data collection grow increasingly sophisticated with each passing year, and each discovery builds on previous ones, presenting a vast landscape of knowledge that could be harnessed to help address pressing global challenges. However, translating that knowledge into action remains a complicated task. Research often fails to find its way into policy-making circles due to a number of technical, normative, cultural, political, institutional and financial barriers. Add to that a growing public distrust of science spurred by “post-truth” politics and populist movements, and the prospects for successful research uptake seem bleak.

For this reason, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) and its Global

Governance Centre, Think Tank Hub Geneva, the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the UN Library Geneva, the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) joined together to convene a two-day conference, “From Science to Practice: Strengthening Research Uptake to Achieve the SDGs,” on 11–12 December 2019. Held on the premises of the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva, the conference set out to identify gaps and needs in the area of research uptake, and to brainstorm ways to develop new and strengthen existing interactions between the worlds of science and policy. On Day 1, two distinguished panels discussed the value and potential of scientific research to influence policy, laid out challenges to bridging the divide between the two, and provided insights as to how these challenges might be overcome. During parallel breakout sessions, participants discussed these issues thematically across three SDGs—Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being; Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities; and Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities—and how research can be better harnessed to achieve them. On Day 2, the Think Tank Hub brought together students and experts in an innovative workshop, based on a design thinking approach, to brainstorm solutions to some key challenges to research uptake that were identified during Day 1.

Beyond its primary objective of discussing paths for bridging the research-policy divide, the conference itself served as a bridge, bringing together around 80 researchers and policy makers to build networks and facilitate new avenues of communication and collaboration. Representatives from 34 academic institutions, think tanks, research institutes, NGOs, United Nations agencies and international organizations took part in the conference.

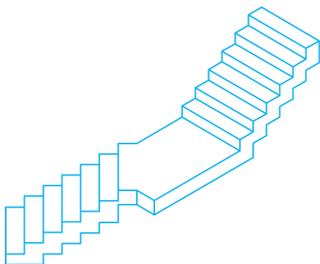
# Barriers to Research Uptake: Gaps and Needs





## Time has become a compressing factor in terms of global problem solving.

Francesco Pisano  
Director, United Nations Library Geneva



**W**HAT EXACTLY DOES THE SCIENTIFIC community have to offer the policy-making community, and vice versa, and what role should science play in achieving the SDGs? This very question provided the problematique for the conference and sparked debate in its opening session. While many calls for “evidence-based policy making” and “science-policy interaction” have been made by researchers and practitioners alike, Professor of International Relations and Political Science Annabelle Littoz-Monnet warned against attributing absolute objectivity to scientific research. Challenging “rationalist assumptions,” she argued instead that “academic knowledge is itself not always objective; it is not immune to interests, norms, identities, power relationships, political and social realities.” However, she asserted, scientific knowledge can nevertheless inform policy and public debate, and be valued for different reasons,

namely its ability to reveal alternative ways of seeing problems, harness a broad range of methodological tools, maintain relative autonomy, and occasionally make paradigm-shifting discoveries that recast the way problems are approached.

The depth of nuance and complexity associated with scientific inquiry may, however, not be suitable for policy makers’ imperatives. Furthermore, as multiple participants and audience members pointed out, it can also lead to the curse of “paralysis through analysis.” Ultimately, as Maurizio Bona, CERN Senior Advisor for Relations with Parliaments and Science Policy, asserted, “complexification” must give way to decision making.

Despite the many valuable contributions science has to offer, the question of how to get from the knowledge produced to effective policy solutions remains. Existing science-policy interfaces have not had great success, as United Nations Office at Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya pointed out in her opening remarks: “The problem is not that we do not have the knowledge. The problem is that sometimes we cannot transform this knowledge ... into practical political measures.” Throughout the course of the conference, participants identified a number of major challenges preventing this transformation of knowledge into practice, which may arise at various stages in policy processes: what knowledge is being produced; how this knowledge reaches policy makers; and finally, what policy makers do with this knowledge.

## Aligning science and society?

One strand of discussion centred around the specific ways in which scientific research is conceptualized and conducted, indicating that this is not always conducive to the results-oriented work of policy making. As Paul Ladd, Director of the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), argued, “It’s not enough to just do research. In fact, it’s not even enough to do the best research. You have to think about how that research then engages with people that make decisions about the allocation of resources.” There is often a disconnect between scientists and policy makers. Many argued that for scientific research to have a concrete impact on policy, science needs “transformational changes when it comes to its incentive systems,” as Peter Messerli, Director of the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern, put it, in order to shift focus and align more closely with societal needs and priorities, as opposed to being a purely knowledge-oriented venture. On the other hand, policy makers are often looking for one-off, quick and simple solutions, greatly underestimating the time and resources necessary to collect data thoroughly and responsibly and to develop recommendations. This can lead policy makers to draw “invisible lines” around research, in the words of Paul Ladd, influencing scientific research in terms of the content, approach, location and time frame, among other aspects. With scientists and policy makers operating at two ends of the spectrum, perhaps what is required is a middle ground, bridging the gap between policy makers’ needs for quick solutions to immediate problems and scientists’ focus on the medium to longer term.

One way this disconnect might be reconciled is by conducting research within the United Nations itself; however, as many participants pointed out, this is an uphill battle in the many agencies not specifically dedicated to research. Petru Dumitriu from the UN Joint Inspection Unit laid out several barriers for UN staff to engage in research, including hierarchical protocols and poor incentives. Further, Flavia Schlegel, the International Science Council’s Special Envoy for Science in Global Policy, asserted that the UN’s lack of cross-cutting quality standards for scientific work and the absence of a single open data policy constitute further roadblocks; and when research is successfully conducted, there is not a regular process to bring this work to intergovernmental bodies like the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Agencies that do conduct research constantly face struggles to fund their work, especially multidisciplinary qualitative research, which is often passed over in favour of quick data.

## Whose knowledge for whose progress?

Another challenge relates to the kind of knowledge being produced, and by whom. Many participants noted a lack of diversity in research, in terms of gender, age, geographical location, discipline and academic background, a problem that must be addressed in order to achieve the SDGs. The role of Southern institutions in multilateral decision-making processes in particular came into focus during the two days. While the SDGs are global in focus, much of the work to meet them must focus on developing countries, in line with the 2030 Agenda’s commitment to “leaving no one behind.” However, long-standing hierarchies of knowledge often serve to delegitimize certain kinds of knowledge, for example knowledge produced in the global South that is embedded in distinctly local paradigms and approaches, although there is now some pushback as efforts to decolonize knowledge make progress. UNRISD Senior Research Coordinator Katja Hujó asserted the importance of taking such alternative forms of knowledge into account. Further, there is a troubling imbalance in the quantity of knowledge produced in the global South compared to the global North. As Peter Messerli pointed out, in some parts of the developing world there are on average as few as 70 researchers per 1 million people. As he said, “That means all of Geneva would have about 35 researchers... We cannot expect knowledge-based solutions and pathways to come out of such an unequal distribution of science.”

Beyond these challenges that relate to the production of knowledge itself, many participants focused on the issue of the transmission of that knowledge to policy makers. Scientific research findings very often require translation so that policy makers can both understand and implement them. Even when scientific research is synthesized in a brief or other concise format for a policy-making audience, formal direct processes meant to feed research into the UN system may be lacking, as many participants pointed out, and these briefs often remain unread. Getting accessible findings into the hands of policy makers able and willing to act on them remains a key challenge.

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## Where there's not a will

Beyond these more technical barriers to uptake of scientific research in policy making, participants also made note of a key overarching issue when it comes to addressing the SDGs: lack of political will. Even in the case where sound scientific research reaches the policy cycle, it faces this oftentimes insurmountable political hurdle before evidence-based policies can be enacted. This remains a challenge in all aspects of policy making, and while there are no clear answers as to how to break up powerful interests and push forward transformative change, bringing this discussion to the table is a necessary step.

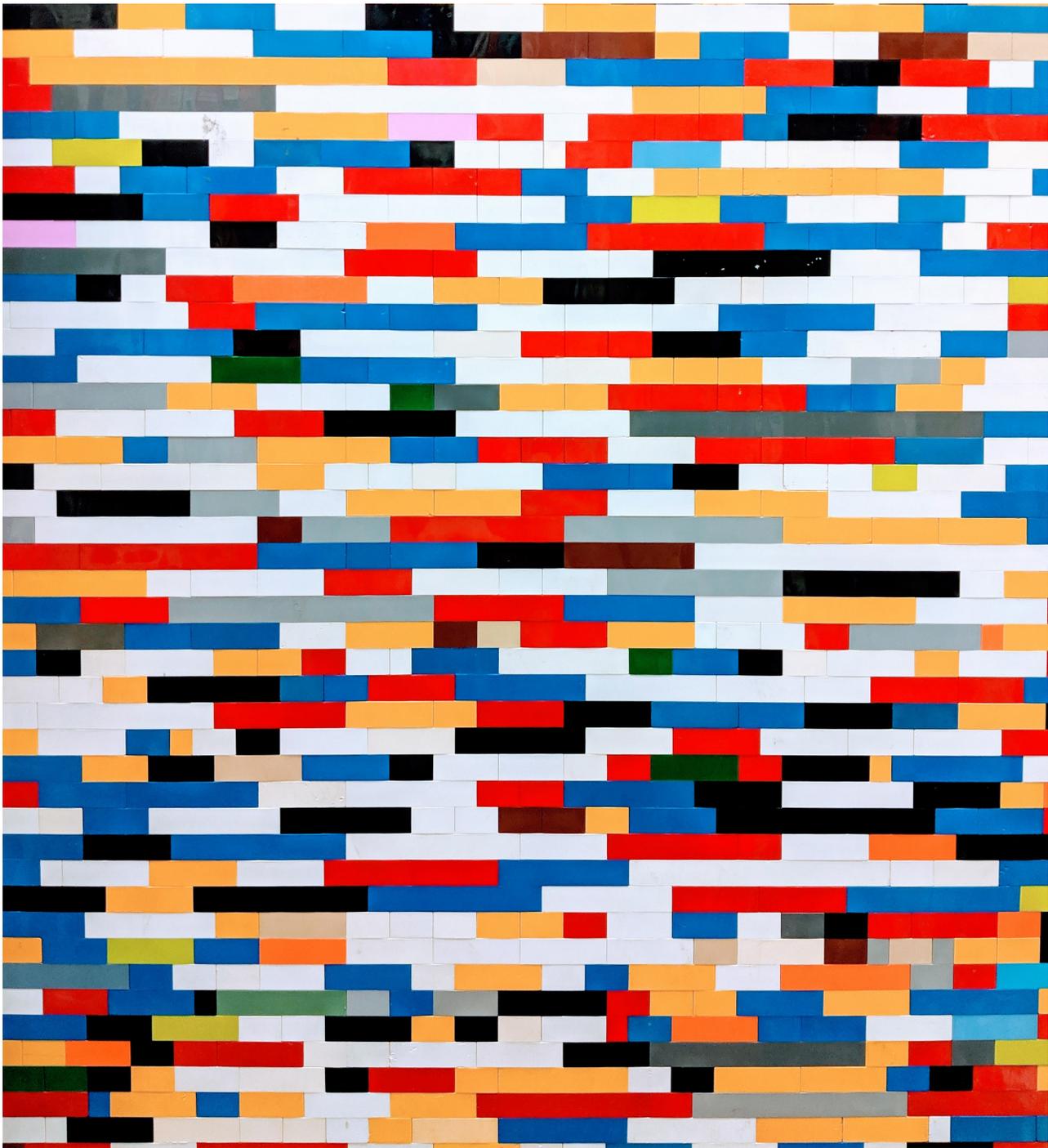


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**The academic system as we have it now ...  
is not the one we need looking forward in this  
decade of action, in this century of action. We  
have to get professors of transdisciplinarity,  
we have to promote citizen science, there  
must be reward systems and incentive  
systems which really make sure we produce  
the knowledge we need.**

Flavia Schlegel  
Special Envoy for Science in Global Policy  
International Science Council

# Transforming the Science-Policy Interface



**T**HROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE CONFERENCE, many ideas for possible ways to overcome the barriers to research uptake were discussed, whether during panel discussions and subsequent audience Q&As, breakout sessions, or the Day 2 workshop in which several experts engaged with students and practitioners to come up with ideas to address a number of these barriers. The following encapsulates broadly the many ideas offered up.

### **Bridging the science-policy divide**

One of the most frequently discussed issues at the conference was the disconnect between scientists and policy makers. All discussions recommended an integrated approach, one that seeks to bridge divides within and between knowledge and practice communities in a coordinated and collaborative effort of global problem solving. Many participants asserted that creating better collaboration between scientists and policy makers requires engagement from the very beginning of the process. As Moira Faul, Deputy Director of the Public-Private Partnership Center at the University of Geneva, argued, evidence use is “significantly shaped by who is included in the process and how they are included.” Conceptualization of research projects should be a joint venture, with impact and communication objectives incorporated from the start. Rather than a “one-way knowledge transfer,” scientists should be incorporated into the process of agenda setting, as Nicolas Seidler, Executive Director of the Geneva Science-Policy Interface argued, and should be engaged in all stages of the policy-making process, from problem definition all the way to impact assessment.

Panelists Anne Ellersiek (Science Platform Sustainability 2030) and Marianne Beisheim (German Institute

for International and Security Affairs) shared an initiative that aims to bridge the science-policy divide through an institutionalized process. The German Science Platform Sustainability 2030, a multistakeholder body funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research, seeks to engage the science community to co-create solutions with policy makers and practitioners to feed into national decision-making processes. They shared their experiences from the platform, arguing that an institutionalized process can help to produce timely results, and stressing the importance of recognizing the needs and objectives of all stakeholders, and based on this offering the right incentives for participation.

Further, participants argued for a concerted effort not only to undertake research for pure knowledge gain, but to engage directly in developing research projects to address the SDGs and target global challenges. Participants suggested that such initiatives can be taken at different levels, from orienting university curricula towards global problem solving, to building dialogues between research communities and policy makers, for example through networking events that bring these two groups together. Creating such spaces in which researchers and policy makers can engage face to face would go a long way towards addressing problems of access and help key voices to be heard.

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### **How can we address the overwhelming gap between what we know on the one hand, and what is actually being done?**

Peter Messerli  
 Director, Centre for Development and Environment (University of Bern)  
 and Co-Chair of the independent group of scientists for the UN Global Sustainable Development Report

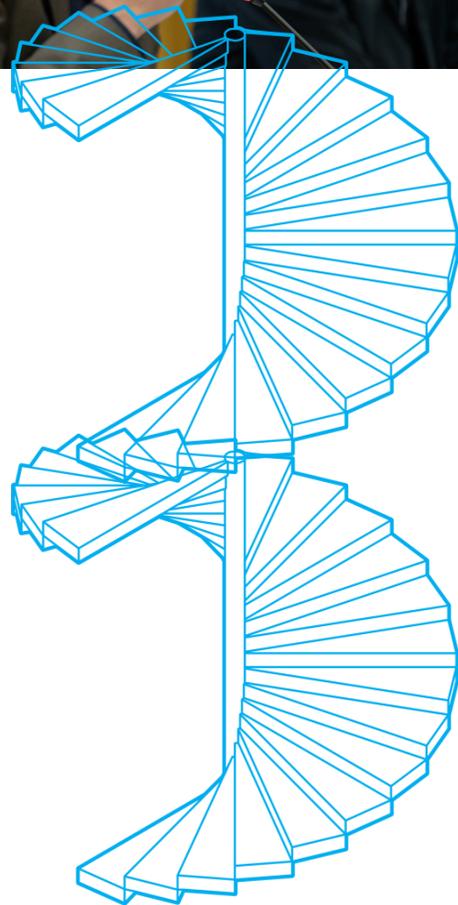


## Speaking each other's language

While engagement between researchers and policy makers from the early phases of policy design can certainly help overcome communication barriers, participants also recognized the need to take specific measures to help with issues of translation. Katja Hujo emphasized the need to strike “a balance between doing justice to the complexity of real-world problems and of research, and also being able to communicate in plain and easy, simple and straightforward language.” This could be achieved in different ways. Some suggested training programmes for scientists early in their career, an idea that was elaborated during the Day 2 workshop. Others emphasized that researchers need to engage with communications professionals able to understand research and help communicate it to relevant audiences. Finally, participants recognized that translation must be fit-for-purpose and tailored to the specific groups of policy makers concerned.

## Solutions from within

Another approach to improving the science-policy interface involves creating spaces within the UN system for conducting research. While there are several UN agencies that conduct scientific research (including the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), an organizing partner of the conference), there are few incentives and opportunities for this kind of work in UN entities not specifically dedicated to research. Petru Dumitriu, from the UN Joint Inspection Unit, explained the need to build spaces for conducting research, by creating opportunities for staff members to engage in this work, rewarding those who hold PhDs and have strong publication lists, and generally incentivizing rather than discouraging the use of staff time for such endeavours. Specific suggestions included the appointment of “research champions” within the UN and enhancing the funds available for research.



## Multiplying voices

Participants also emphasized the need to ensure a range of voices coming from a variety of backgrounds to better tackle the SDGs. In terms of geographical background, ideas were proposed to create better links with Southern universities through exchange systems and mentoring programmes, and to directly fund these institutions to conduct relevant in-country research. Further, the need to improve the gender balance of research networks was emphasized. Of equal importance is the need for multidisciplinary, as the 2030 Agenda requires that we approach the SDGs from many sides, with a wide breadth of perspectives and expertise, though it was noted that some disciplines are more conducive to science-policy interaction than others. On top of this, engaging with young researchers and those with different backgrounds, be they academics or practitioners—including the public sector, the private sector and civil society—is essential to reveal new insights and perspectives and to move towards an action-oriented impact-based approach. Such a shift can help inform an integrated approach to the SDGs, one that is attentive to the links between them, and that takes heed of economic, social, cultural and historical contexts.

## SDG Breakout Sessions

## Discussion topics:

- Existing gaps and needs
- Sources and types of innovation in the relationship between science and policy
- Possibilities for science-policy interaction at different phases of the policy cycle



## Goal 3–Good Health and Well-Being

- There is a broad range of health research communities, from biomedical, to clinical and behavioural, to health systems and beyond. This can further complicate the already difficult processes of research uptake. Further, intersectoral tensions between these knowledge communities can also stifle efforts to design integrated solutions. We must try to bridge divides between different health research communities to develop solutions collaboratively.
- Perhaps more than the other SDGs discussed, research related to health often has a large gap in understanding to overcome before making its way into policy-making circles, because it employs very specific technical language. It is necessary to develop translation strategies in order to bridge that gap when conveying health-related research to policy makers.
- In scientific research communities, particularly hard sciences, scientists may put their legitimacy at risk by engaging in policy discussions “too early,” before research has been extensively validated and a well-tested conclusion is arrived at.
- Health research tends to engage most in the implementation phase of the policy cycle; a greater role should be played by health research during the agenda-setting phase.



## Goal 10–Reducing Inequalities

- Policies to reduce inequalities often face strong political opposition because those in power benefit from the status quo. Therefore, while there is a large and diverse body of research on the topic, it is typically met with opposition at every stage of the policy cycle.
- Geographic inequalities in both research and agenda setting put research institutions and think tanks from countries in the global South at a disadvantage in terms of their ability to contribute to multilateral decision-making processes. The research-policy interface of these countries needs to be supported and enhanced so that they can better harness their unique resources and perspectives to offer innovative solutions to both country-level and global challenges.
- As different types of inequalities often overlap, policy solutions need to take account of these convergences, developing innovative solutions that address inequality in all of its complexity.
- Technology and digitization can both reduce and exacerbate inequality. However, when technological innovation is applied in tandem with social innovation, the two can reinforce each other in reducing inequalities.
- It is important to re-examine and discuss the definition of inequalities when it comes to linking research with policy making, as the concept differs and evolves in different countries and cultural contexts.



## Goal 11–Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Cities represent more than half of the global population, generate a huge portion of global GDP, and account for at least two thirds of energy consumption and carbon emissions globally, which means that they are a critical site for achieving the SDGs.
- Many cities are ideally placed to foster innovation, with their unique ecosystems composed of: universities; think tanks; start-ups; NGOs; companies; well-financed investors; deep and diverse talent pools; state-of-the-art communication, transport and energy infrastructures; large local markets; good governance structures; and strong economic ties to the rest of the world. However, there is significant variance across cities in terms of capacity and resources to foster science-policy interaction, suggesting some successes might be one-offs.
- Cities can be laboratories for science-informed policies and technological solutions that could be scaled up once they have proven successful. However, scaling solutions that work for cities might not be feasible, due to issues of scope, and the fact that cities have unique cultural, political, social and geographic landscapes.
- A city's capacity to innovate depends largely on the national context, as the choices available to city administrators may be fostered or constrained by regulatory policies and standards set nationally.
- Forming alliances or peer networks between cities can facilitate learning and research uptake.
- Many of the best-run cities employ innovative and participatory governance models that involve citizens early in policy cycles.
- The questions of incentives and externalities remain, as addressing issues of cities in isolation can have negative spillover effects for surrounding regions.



## Day 2 Workshop

On Day 2 of the conference, an interactive workshop brought together students and experts, policy makers and researchers to explore solutions to gaps and needs identified during Day 1. Labelled an “open situation room,” the format drew on design thinking approaches to develop concrete solutions to specific problems in only a few hours, taking participants through the phases of problem understanding and definition, ideation, and testing. To open the workshop, three experts presented challenges from Day 1, and at the end of this innovative process, participants presented their collaboratively designed solutions.

Challenges:

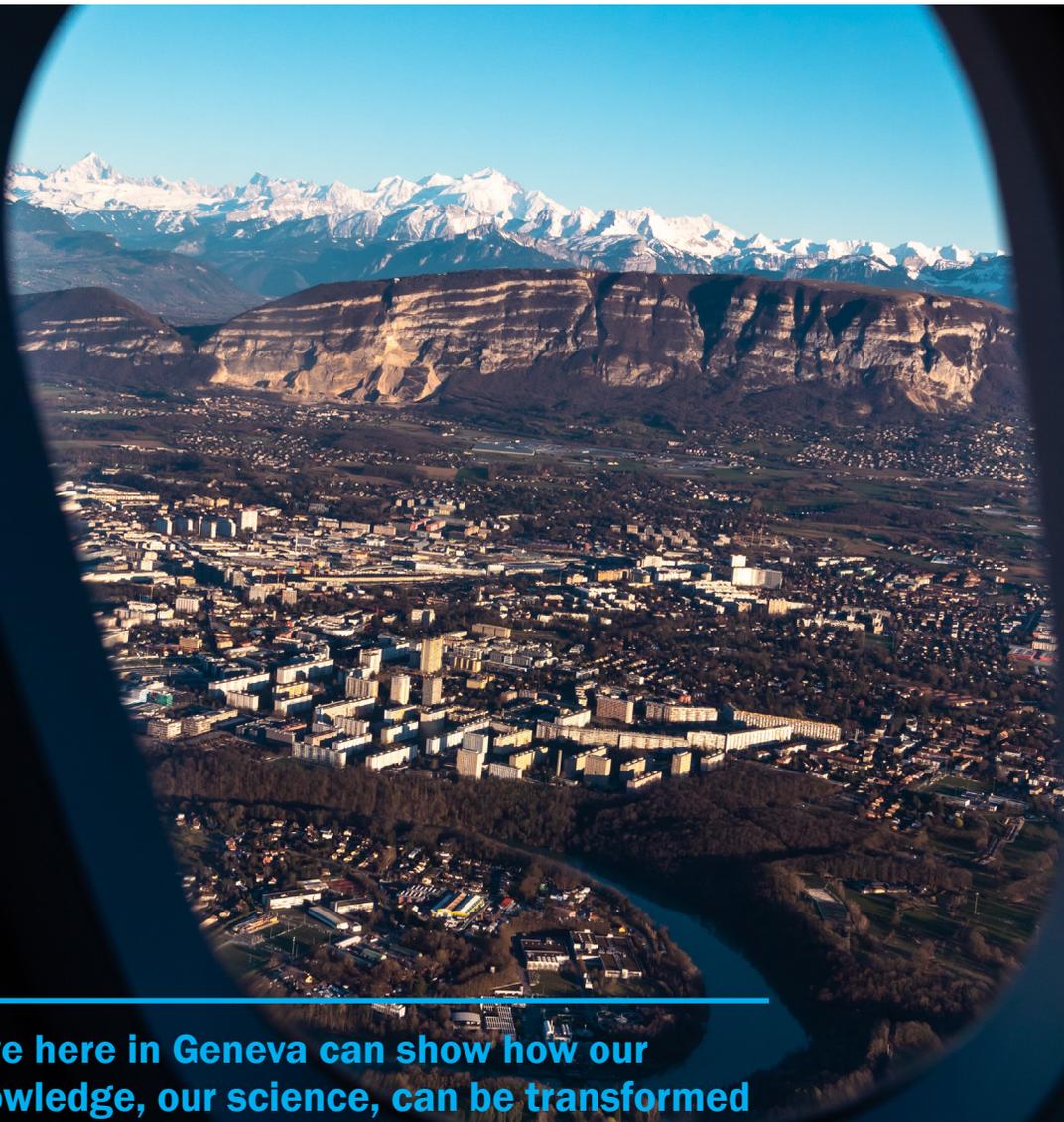
- What can academia do in order to improve interaction between the worlds of science and policy (and other actors)?**  
Maurizio Bona, Senior Advisor for Relations with Parliaments and Science Policy at CERN
- How can we ensure that “scientifically based” policy making is not politically charged? How can we make it inclusive?**  
Maria Isabelle Wieser, Head of Think Tank Hub Geneva
- How can scientific information be presented to different groups of policy makers? How can we communicate differently based on who we address?**  
Andreas Obrecht, Managing Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Switzerland

Proposed solutions:

- Cross-sector exchange programmes:** Place scientists in various types of organizations so that they can work directly with local communities and identify knowledge gaps where they can contribute, and learn how decision-making processes work, in order to be better able to influence policy. The goal is to break down barriers between the science and policy worlds while building trust and mutual understanding.
- Science ambassadors:** Appoint scientists to act as ambassadors to the public, making science more accessible for a general audience and informing the public about priority issue areas. This goal is both to inform and to leverage public opinion to influence policy makers.
- Mix and mash events:** Host events that bring a diversity of scientists (in terms of age, gender, geographical background and discipline) into direct contact with policy makers. The goal is to cut out “gatekeepers” who determine what kind of knowledge is valued, and to give scientists with new ideas and approaches access to policy makers, and vice-versa.
- Training courses:** Develop courses to empower students with the tools to effectively communicate their work to policy practitioners. The goal is to break down translation barriers from the start, so that scientists are equipped with “plain” language skills and knowledge of policy-making processes.



# Geneva: A Laboratory for Science-Policy Collaboration



**If we here in Geneva can show how our knowledge, our science, can be transformed into our political decisions, then we will set an example for many other parts of the world.**

Tatiana Valovaya  
Director-General  
United Nations Office at Geneva

**W**HILE THE SUGGESTIONS MADE in this report may seem like a tall order, the conference itself provided some insight into the space and opportunities for transforming the science-policy interface. One could view this conference as a small-scale example of the kind of integrated and collaborative potential that the city of Geneva has to offer. Home to a significant concentration of NGOs, international organizations, academic institutions and think tanks with a “tradition of cooperation,” as Ambassador Valentin Zellweger of Switzerland described it, Geneva is a unique ecosystem with tremendous potential as a site of innovative global problem solving. It is an ideal place to forge unprecedented collaborations between science and policy, a testing ground for multi-stakeholder multilateralism, necessitated by the urgency of today’s global challenges, and the kind of integrated approach to them called for by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

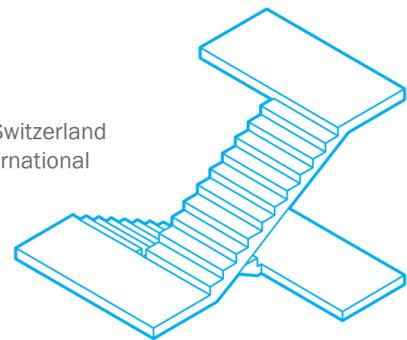
### Looking Beyond

Three and a half years after an initial Geneva conference on “Strengthening the UN’s Research Uptake,” participants took stock of what had changed in the intervening years. Ultimately, as Director for Policy Research at IHEID Thomas Biersteker pointed out, many of the structural problems obstructing science-policy interaction that were identified in 2016 remain the same, and for the most part, so have the proposed solutions. However, he argued that today we are seeing a new level of scepticism and even hostility towards science, and that the UN’s funding shortfall is further compounding the many barriers to research uptake. At a moment when the roadblocks are mounting higher on both the science and policy sides, he suggested we might turn elsewhere: civil society, social movements, the general public. Opening up such spaces may prove able to reinvigorate the drive towards integrated and knowledge-based solutions to the SDGs with new perspectives and approaches. After all, one could argue that such a turn is exactly what the 2030 Agenda asks of us, to look outwards and beyond our siloed



**Those of us who continue to believe that today’s problems cannot be solved without cooperation need to continue to invest in multilateralism ... continue to put our energy, our political capital and, most of all, our knowledge into this cooperation.**

Ambassador Valentin Zellweger  
Head of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva



communities, to change our mindsets, an idea echoed by various participants, including Maria Isabelle Wieser, Head of Think Tank Hub Geneva. Ultimately, as Anja Kaspersen, Director of the UN Office on Disarmament Affairs, reminded us, “science is not the answer, people are.” It is the work of science to bring forward useful knowledge, and the work of policy to provide the tools to implement it, but it is people who will take that knowledge and those tools and build a better future.

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day 1		14:00–16:00	BREAKOUT SESSION
8:30–9:00	Arrival and Registration		
9:00–9:20	WELCOMING REMARKS <b>Tatiana Valovaya</b> Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva <b>Valentin Zellweger</b> Head of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations and to other International Organizations		<b>Three breakout groups (A,B,C) corresponding to specific SDGs (3,10,11) discuss independently the following set of questions:</b> • <b>Gaps and needs: What are the existing gaps (e.g. in knowledge, skills, institutional capacities, representativeness) that hamper science-policy interaction, and how to overcome them?</b> • <b>Innovation: What is the source of innovation in research-policy interaction, both within the UN, state and non-state sectors, and in what ways can institutional innovation be nurtured?</b> • <b>Policy cycle: Are different stages of the policy cycle (issue/framing and agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, implementation and evaluation) more/less conducive to research-policy interaction?</b>
9:20–10:35	● PLENARY SESSION 1 <b>Iterations of Science, Politics, and Policy</b>  <b>How should scientific knowledge be created? What role should research have in global policy processes? How can its authority be upheld/maintained?</b>  Chair: <b>Thomas Biersteker</b> Director for Policy Research, IHEID <b>Paul Ladd</b> Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development <b>Maurizio Bona</b> Senior Advisor for Relations with Parliaments and Science Policy, CERN <b>Anja Kaspersen</b> Director, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs <b>Annabelle Littoz-Monnet</b> Professor of International Relations/Political Science; Co-Director, Global Governance Centre, IHEID		Group A: Good Health and Well-Being (SDG3) Chair: <b>Suerie Moon</b> Co-Director of the Global Health Centre, IHEID  Group B: Reduced Inequalities (SDG10) Chair: <b>Katja Hujo</b> Senior Research Coordinator, UNRISD  Group C: Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG11) Chair: <b>Alexandre Hedjazi</b> Director, Global Environmental Policy Programme, University of Geneva
10:35–11:05	Coffee Break	16:00–16:30	Coffee Break
11:05–12:30	● PLENARY SESSION 2 <b>Leveraging Knowledge to Advance the 2030 Agenda</b>  <b>What are the cultural, organizational and political determinants of un/successful interaction among researchers, decision makers and policy practitioners when working towards the SDGs?</b>  Chair: <b>Moira Faul</b> Head of Research, Public Private Partnerships Center, University of Geneva <b>Peter Messerli</b> Director, Centre for Development and Environment (University of Bern) and Co-Chair of the independent group of scientists for the UN Global Sustainable Development Report <b>Petru Dumitriu</b> Inspector, Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System <b>Flavia Schlegel</b> Special Envoy for Science in Global Policy, International Science Council <b>Anne Ellersiek</b> Research Associate, German Science Platform Sustainability 2030 <b>Marianne Beisheim</b> Senior Associate, Global Issues Division, German Institute for International and Security Affairs	16:30–18:00	● PLENARY SESSION 3 <b>Reporting back - Q&amp;A</b>  <b>Rapporteurs to synthesize findings from the breakout session and report back in plenary, followed by initial comments from their chairs and then a group discussion to identify cross-cutting themes, challenges and opportunities across the different SDGs.</b>  Chair: <b>Francesco Pisano</b> Director, United Nations Library Geneva
		18:00–18:30	Conclusion and next steps
		18:30	Cocktail
Day 2			
12:30–14:00	Lunch	9:00–12:30	<b>This interactive day is dedicated to further investigating with students the gaps and needs hampering the science-policy interface identified in the breakout sessions. It is a great opportunity to exchange with bright young minds as well as speakers and come up with fresh and innovative solutions.</b>  Facilitator: <b>Florian Egli</b> ETH Zurich <b>Maurizio Bona</b> Senior Advisor for Relations with Parliaments and Science Policy at CERN <b>Maria Isabelle Wieser</b> Head of Think Tank Hub Geneva <b>Andreas Obrecht</b> Managing Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Switzerland

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**With intensifying policy challenges coinciding with eroding trust in science and public institutions, how can we support effective, evidence-based policies to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?**

The *From Science to Practice* Conference is a forum for representatives from UN system entities, other international organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector to come together and promote exchange that can inform global efforts to achieve the SDGs. Participants met in Geneva to explore ways to improve the interface among researchers, decision makers and policy practitioners to inform global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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