

Workshop/Forum Discussion: Role of Diplomacy in Informed Decision-Making at the Science-Policy Interface – Science Diplomacy

Programme Agenda

Sri Lanka Standard Time: (GMT+5.30)

Venue: View Hall, Waters Edge, Colombo, Sri Lanka (Hybrid Mode)

10th November 2025

- 13:30 – 14:00 hrs. Registration of the participants
- 14:00 – 13:05 hrs. Opening of the Programme
- 14:05 – 14:15 hrs. Opening Remarks by Ms. Aruni Ranaraja, *Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, Sri Lanka*
- 14:15 – 14:45 hrs. **Keynote: “Addressing the Global Challenges through Collective cross boarder STI efforts”**
by Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid

*Former Science Advisor to Malaysia's Prime Minister
Founding Chair, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); Chairman for Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia; Chairman for INGSA Science Advice Network for the ASEAN Region; Joint-Chair of Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT), Malaysia*
- 14:45 – 15:00 hrs. **Topic: “International Scientific Cooperation for Sustainable Development”**
by Dr. Timothy Curtis, *Director and UNESCO Representative/UNESCO New Delhi Regional Office, India*
- 15:00 – 15:15 hrs. **Topic: “The Role of SD in National R&D: A Sri Lankan Perspective”**
by Dr. Sirimali Fernando
Former Chairperson of National Science Foundation (NSF), Sri Lanka; Former Secretary General of Sri Lanka Commission for UNESCO; Foundation Fellow, International Science Council (ISC), Founder member of the STI Advisory Board to the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP)
- 15:15 – 15:30 hrs. **Topic: “The impact of SD in gathering information to support the informed decisions makings”**
by Prof. Marcelo Knobel, *Executive Director, UNESCO-TWAS, The World Academy of Sciences, Trieste, Italy; Physicist, academic leader and strong advocate for science communication and higher education*

15:30 – 15:40 hrs. **Honorary Speech**
by the Guest of Honour, Hon. (Prof.) Chrishantha Abeyseena, *Minister of Science and Technology, Sri Lanka*

15:40 – 15:55 hrs. Tea/ Coffee Break

15:55 – 17:00 hrs. **Panel Discussion on the “untapped potential of soft power and cooperation to enhance scientific partnerships for National Development goals”; Interactive Session Q&A**

Session Moderators:

Seyed Shahmy

Member, International Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA); AAAS-TWAS Science Diplomacy Alumni; UNU-CRIS Modern Diplomacy Alumni; Fellow RSS-UK

&

María Estelí Jarquín

Member, INGSA Member, ISC Governing Board; International Relations Manager, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH); AAAS-TWAS Science Diplomacy Alumni

Panel Members

- Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid Zakri Abdul Hamid, *Founding Chair, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Malaysia*
- Dr. Sirimali Fernando, *Former Chairperson of National Science Foundation (NSF), Sri Lanka; Former Secretary General of Sri Lanka Commission for UNESCO*
- Professor Marcelo Knobel, *Executive Director, UNESCO-TWAS*
- Mr. Samantha Pathirana, *Director General, South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, Sri Lanka*
- Professor Lalith Rajapaksha, *Director UMCSAWM/Centre Chairman, UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for South Asia Water Management*

17:00 – 17:15 hrs. ***The Way Forward and Emerging Opportunities in Science Diplomacy (Future Outlook)*** by Dr. Peter McGrath, *Coordinator, the Inter Academy Partnership (IAP), Trieste, Italy*

17:15 – 17:20 hrs. ***Announcements***

17:20 – 17:25 hrs. ***Vote of Thanks*** by Ms. Geethanee Kanangara, *Director, International Relations, Ministry of Science and Technology, Sri Lanka*
