

POLICY FOR SCIENCE, POLICY FOR PEACE

In order for science to achieve its full potential for humanity, policy must support stronger bonds between researchers and governments.


 by Flavia Schlegel



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Science and the results of research are public goods which should in principle be accessible to all people, regardless of creed, class, gender or country. In practice, however, this is difficult to realize, since the political economy of resources needed to access science is heavily skewed in favour of the developed nations, to the disadvantage of the developing world and notably the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Resources in this context include not only material wealth, but also cultural inputs such as higher education institutions; the training, salaries and mobility of researchers; and promoting STEM Education. Closing this gap and achieving a minimal level of scientific capacity through international cooperation are vital issues for LDCs.

Indeed the work of UNESCO provides a window on the historical advances made in this direction, as well as the various obstacles faced concerning what works and what does not.

Setting up bodies such CERN, SESAME and

the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and providing early support to the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) to become a UNESCO Category I center by 1996 – and to TWAS, joining the UNESCO programme family by 1991, reflect a key approach to further international cooperation. A critical partner or host of bodies as those mentioned above, UNESCO, will play a central role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The interface between scientists and policymakers therefore is one that must be strengthened for science to provide more benefits to humanity. UNESCO is honoured to host the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). Its main task is to improve the science-policy interface.

There are no two ways around it: The generation and use of science forms the bedrock of all economic and social development, and with this comes peace and security. ■



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