



Event Report

UN Sustainable Development Goals: A Circular Science Symposium

9 AM – 6 PM, September 21, 2015

The CUNY Graduate Center

Context

This Circular Science Symposium was organized in the context of the opening of the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations. It aimed at two crucial goals:

1. To present key science initiatives and their contribution to alleviating social and economic deprivation and, by extension, support economic growth and development. Symposium session themes focus on energy, water, food, and global environmental policy.
2. To address the enabling policy and regulatory environment necessary to implement the aforementioned initiatives and achieve their expected impacts, especially within the context of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN Summit of 25 – 27 September confirmed the new objectives, a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On 25th September world leaders embraced a sweeping 15-year global plan of action to end poverty, reduce inequalities and protect the environment, known as the Sustainable Development Goals. Titled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and contained in document A/70/L.1, the agreement on a set of 17 goals and 169 targets would come into effect on 1 January 2016, replacing the Millennium Development Goals set in 2000.¹

Attendees

More than 80 persons registered for the event. The Symposium was attended by about 40 individuals representing companies, non-governmental organisations and research institutions from Canada, Congo, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Senegal,

¹ UN press release, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/ga11688.doc.htm>



Sierra Leone, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. The profiles of attendees spanned from CEO's to programme and project managers of international development projects, heads of partnership and programmes departments, as well as students and representatives of local authorities and liaisons of international organisations. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions during sessions and continue discussion with the speakers during breaks and the networking reception after the Symposium. Many of them confirmed their interest in collaborating in future potential projects as well as to learn about opportunities of funding from the European Union and other sources.

Agenda of the meeting

Meeting Program

9:00 - 9:30 am	Coffee and Registration
9:30 - 9:45 am	Greetings Dr. Chase F. Robinson, Distinguished Professor of History, President of the CUNY Graduate Center
9:45 - 10:30 am	Keynote Speaker William Solecki, Ph.D.
10:30 - 10:45 am	Coffee
10:45 - 12:15 pm	Session 1: Energy - Shifting paradigms in Changing Climates
12:15 - 1:30 pm	Lunch break
1:30: - 3:00 pm	Session 2: Future Food and Water Security: Climate Change Challenges
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 - 4:45 pm	Session 3: Science, Policy and the Environment: the case for Circular Science
4:45 - 6:00 pm	Session 4: Perspectives for Global Collaborations: A Roundtable Discussion
6:00 - 7:00 pm	Reception

**for full description of the symposium see: <http://www.iscintelligence.com/event.php?id=284>*



Description of the Sessions and Speakers

Please, see the website of ISC for the session concepts, bios of speakers and their presentations: <http://www.iscintelligence.com/event.php?id=284>

Conclusions

Each of sessions dealt with a number of research topics which were put in context of the past Millenium Development Goals and the new SDGs. The Circular Science Symposium demonstrated the high level of engagement of research community and the stakeholders in the accomplishment of the Goals, as well as pointed at the need of systemic thinking and need for more connection between science, society and policy making. The participants oftentimes referred to the difficulty of connecting the Goals among each other, as some of them seem to have contradictory social, environmental or economic effects. It was also felt that scientific evidence is not enough present in the policy making, especially in the developing countries. Awareness raising among the general population, and especially local affected communities, returned as an indispensable aspect for the future research, emphasizing the question of the social responsibility of science, and building the support among the citizens for the innovative solutions, backed by science, to be adopted by the policy makers.

Next Steps

A number of speakers and participants confirmed their interest in collaborating in future potential projects as well as to learn about opportunities of funding from the European Union and other sources. A call for expression of interest will be produced by the Symposium organisers to gather the partners interested in the collaboration. The nearest future actions would encompass both creation of consortium around a research area for a potential submission of a project proposal to the funding schemes, as e.g. Horizon 2020, as well as to produce a “next big thing” concept which could be welcomed in next programming.