

Press release: Commonwealth scientific advisers to look at global challenges

Scientific advisers from across the Commonwealth will establish a knowledge exchange network to look at some of the global challenges we face such as climate change, food security and the state of the oceans.

The group was established following the inaugural meeting of chief scientific advisers and equivalents from across the Commonwealth chaired by [Dr Patrick Vallance](#), Government Chief Scientific Adviser and [Sir Peter Gluckman](#), Chief Science Adviser to the Prime Minister of New Zealand. The meeting was held at the Royal Society.

The science leaders met to discuss the role of science and technology in achieving a more secure, sustainable and prosperous future. They discussed how science and technology can benefit Commonwealth countries, both individually and collectively, focusing on 2 main areas:

- preparing for and responding to emergencies; and
- meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Dr Patrick Vallance said:

This is an important start to a new Commonwealth science collaboration. The Commonwealth represents a great opportunity for international collaboration, sharing data and science expertise to solve universal challenges such as climate change, food security, the state of the oceans, supporting private sector innovation and managing the impacts of disruptive technologies. These are challenges for which no country can plausibly claim to have all the answers.

Sir Peter Gluckman said

Science, technology and innovation are primary drivers of progress. The Commonwealth presents an obvious forum in which they can and should serve that purpose. Much can be achieved through identifying key knowledge gaps, synthesising and sharing evidence, and by strengthening the link between available evidence and policy.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Climate change, pollution, food security, healthcare, and clean energy are just some of the world's biggest challenges. These issues affect everyone and the impact is already being felt, even

here in the UK. While the government's ambitious Industrial Strategy and Grand Challenges are already addressing these global challenges, collaboration is essential to provide effective results.

Across the Commonwealth, the brightest and best talent are conducting incredible research that has the potential to change our world forever. It is essential that we come together and share our expertise and knowledge to speed up the development of innovative solutions, saving our planet and improving everyone's lives.

The network will foster greater cooperation between Commonwealth science academies and other science advice mechanisms. Specifically, it will seek to:

- promote information exchange covering scientific and technology-based solutions to the SDGs as they affect Commonwealth countries
- enhance cooperation on science related to risk management and emergency response
- develop a strategy for integrating locally-derived data across the Commonwealth to understand and stimulate innovative solutions to such issues as coastal erosion, water quality and food waste
- explore approaches to data governance
- promote beneficial collaboration using major science infrastructure where it can support research around the SDGs
- consider what further mechanisms might strengthen the role of science and innovation in the Commonwealth

A report summarising the projects, their impact and the key lessons learnt will be presented to leaders at the Commonwealth summit in 2020.

Notes to editors

1. The Commonwealth forms a significant part of the global scientific community. It is home to 12% of the world's researchers and accounts for around 10% of global research and development expenditure.
2. The [Government Office for Science](#) advises the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet on all matters related to science and technology ensuring that government policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking.