SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

SLAAS

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

THEME SEMINAR

79th ANNUAL SESSIONS

"Science Diplomacy as a Powerful Force for National Unity and Friendship among Nations"

2023

SLAAS Theme Seminar on "Science Diplomacy as a Powerful Force for National Unity and Friendship among Nations"

On 11.12.2023 at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), Nawala in Hybrid Mode

08.00 a.m. – 08.30 a.m.*	**Registration of Participants**
08.30 a.m. – 08.40 a.m.	**Welcome Address and Opening Remarks** Prof. Ranjith Senaratne, General President/ SLASS
08.40 a.m. – 09.10 a.m.	**Keynote Speech: "Science Diplomacy as a Powerful Force for National Unity and Friendship among Nations"** Sir Prof. Peter Gluckman, President, International Science Council (ISC)
09.10 a.m. – 09.30 a.m.	**Address by the Chief Guest** H.E. Sandile Edwin Schalk, Ambassador for South Africa in Sri Lanka
09.30 a.m. – 09.50 a.m.	**"Elevating Sri Lanka's Global Influence: The Role of Sri Lankan Scientists in Science Diplomacy"** Emeritus Professor Saroj Jayasinghe, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
09.50 a.m. – 10.10 a.m.	**"Science Diplomacy for Reconciliation, Peace and National Development"** Prof. P. Balasundarampillai, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka
10.10 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	**Tea Break**
10.30 a.m. – 10.50 a.m.	**"Science Diplomacy and the Asia Pacific Region: Challenges and Opportunities"** Dr Baskar Balakrishnan, Fellow for Science Diplomacy, Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries, India
10.50 a.m. – 11.10 a.m.	**"Science and Innovation Diplomacy for and from the Global South"** Mr Pedro Ivo Ferraz da Silva, Head of Science, Technology & Innovation and Technical Cooperation at the Embassy of Brazil in Berlin
11.10 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.	**"Science Diplomacy in the Middle East and Neighboring Regions: Slogan or Reality?"** Dr Gihan Kamel Badie, Principal Scientist, Synchrotron-light Project for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), Jordan
11.30 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.	**"Science Diplomacy: Lessons learned from the European Region"** Prof. Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, Professor of International Economics at the Faculty of International Affairs, University of Le Havre, France
11.50 a.m. – 12.40 p.m.	**Panel Discussion:** "Application of Science Diplomacy in Promoting National Unity and Friendship among Nations" **Chairman:** Ambassador Sumith Nakandala, Former Secretary General of BIMSTEC and Former Additional Foreign Secretary **Rapporteur:** Ms Thilinakumari Kandanamulla, Scientific Officer, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka

(*All Times are in Sri Lanka Standard Time)

Prof. Sir Peter Gluckman

President, International Science Council and Inaugural Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand Prime Minister (2009 to 2018)

Distinguished Professor Sir Peter Gluckman is the director of Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures, a think tank focused on long-term complex problems, which is hosted at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. He was first Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand from 2009-2018, the former foundation chair of the International Network of Government Science Advice (INGSA) and is president of the International Science Council.

He was awarded CNZM in 1996, DCNZM 2008 redesignated as KNZM in 2009, made a member of the order of New Zealand (ONZ, 2015) and received the Rutherford Medal in 2001.

He holds honorary chairs at the University College London, University of Southampton and National University of Singapore and is chief scientific officer of the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences. He was Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (1992-2001) and founding Director (2001-2009) of the Liggins Institute of the University of Auckland.

He has published over 750 scientific papers related to his research interests including hormonal development, neuro- and neuroendocrine-development, the development of executive functions, the evolution of puberty and adolescence. He has also authored many policy reports including a major report on adolescence to the government in 2011, followed by reports (2017) on youth suicide and mental health. He designed and still leads the major birth cohorts in Singapore (GUSTO, SPRESTO) and has designed and been principal investigator on numerous clinical trials. As director of Koi Tū he has led international studies and reports on social cohesion and leads major project on the broader causes of the rising rates of loss of youth mental wellbeing and on improving human capital in partnership with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of London (2001) and the Royal Society of New Zealand, a member of the National Academy of Medicine (USA, 2004), a fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (UK, 2006), a fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (2021). Amongst international awards he was awarded Singapore's highest scientific honour, the Presidential Science and Technology medal in 2021 and the American Association for Advancement of Sciences Science Diplomacy award in 2016.

Keynote Speech: “Science Diplomacy as a Powerful Force for National Unity and Friendshipamong Nations”

Science has a pivotal role to play in the global policy processes. In that regard, every aspect of the sustainability agenda needs an approach in which the global commons are appreciated to be critical. The interdisciplinary field of science diplomacy has a potential to address this need. As evident by several examples, science and diplomacy are inevitably intertwined. Diplomacy has long played a role in assisting trans-national science; that is in promoting **‘diplomacy for science’**. This is most evidently seen in the raft of bilateral agreements involving researchers between states and in the development of global science projects such as the international space station; CERN: the Square Kilometer Array; and the Antarctic Research program. On the other hand, ‘diplomacy for science’ has a reciprocal effect in the area of ‘**science for diplomacy**’. Global Research Alliance on agricultural greenhouse gases has been a doorway for New Zealand for relationship building with a number of countries, and has allowed it to project itself globally. Thus, diplomatic objectives can be met using science policy tools, all while advancing internationally collaborative science itself. The third class of interaction between the diplomatic and scientific worlds is when science provides technical knowledge to meet diplomatic or trade objectives – that is: **‘science in diplomacy’,** e.g., without scientific verification, arms treaties, would not be possible and effective global regulations to mitigate climate change need to be evidence-based. Science is absolutely core to an effective rules-based global trading system. As innovation based economic growth becomes the centerpiece of many countries’ economic growth strategies, the role of science in that setting becomes more obvious. There is a growing list of societal challenges that need a trans-national policy perspectives that are grounded in science, while accounting for national social values and economic imperatives. Many of the national, regional and global challenges that need science advice to governments, drive high diplomatic interest as well. Thus, Science Diplomacy has a wider global prominence at present in building national unity and friendship among nations, specially in the global south.

Chief Guest

H.E. Sandile Edwin Schalk

Ambassador to South Africa in Sri Lanka

Mr Sandile Schalk is a senior career diplomat at the South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). Most recently, he was the Chief Director and South Africa's National Contact Point to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). During this period, he was the lead Negotiator for South Africa at the discussions and adoption of the revised SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and its Implementation Plan as well the Strategic Plan of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation. Previously, he served as the Head of SADC Liaison Office responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SADC sponsored Roadmap towards Political and Security Stability in the Republic of Madagascar (2010-2011); Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Head of Mission at the South African Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, accredited to the Republic of Djibouti, African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2005-2009) and Chargé d' Affaires at the South African Embassy in Luanda, Republic of Angola(2012)

Within DIRCO, Mr Schalk served as Director responsible for South Africa's bilateral relations with Republics of Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively. He also served as the Director responsible for African Union. Throughout his work on the African Continent, he actively participated in peace making and keeping negotiations and efforts; political facilitation processes, national reconciliation and nation building processes in various countries including Republics of Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kingdom of Lesotho, Republics of Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe respectively. Before joining the Foreign Service, he worked as a Lecturer of Political Science, African Political Economy and International Relations at the University of the Western Cape and the University of Venda respectively.

Emeritus Professor Saroj Jayasinghe

Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Saroj Jayasinghe is an Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Colombo, and a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka. His research interests cover a wide range of disciplines or fields: clinical reasoning, mathematical modeling, humanities, device development, population health, and clinical medicine. These diverse disciplines or fields of interest form parts of a wider canvas that he links using a systems approach.

He was a member of the Science Committee on Urban Health and Wellbeing.: A Systems Approach of the International Science Council and has co-authored several key publications on systems thinking.

He has won several awards, including the Presidential Awards for research, and is among a group of scientists in Sri Lanka who reached the top 2% of a global ranking based on citations. He is a strong advocate to develop a more structured approach to science advice in Sri Lanka.

Elevating Sri Lanka's Global Influence: The Role of Sri Lankan Scientists in Science Diplomacy

The presentation will give a concise overview of history and concepts related to Science and Diplomacy, while proposing a distinctive role for Sri Lankan scientists in the global stage.

One definition of Science diplomacy is 'the use of scientific interactions among nations to address the common problems facing humanity and to build constructive, knowledge based international partnerships'. This definition can be expanded to encompass three dimensions to Science Diplomacy: Science in diplomacy; Diplomacy for science; Science for diplomacy.

It is crucial to consider these dimensions from the perspective of diplomacy and international relations. One prevailing school of thought is encapsulated in the notion that an ambassador is 'an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country' (Sir Henry Wotton, the 17th century diplomat). Such goals undermine the genuine humane objectives of scientists who are promoting the development of constructive, knowledge based international partnerships.

Throughout history examples abound of scientists battling with the conflicts between their role in advancing humanity, and actions that protect or promote self-interests. Therefore, a useful conceptualization is to consider 'science diplomacy' as a spectrum of possibilities, ranging from genuine science diplomacy to its polar-opposite, 'Science Undiplomacy'. To contrast between the two lies in at least three axis: Informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice versus informing exploiters with scientific advice; Using science to facilitate international cooperation versus disrupting international science cooperation; Using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries versus using it to further national interests.

In this context, Sri Lankan scientists need to define their role in the global arena. We can be a beacon of hope and ensure a non-aligned nature of science. We should call for action that explores and promotes an ethical dimension to science diplomacy. With this intention the author proposes the Colombo Declaration on Ethics for Science Diplomacy.

Prof. P. Balasundarampillai

Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Prof. Ponnuthdurai Balasundarampillai, B.A (Hons), Ph.D. (Durham), D.Lit (Jaffna), Honoris causa, is a well-known academic in Sri Lanka, specialised in Geography and worked at the University of Peradeniya and the University of Jaffna for more than four deca des. He was a Professor of Geography at the University of Jaffna for a long period. Further, he served in several academic and administrative positions, as Head, Dean and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Jaffna, and also served as Chairman of the Committee of Vice-chancellors and Directors (CVCD) of Sri Lankan Universities in the year 2000.

He did his first degree at the University of Ceylon Peradeniya and PhD in Urban Geography at the University of Durham, UK. He was awarded a Commonwealth fellowship in UK and attended a number of international conferences in various countries.

In addition to his academic administrative duties, he served as a member of the Rehabilitation Authority-Area North (RAAN), a member official language commission, a member of local government and Provincial Council delimitations review committees and served from time to time as several important committees.

At present, he is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Jaffna and doing visiting lectures and independent research. He is very much interested in Political Geography and Community and Regional Planning. He also is a civil society activist and a social worker.

“Science Diplomacy for Reconciliation, Peace and National Development”

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethic, multi-religious, multi – lingual and multi-cultural country with a long heritage. It has a recorded history for more than 2500 years and it was under European colonial powers (Portugal, Dutch, and British) for nearly four hundred and fifty years and gained independence in 1948 due to joint efforts of all the local communities.

After independence the ethnic relationships among the communities have been declined. The minority communities feel that they are not getting their due share from the government and the majority community is enjoying the government facilities more than their due share in government employment, land allocation etc.

The Tamil community in the country has been badly affected by disfranchising citizenship (Plantation Indian Tamils) Sinhala only act, communal riots of 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983 and thirty years of protracted civil war. A large number of Tamil people lost their life and a significant number of Tamils had migrated to various countries. Like Tamils, other minority communities too have their own grievances. Generally all the minority communities are feeling that they are not treated fairly in many spheres.

Further the country at present socio economically is in a difficult position due to poor governance over the years. Poverty, unemployment, poor standard of living, scarcity of goods are prevalent in the country. Further quality of education, health, transport and many other sectors have to be improved.

The unity and harmony among the Sri Lankan communities are very essential and pre-requisite to overcome the contemporary problems of the country. Through scientific approach and studies each problem could be resolved through diplomacy, dialogue and amicable settlement in principal of win-win situation. We may able to overcome the current issues in many spheres.

This is the time for joint effort to resolve the problems and looking for bright future.

Dr. Baskar Balakrishnan

Fellow for Science Diplomacy, Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries, India

Dr. Bhaskar Balakrishnan has been an Indian diplomat from 1974-2007 and served as Ambassador of India to Greece, Cuba and worked with UN organizations in Geneva and Vienna, including as Special Assistant to the Director General, UNIDO. He has a Ph D in Physics from Stonybrook University, New York. He has served on India's Member of the National Security Advisory Board. He is an adjunct faculty member at JSS University, Mysore, and Science Diplomacy Fellow, Research and Information Systems (RIS), New Delhi. He authored a book entitled "Technology and International Relations - Challenges for the 21 st Century" More details on http://bbalakrishnan.atspace.cc . https://www.linkedin.com/in/bhaskar-balakrishnan-8488723b/

"Science Diplomacy and the Asia Pacific Region: Challenges and Opportunities"

Introduction

For the purpose of this article, we use the term "Asia Pacific" to include the member countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) which has 53 Member States and nine Associate members, including countries such as France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. Taiwan is also included in our analysis. The region covered by the Commission is home to 4.1 billion people, or two-thirds of the world's population.

Science Diplomacy

Science diplomacy is the integration of science and technology into foreign policy and practice. The AAAS/RIS (2010) formulation of Science Diplomacy is based on three pillars - science in diplomacy, science for diplomacy, and diplomacy for science. All these three are relevant for the Asia Pacific region.

Under the first pillar, science inputs will help governments and regional bodies to address common challenges, such as the health, and triple threat of climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.

The second pillar involves science cooperation to build trust and confidence among countries of the region, despite political differences and tensions. This is because science is a universal language that can transcend borders and cultures. When scientists from different countries work together on common challenges, it can help to build understanding and respect. Scientists from different countries can work together on common challenges. This can help to build relationships and trust between scientists, which can then translate into improved relations between the countries themselves. For example, the United States and the Soviet Union collaborated on joint space research projects during the Cold War. This helped to build trust and cooperation between the two countries, despite the intense geopolitical tensions that existed at the time. Scientific exchanges can provide opportunities for scientists from different countries to visit each other's laboratories and institutions. This can help to build understanding and respect between scientists, and it can also help to promote the transfer of knowledge and technology. For example, the Fulbright Program is a scientific exchange program that has helped to bring scientists from over 160 countries together to collaborate on research and teaching. Science diplomacy initiatives can be specifically designed to use science to promote specific foreign policy goals. These initiatives can include joint research projects, scientific exchanges, and other forms of scientific collaboration.

The third pillar involves using foreign policy to get countries of the region to collaborate on large projects, beyond the capacity of individual countries to advance frontier and emerging science and technology. It also involves using foreign policy to strengthen national STI ecosystems, including through mobilization of STEM diaspora capabilities.

Asia Pacific Region S and T cooperation

The Asia Pacific region includes a diverse range of countries, with different levels of scientific and technological development. The challenges for science diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region, include - Geopolitical tensions between some countries in the region, Limited scientific and technological capacity

of some countries, and lack of coordination between science and foreign policy agencies in some countries

There are a number of regional cooperation entities that are active in the region, such as: the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) etc. These organizations can play an important role in promoting scientific and technological cooperation in the region. For example, APEC has a number of initiatives in place to promote research and development, technology transfer, and innovation. ASEAN has also established a number of centers of excellence in science and technology. Some multilateral arrangements are - Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Science and Technology Cooperation Framework, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Science and Technology Plan of Action, East Asia Summit (EAS) Science, Technology, and Innovation Plan of Action

There are a large number of bilateral science and technology cooperation agreements between countries in the Asia Pacific region. This number has been steadily increasing in recent year due to the growing importance of science and technology in the region, the increasing interconnectedness of the region's economies, and the growing awareness of the benefits of international scientific collaboration. Some of the most active countries in terms of bilateral science and technology cooperation in the Asia Pacific region include China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India.

Some specific science diplomacy actions in the region

Some specific actions for science diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region include -

Air pollution - Joint programmes to monitor air quality and combat air pollution which is threatening the health of the population in many large cities of Asia-Pacific. Science based tools can be employed, for data collection and analysis, and measures to mitigate air pollution.

Ocean health - Millions of people in the region depend on marine living resources especially in the coastal areas. There are 20 Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) in the region - 1. Sea of Japan; 2. Kuroshiro Current; 3. Yellow Sea; 4. East China Sea; 5. South China Sea; 6. Bay of Bengal; 7. Gulf of Thailand; 8. Arabian Sea; 9. Sulu-Celebes Seas; 10. Indonesian Sea; 11. Western-Central Pacific; 12. Pacific Hawaiian; 13. N Australia; 14. NW Australia; 15. W Australia; 16. NE Australia; 17. E Australia; 18. SW Australia; 19. SE Australia; and 20. New Zealand (1) Together these LMEs generate about 50% of the global marine fish catch of approximately 110 million tonnes annually. Most of these LMEs are at very high risk of depletion of living resources and need to be managed to protect biodiversity and secure livelihoods for the dependent populations. The example of successful management of the LMEs such as the Gulf of Guinea, could be followed in the region, by establishing management frameworks of the coastal states for each of the LKMEs. This could be supported by the B\Global Environmental Facility(GEF) and other International organizations such as the FAO. Beyond the LME areas, in the High Seas, the new BBNJ Treaty can be promoted, and states encouraged to join it. The provisions of this Treaty could be implemented in the ocean space to ensure marine biodiversity is protected.

Health security - With its large populations, the region is susceptible to disease outbreaks, including pandemics and new and emerging diseases of zoonotic origin. This makes it necessary to have a strong and effective collective response to disease outbreaks, covering the full range of activities from surveillance, data sharing, diagnostic technology, drugs for treatment, medical infrastructure, human

resources, and research, development and production of vaccines. These are all areas where cooperation among countries in the region could yield large dividends.

Energy transition - Given the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change and warming, it is necessary for countries in the region to transition away from fossil based energy to non-fossil based energy as rapidly as possible. Collaboration in areas such as renewable energy, especially solar energy, sharing of power through grid linking, biofuel based energy, is important and can accelerate the energy transition.

Chemicals and human health - There Is increasing concern over the spread of various chemicals through the environment of countries in the region, with consequent health risks. These Include heavy metals such as lead and arsenic, persistent and long lived organic pollutants, and micro and nano plastics emanating from plastic wastes. UNEP has mandated the creation of a new science based panel of experts modeled on the IPCC to monitor pollution and its effects on health in a comprehensive manner. The countries of the region could collaborate and create an Asia Pacific science based panel to go into this problem, including monitoring, and mitigating the effects of pollution by chemicals and wastes. (2). The countries of the region could collaborate and create an Asia Pacific science based panel to go into this problem, including monitoring, and mitigating the effects of pollution by chemicals and wastes. In addition, collaborative research and monitoring the level of pollutants and their effects by scientists and institutions across the region could be extremely useful.

Geopolitical tensions

As in any other region there are geopolitical tensions between some of the member states of the region. However, the countries of the region have shown considerable maturity in managing these tensions. In some cases, while there may be tensions between governments, they may not impede cooperation by non-governmental entities such as research and academic institutions, scientists and think tanks. The model of CERN in Europe, or SESAME in the Middle East could be useful in building cooperation among scientific communities across the region, especially for tackling regional and global problems that affect the populations. This is exactly the role envisaged under science for diplomacy which can be exploited in the region.

Conclusion

The above are only a few examples of areas where science and technology cooperation in the region could prove to be extremely fruitful. To explore and develop these into concrete programmes is a challenge for the member states of the region and their respective stakeholder. The support of regional organizations of the UN, WHO, FAO, UNEP and UNESCO could play a catalytic and supporting role in this process.

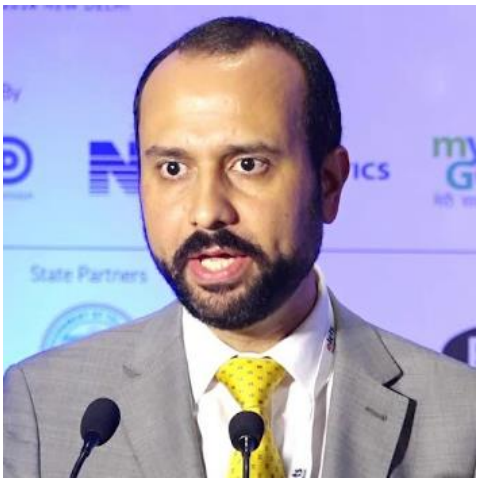
References

Status and potential of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia and the Pacific, Shunji Sugiyama, et al, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Chapter 3, 2004, https://www.fao.org/3/ad514e/ad514e06.h

Ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution prevention, UNEP, https://www.unep.org/oewg-spp-chemicals-waste-pollution

Mr. Pedro Ivo Ferraz da Silva

Head of Science, Technology & Innovation and Technical Cooperation at the Embassy of Brazil in Berlin



Mr. Pedro Ivo Ferraz da Silva is a career diplomat and the Head of the Science, Technology & Innovation and Cooperation Section of the Brazilian Embassy in Berlin. He is also co-founder and executive coordinator of the São Paulo Innovation and Science Diplomacy School (InnSciD SP). Previously, he headed the ST&I section of the Brazilian Embassy in New Delhi, worked as Deputy Head of the Information Society Division of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was the Brazilian representative to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Prior to joining the Brazilian Foreign Service, Mr da Silva was the Director of Customer Services at Comptel Communications in São Paulo, Brazil, and Software Development Manager at Siemens AG in Munich, Germany. Da Silva holds a degree in Electrical Engineering (2000), University of São Paulo (USP), and a bachelor's degree in Philosophy (2009), USP, and a master's degree in Philosophy of Technology (2013), USP.

"Science and Innovation Diplomacy for and from the Global South"

Perspective from the developing world on the concept of science diplomacy are important to be focused at, taking objectives such as poverty eradication, industrialization and capacity building in to consideration. "Colonial science" is a concept and a practice worth to be delved in to, which consists of a broad spectrum ranging from the instrumentalization of scientific institutions of the Global South to the exclusive benefit of researchers and institutions of the developed world. The field of innovation diplomacy is another key area of study which distinguishes itself from science diplomacy due to its inherently commercial and industry-related characteristics.

Dr. Gihan Kamel Badie

Principal Scientist, Synchrotron-light Project for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), Jordan

Gihan Kamel (female) is the SESAME (Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East) Infrared Beamline Principal Scientist, on leave from the Physics Department, Faculty of Science, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt, where she is an Assistant Professor in Physics. Dr Kamel obtained her Ph.D. in Physics in 2011 from the University of Rome, La Sapienza, Italy, and held beamline researcher position at Daφne-light at the Italian Institute for Nuclear Physics (LNF-INFN) before moving to SESAME in 2015. She is the SESAME Infrared Beamline Responsible scientist, and up to date, she is the only woman scientist at the facility. Her responsibilities involved the beamline construction and operation, and currently she is responsible f or the beamline operation and development. With several engagements in international projects on cultural heritage, bioarchaeology, life sciences, and biomedicine, she also organizes science events at the national and international levels to build awareness and to highlight special topics linking science to society. She is featured in several interviews and portraits for being particularly noted for her lectures on science for peace, science diplomacy, as well as, women in science. Dr Kamel is also involved in the establishment of the first African Light Source (AfLS). She was honored with a recognition at the International Day of Women in 2017 by the President of the Italian Republic for her engagement as the only woman scientist at SESAME. In 2020, she was awarded the Eureka South Shore Prize ex-aequo Laureate of Eureka Prize of the French organization amcsti (The professional network of scientific, technical and industrial cultures) for her role at SESAME that brings together scientists from the eight founding states of this unique experiment in this region. In 2021, as part of the 'Championing the Decade of Action' - an initiative being implemented by ECA and other UN agencies, Dr Kamel was selected by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as one of twenty-five African Women scientists featured in the publication titled "Earth, Oceans and Skies: Insights from selected, outstanding African women scientists". The publication aims to establish the legitimacy and prestige of women scientists within the African and global research and development (R&D) communities. In 2023, she was one of the six women chosen by Nature to comment on the challenges facing women scientists in the Middle East.

"Science Diplomacy in the Middle East and Neighboring Regions: Slogan or Reality?"

Despite similar identities, national standards, and ideologies those are the conjoint pillars needed to create a status of peace and harmony within a single society, one still needs to speak a language that must be tolerant, unbiased, and unprejudiced in order to be well understood and accepted as a midpoint. To some degree, this is the case when communicating science.

Transforming repulsion between widely divergent identities into trust and cooperation, and replacing disappointment with tangible understanding by using science as a new solo player is undoubtedly a huge success. This is why SESAME, the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East is -and will always be- unforgotten experience of science diplomacy at its best. Synchrotron-light sources are super microscopes implemented to reveal the unknown of physics, chemistry, biology, pharmaceuticals, biomedicine, environment, in addition to cultural heritage and archaeology. SESAME started in 1997 following the model of CERN. Long journey has been established from conception to realization to establish the first light-source in the region. Current Members are: Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, Palestine and Türkiye. It was established by those who believe in human rights and human capacities, regardless of any particular identity. It seeks excellency of science, besides functioning as a bridge of understanding on different levels aiming at a stronger community that will be able to deal with scientific challenges, political conflicts, and hopefully beyond.

Prof. Pierre-Bruno Ruffini

Professor of International Economics at the Faculty of International Affairs, University of Le Havre, France

"Prof. Pierre-Bruno Ruffini, University of Le Havre Normandie, has spent most of his academic career as an economist, with a marked orientation toward international economics. He served as president of the University of Le Havre (2000-2005) and as a counselor for science and technology at the French embassies in Russia (2007-2010) and Italy (2010-2013). Since returning to academia, he has devoted most of his research to the theme of science diplomacy. He authored the first book entirely devoted to this subject (Science and Diplomacy – A New Dimension of International Relations, Springer, 2017). From 2018 to 2022, he served as an expert in the European research project 'Inventing a Shared Science Diplomacy for Europe' (InsSciDE-H2020). He was recently invited as co-editor of a series of articles on the subject of "Science Diplomacy in the Global South" published by the journal Science and Public Policy (2023)".

“Science Diplomacy: Lessons learned from the European Region”

The Europe region is taken in this text in its political and institutional sense, that of the European Union (EU). The 27 countries that form the EU are solidly united around common institutions and objectives, and some of them have shown great commitment to science diplomacy for long. In this presentation, we first consider that the scientific and technical relations between the EU and the rest of the world can be analyzed in the same way as one would do for examining the science diplomacy of any State: the strategic drivers of cooperation, acquisition of S&T resources and projection of influence inspire and characterize the science diplomacy of this “superstate” that the EU can resemble. But the analogy should not be pushed too far. If the EU tends to behave in certain respects as a state power, its singularity remains: that of being “only” a union of sovereign countries. The double-level of governance (national/supranational) which characterizes the architecture of the EU makes it possible to analyze the uniqueness of its engagement in science diplomacy: the observation of initiatives in the field of the science counselors posted at EU’s delegations shows that their mission is not only to push the EU's own agendas, but also to act in support and complementarity to the objectives of the science diplomacy of the Member States of the Union.

Panel Discussion

"Application of Science Diplomacy in Promoting National Unity and Friendship among Nations"

Chairman

Ambassador Sumith Nakandala

Former Secretary General of BIMSTEC and Former Additional Foreign Secretary

Ambassador Sumith Nakandala was the first Secretary General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). He was the Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Nepal, Iraq and the Netherlands.

Rapporteur

Ms Thilinakumari Kandanamulla

Scientific Officer, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka