

May 5, 2016

To: ISSC Member Associations, Organisations, Institutions, and Associate Members.

Cc: ISSC ExCo, co-sponsored programmes

Communiqué: Future relations between the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC)

Dear Colleagues,

In our communiqué of 15 February 2016 (see below), we reported on the establishment, composition and anticipated work of a joint ISSC-ICSU Working Group (WG) on future relations between the two organisations. We are writing now to update you on developments and proposed next steps in this important process.

During April, the Executive bodies of both ICSU and ISSC considered recommendations submitted by the WG after its first meeting (held on 28-29 January 2016). At their respective meetings (held on 5 April 2016 in the case of the ISSC, and 14 April 2016 in the case of ICSU), Officers and Members of the ISSC Executive Committee and ICSU Executive Board accepted the WG's advice and unanimously agreed to propose to their members that ICSU and ISSC merge to form a single international organisation for the social and natural sciences. Such a merger will bring together the unique membership base of both ISSC and ICSU – i.e. national scientific organisations and international scientific unions and associations – and create an organisation best suited to develop a unified vision and drive a holistic approach to some of the great contemporary challenges for science.

The decision as to whether ISSC and ICSU merge into a single organisation, or not, will lie exclusively in the hands of the members of both organisations. The WG thus developed, during its second meeting on 18-19 April 2016, a roadmap and associated work plan that will ensure proper engagement and full consultation with all ICSU and ISSC members, and enable them to make informed decisions about the proposed merger. The proposed roadmap and work plan have been agreed by the ISSC and ICSU Executives and are set out in this communiqué.

A shared vision

The ISSC and ICSU Executives' shared vision in recommending a merger is to enable and advance "science for the future". It is to build a stronger foundation for promoting all our disciplines, and on that basis, to convene their collective strengths more effectively in order to increase the role and impact that science can and must have on shaping humanity's future on planet Earth. We regard this as an important intellectual project, one that speaks to fundamental scientific and societal (rather than organisational or bureaucratic) imperatives. And we believe that the time is right for ICSU and ISSC to demonstrate leadership in addressing these imperatives within the global scientific landscape.

The proposed roadmap and work plan

The proposed road map and work plan outlined in the table below comprise three phases, each of which culminates in a joint meeting of the members of both organisations. The first two of those meetings will coincide with currently scheduled General Assembly (GA) meetings, of the ISSC in October 2016 and of ICSU in October 2017. This means that ICSU will hold an extraordinary GA session in October 2016 and ISSC will similarly hold an extraordinary GA session in October 2017. The key actions/decisions to be taken at these meetings, as well as the supporting materials to be made available for each, are clearly specified. Phases Two and Three will proceed only if the combined ISSC and ICSU membership agree in principle to pursue a merger at the end of Phase One.

Phase One: Preparing for an in-principle decision to merge

May – June 2016	WG to prepare materials for a June 2016 joint meeting of the ICSU and ISSC Executives
28 June 2016	<p>Joint meeting of the ISSC Executive Committee and ICSU Executive Board, to be held in Paris, France</p> <p><i>Key Actions/Decisions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review any feedback received in response to the April 2016 communiqué and, if necessary, to adjust the proposed roadmap and work plan • To discuss and finalise for submission to ICSU and ISSC members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A background narrative report on the need for a unified, interdisciplinary voice for science at the global level - A planning framework that sets out the key parameters and implications of a merger for future strategic, governance and organisational (including financial and legal) arrangements of a new organisation and that recommends preferred options • To agree on a joint planning process for the development of a high-level strategy (outlining a new vision, mission, priority activity profile and core working principles) for a new organisation, for consideration and adoption by ICSU and ISSC members in October 2017
By end July 2016	Submission of the background narrative report and planning framework to ISSC and ICSU members in preparation of a joint meeting in October 2016
24 October 2016	<p>One day meeting of ISSC and ICSU members during the ISSC General Assembly (which runs from 24 to 26 October 2016), to be held in Oslo, Norway</p> <p><i>Key Actions/Decisions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the recommendation to merge ICSU and ISSC and agree – in principle – to pursue this • To discuss and provide feedback on the planning framework • To agree on the appointment of a Transition Task Force (comprising representatives of both Executive bodies); and to mandate this group to develop detailed transition plans (including new statutes/rules of procedure) for accomplishing a merger

Phase Two: Transition planning

November 2016 – June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition Task Force to develop detailed transition plans • ICSU and ISSC Executives to oversee the development of a high-level strategic plan for a new organisation
July 2017	Submission of detailed transition plans and high-level strategy to ISSC and ICSU

	members in preparation of a joint meeting in October 2017
Between 24-27 October 2017 (Exact date tbc)	One or two day meeting of ICSU and ISSC members during the ICSU General Assembly (which runs from 24 to 27 October 2017), to be held in Taipei <i>Key Actions/Decisions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the transition plans (including new statutes/rules of procedure) • To adopt the high-level strategy for a new organisation • To agree on the name of the new organisation

Phase Three: Transition implementation

November 2017 – mid/end 2018	Transition implementation to be overseen by the ISSC and ICSU Executives, co-chaired by the Presidents of each organisation
Before the end of October 2018	Founding General Assembly of the new organisation <i>Key Actions/Decisions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the new organisation to elect an Executive governance body

Membership engagement and consultation

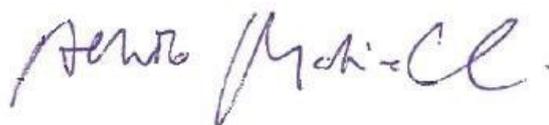
Clearly, the three joint meetings of members – in October 2016, October 2017 and at some point by the end of October 2018 – represent key decision milestones in the proposed road to a merger. We therefore urge all our members to give priority to planning their participation in these events. We recognise that the first of these meetings, in October this year, comes at short notice for ICSU members and, more generally, that an annual schedule of meetings in the coming three years will pose financial challenges for many. Given this, we will work towards ensuring fully inclusive voting procedures, which may include electronic procedures. Information about these arrangements, as well as formal invitations to participate in the events, will follow.

In preparation for these important decision making moments, and in a spirit of transparency and full engagement, we invite all of you to get in touch with initial feedback, questions of clarification and/or concerns about the information and proposals conveyed in this communiqué. For this purpose we ask that you contact us by email, using one of the following addresses:

For ICSU members: roadto2018@icsu.org

For ISSC members: roadto2018@worldsocialscience.org

We look forward to working closely with you on this ambitious and exciting project of realising a new vision for the future of global science.

Sincerely,

Gordon McBean and Alberto Martinelli

On behalf of the ICSU Executive Board and ISSC Executive Committee

To: Members of the ISSC

February 15, 2016

Communiqué: Joint Working Group on future ISSC-ICSU relations

Dear Colleagues,

In view of opportunities in the changing global landscape of scientific cooperation, and the increasing demands for more effective interdisciplinary approaches to today's global challenges, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and International Social Science Council (ISSC) have established a joint Working Group (WG) to explore closer institutional alignment, and possible amalgamation, between the two councils. The WG met for the first time on January 28th and 29th 2016, in Paris.

This initiative followed an exchange of letters in 2015 between ISSC President Alberto Martinelli and ICSU President Gordon McBean. With the full support of the Executive bodies of both organizations, the WG was mandated to consider how ISSC and ICSU can build on the positive experiences of recent mutual endeavours, such as Future Earth, and respond to internal and external pressures, including in the organization and funding of research, that call for more meaningful collaboration between the natural and social sciences, and for a unified and strengthened voice of science at the global level.

The WG, which will advise the Executive bodies of ISSC and ICSU, is co-chaired by Khotso Mokhele, former ICSU Vice President for Scientific Planning and Review (nominated by ICSU) and Pierre Ritchie, (former Secretary General of the International Union of Psychological Science) (nominated by ISSC). The ISSC delegation comprises Alberto Martinelli (ISSC President), Saths Cooper (ISSC Vice-President Information and Communication Outreach), and Renée van Kessel (ISSC Executive Committee Member). The ICSU delegation comprises Gordon McBean (ICSU President), Jinghai Li (ICSU Vice-President for Scientific Planning and Review), and David Black (ICSU Secretary General). The process is supported by Heide Hackmann and Mathieu Denis, Executive Directors of ICSU and ISSC respectively. External advisors may be invited to contribute to the work of the WG as discussions progress.

During its first meeting, the WG agreed on the importance of a comprehensive and open dialogue and, particularly, on the need to explore a full range of possible scenarios, from maintaining the status quo to an effective merger of ICSU and ISSC. It was agreed that each scenario should be carefully examined in terms of its pros and cons for future strategic, governance (including membership) and organizational arrangements. The WG created several work streams and plans to meet again in mid-April to consider the outputs from these.

In addition to scenario development, the WG will also identify a critical roadmap of communication and consultation with the membership and staff of both ISSC and ICSU. Due consideration will be given to the opportunities created by currently scheduled governance and consultative meetings, including, for example, the ICSU Unions' meeting in April 2016, the ISSC General Assembly in October 2016, and the ICSU General Assembly in October 2017.

It is important to reiterate that the WG's conclusions and recommendations – on both substance and process – will be submitted to the ICSU Executive Board and the ISSC Executive Committee, and that decisions about how and when to take WG recommendations forward will be based on agreement between these two bodies. We expect to update you on this process soon after the WG's meeting in April 2016.

With best regards,

Handwritten signature of Alberto Martinelli in black ink.Handwritten signature of Gordon McBean in black ink.

Alberto Martinelli and Gordon McBean

On behalf of the ISSC Executive Committee and ICSU Executive Board