



international social science council



**29th General Assembly Meeting
Montréal, 10-12 October 2013**

**President's Report
Professor Olive Shisana, Sc.D**

ISSC's Executive Committee

2011
in Beijing

Additional
meetings
conducted
electronically

Olive Shisana
Alberto Martinelli
David Thorns
Michel Sabourin
John Beaton
Ruth Fincher
Chad Gaffield
Katsuya Kodama
Li Hanlin
Helen Milner
Manfred Niessen
Elisa Reis
Yasuhiko Saito
Ramesh Dadhich

2012 in
Montreal

2013 in
Montreal

2013
in London

Outline

- Mission
- Objectives set in 2010
- Strategic planning of EXCO
- Progress on implementation
- Vision of Social Sciences
- Challenges ISSC in the future
- Conclusion



Our mission

**Strengthening
the social
sciences to help
solve global
problems**

- **Reflected in the ISSC constitution:**
“fostering of the social, economic and behavioural sciences throughout the world and their application to major contemporary problems”
- **Reaffirmed by the 2010 GA endorsement of the ISSC’s results-based management objectives:**
“To increase the demand for and production of high quality, interdisciplinary social science knowledge produced in all regions and internationally, addressing global priority problems”

Objectives set at the GA held in 2010



1. Continued dissemination of the 2010 World Social Science Report on Knowledge Divides
2. Delivery of a second World Social Science Report on the theme of global environmental change in 2013 or 2014
3. Design of a proposal for Sida for a new social science funding programme on global change research
4. Delivery of a second World Social Science Forum in 2012 and a third in 2015
5. To seek support to implement a World Social Science Fellows Programme as the ISSC's primary capacity building initiative
6. Continued ISSC collaboration with ICSU, the Belmont Forum (a group of major national funders of global change research) and other partners in a new international initiative on global environmental change and sustainability research

Input into strategic planning (Consultation with some Disciplinary Members)

- ISSC to develop a platform (or activity) allowing members (notably the disciplinary associations) to meet and discuss common priorities and joint initiatives (Member Associations).
- ISSC should do more scientific agenda-setting, and strengthen its profile as main advocate of global social science research.
- A demand for more frequent and direct contacts with the ISSC Secretariat.
- ISSC should assist some member associations with their difficulties in developing and maintaining professional, secretarial capacities.

Strategic Planning Session of EXCO



- Develop further global environmental change research
→ global sustainability, inclusive of growth, inequality and poverty (2016 WSSR)
- ISSC's two main flagship activities are: the WSSR and WSSF, but also maintain the Fellows Programme & ISSC's co-sponsored programmes and networks
- Platform for its members to network; "Social Science and Humanities Priority Scanning Exercises"
- Increase fund raising activities, eg use WSSF to generate revenue
- External evaluation of ISSC
- Continue to strengthen relationship with ICSU and CIPSH

Driving a profile of strategic scientific activities

Flagships

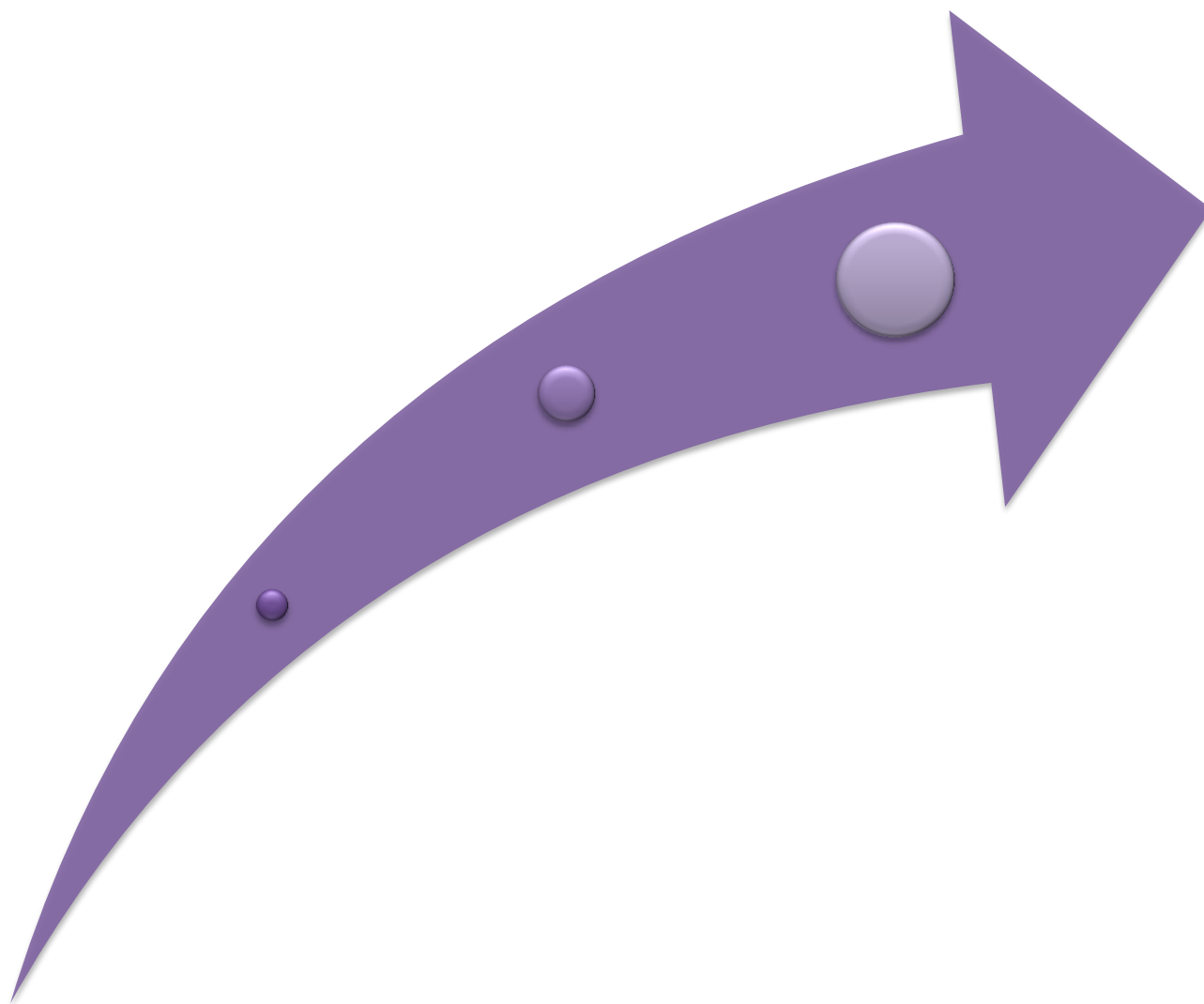
- World Social Science Report
- World Social Science Forum

That are complemented by

- Capacity building
- Priority programmes and networks
- Recognition of social science excellence



On the road to success: 2011-2013



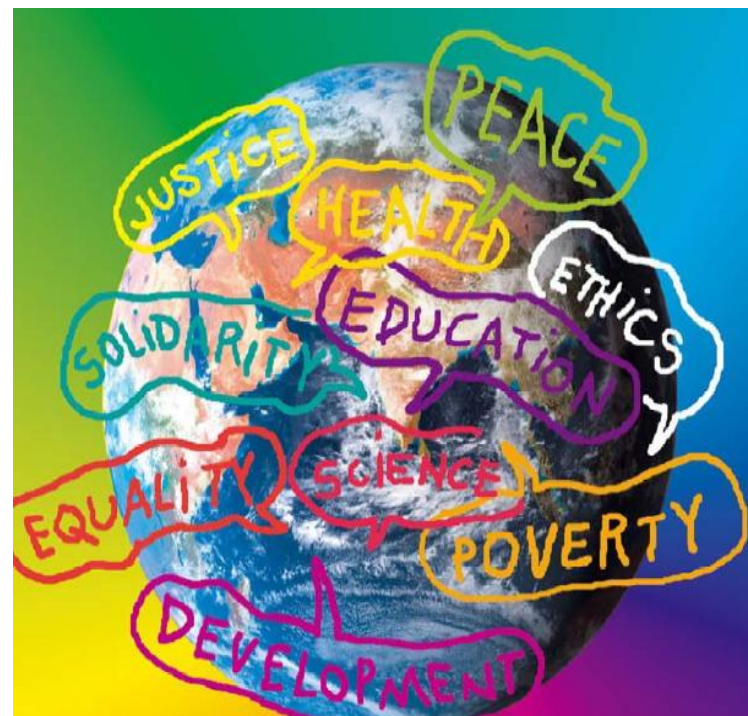
An inclusive social science knowledge framework for global change research



- Securing new spaces for social science voices: from Rio+20 to co-organising the international S&T inputs into the UN's work on a post-2015 agenda
- Positioning the ISSC into a new international partnership as a co-sponsor of Future Earth: a 10 year research for global sustainability initiative
- Now taken forward in the 2013 World Social Science Report

Drawing attention to the need for social science research leadership on social transformations

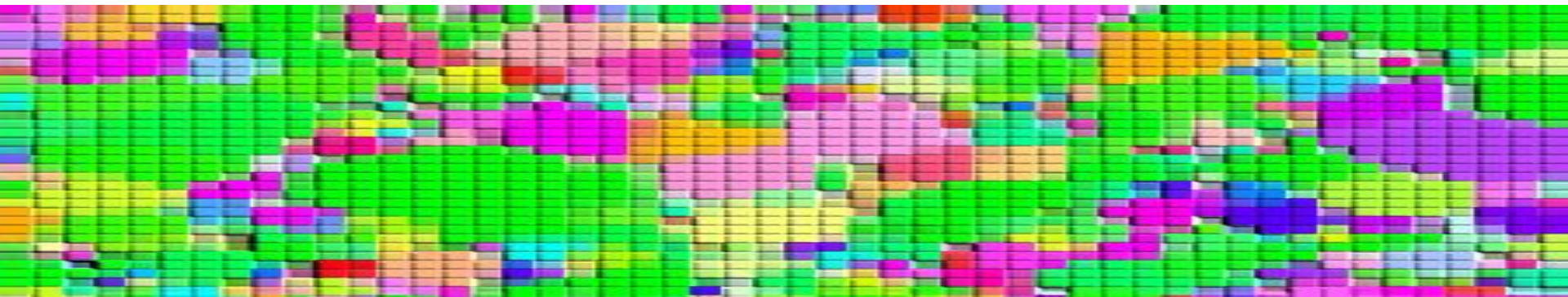
- Supported by Sida to develop a proposal for an international research funding and coordination programme on Social Transformations to Sustainability
- Convening a World Social Science Forum on Social Transformations and the Digital Age
- Preparing the next Forum on issues of global social justice, inequality and growth
- To be taken forward in the next World Social Science Report?





Advancing interdisciplinarity and integrated research

- Bringing ISSC members, programmes and networks together in collaborative efforts
- Contributing to the development of an understanding of integrated research
- Fostering ever-closer relations with the International Council for Science
- Reaching out to other fields, including the humanities and the arts





Building a new generation of world social science leaders

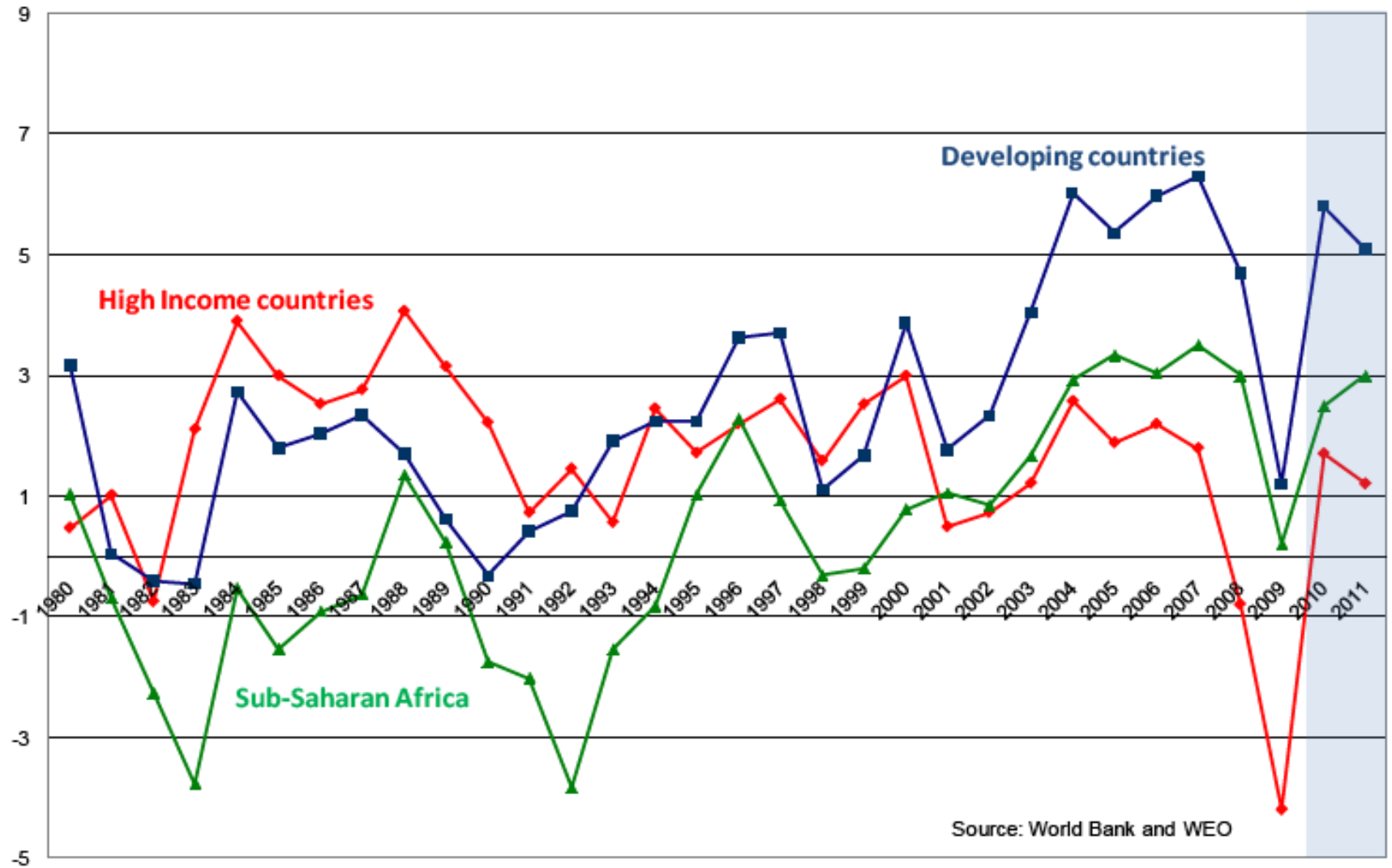
- Launched the World Social Science Fellows Programme in 2012
- First set of World Social Science Fellows at this GA and World Social Science Forum

Vision of Social Science



- Historical global dominance in defining the world's socio-economic and political agenda is now changing as a result of the rise of the South.
- It is projected that the- combined growing economies of China, India and Brazil will surpass that of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain and the U.S. combined by 2020 (UNDP 2013).
- Raising hopes of structural transformation to a more balanced and equal world where the needs of citizens from all corners of the globe will be heard and met.

GDP per capita: Annual growth rates (%)



Source: World Bank and WEO

Vision of Social Sciences, Cont



- It is expected that the rise of the global South will be accompanied by major global shifts in
 - human development,
 - patterns of resource consumption,
 - regional expectations and
 - ultimately the nature of global relations.
- New voices are beginning to shape the world we have come to know. What will these new entrants bring to the global stage? Importantly, what kind of world will they bring? What values will be driving this change? Who will benefit?

Vision of Social Sciences, Cont



- What will these voices from the global South bring to the world by way of alternative approaches to development and improving population wellbeing?
- Will they promote economic growth at the expense of human development – for instance, prioritizing physical infrastructure by building highways that bypass poor communities?
- Will they promote a model that enables the creation of more dollar billionaires in the face of global abject poverty?

Vision of Social Sciences, cont



- Will the vision of new leading countries be captured by private sector interests or by population needs?
- Will private profit supersede public interest?
- Will the emerging economic powers of the Global South focus on developing new global economic structures based on a redistributive model that will bring justice for all, or will they perpetuate the same inequitable systems that encourage material resource accumulation for some, while others suffer?

Challenges for Social Science



- It is critical that social scientists seek to understand global shifts and the consequent changing nature of the economic, social, cultural and political world.
- How to make social science truly global in a world that is rebalancing and where priorities are changing to a new global reality.
- Are social scientists prepared to change their research priorities and gaze into the evolving multipolar world where the global balance of power, influence and social policy is rapidly changing?

Future challenges for ISSC



- Funding challenges
 - Core funding for ISSC activities that is global
- Sustainability-
 - victim of own success- how to maintain the success achieved
- Contribution of the global south to ISSC scientific work
- Recruitment of more members

Conclusion

- The three Year term has been successful, achieving the majority of the objectives set
- Profile of ISSC has grown tremendously and it is now professional
- Fundraising has improved very much
- WSSR and WSSF now define ISSC
- Membership has increased, but still not universal
- Global economic, social and political landscape is changing calling for Social Scientists to re-examine their research agenda.



THANK YOU

www.worldsocialscience.org



international social science council