

Round-table: Keeping Science Involved in SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Implementation

Good afternoon distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this opportunity of speaking here today. My name is Jorge Monardes and I am speaking on behalf of the Sustainable World Initiative. And we are in complete agreement that science is required to generate better regulatory indicators, but, our question is more about fundamental points.

Our question is very simple: Does our current economic structure allow us to solve the environmental challenges we are facing today? Allow me to develop this question.

The over-arching challenge today, as WE see it, is this. We have an infinite-growing economy, which is circumscribed within a finite planet, with finite resources. We are way behind schedule, in developing technology to access the enormous resources of the solar system or the vast resources of the universe, which hypothetically would be the only way to sustain our current economic structure. We must synchronize our market and economy with our planetary resources. The present situation requires us to learn to live within our ecological means, not simply our financial means, which is a manmade construct.

The complexity of this challenge is so immense that countless solutions at the intersection of science and policy must be developed. There is an urgent need to bring the XIX century industrial complex to our current XXI century, an era of efficiency and information technology. We need to continue fostering renewable energy and, harnessing the energy we need through eco-friendly processes. Education and regulation of production and consumption is essential - and the solution to this is not simply better and cheaper technology, it is a matter of culture and respect for nature. Our increasing population growth must be lessened through expanded access to family planning, reproductive health education, complete cessation of child marriage,, and the empowerment of women and girls.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments of humanity has been to create community and cooperation across various cultural and physical bounds. We are living in a modern global society where many have improved quality of life, yet still more are confined and plagued by poverty. The earth and her people have suffered from the exponential economic growth and increased competition that define our society today. Our duty is to act now, using existing tools of science while seeking new technological solutions, because we are the generation with the ultimate opportunity to reshape civilization and rescue humanity.