

> As a result of the International Round Table on "Science, Technology and Innovation Policies: The Parliamentary Perspective" (Helsinki, Finland, 2003),

UNESCO LAUNCHED PILOT PROJECTS AIMED AT BUILDING S&T POLICY REGIONAL FORUMS

that regroup Parliamentary Science and Technology Committees, Government policy-makers, Scientists, Industry, Representatives of the civil society and the Media:

- African Science Policy Forum
- Arab Science Policy Forum
- Balkan Science Policy Forum
- Caucasian Science Policy Forum
- Latin American Science Policy Forum
- South-Asian Science Policy Forum
- Western-Central Asian Science Policy Forum

>>> POLICY FORUMS

Science & Technology POLICY FORUMS



DIVISION OF SCIENCE POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
 Natural Sciences Sector
 UNESCO
 1, rue Miollis
 75732 Paris Cedex 15
 France

Tel.: + 33 (0)1 45 68 41 63
 Fax: + 33 (0)1 45 68 58 27

Design: Mario Haas, Le PréSt. Cervalis France ■ Printing: SEP, Nîmes France
 Photo credits: European Community, 2005 ■ UNESCO/Nisamh Burke ■
 Gospod ■ Sanjay Pindiyath ■ Florian Rohlfshagen

>> POLICY FORUMS SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY POLICY FORUMS

> OBJECTIVES:

- **Providing** the S&T Parliamentary Committees with platforms for dialogue with scientists, the media, public and private sectors and civil society in developing national Science, Technology and Innovation systems;
- **Identifying** good practices and building upon lessons learned from existing mechanisms for S&T decision making;
- **Promoting** the development of participatory mechanisms and practice for governance of Science and Technology among stakeholders;
- **Exchanging** experiences of, and information on, science, technology and innovation policy-making process;
- **Strengthening** the capacity of parliamentary science committees by drawing on best practice from national and regional parliamentary organizations that have a significant operational experience.



Participants of the International Round Table on "Science, Technology and Innovation Policies: The Parliamentary Perspective", held at the Parliament of Finland, Helsinki, January 2003

Balancing the complexity of science

The World is undergoing rapid changes in the Science and Technology systems. The need to deal with more complex relationships calls for new alliances of domains of knowledge. A better understanding of the scientific process and of uncertainty, which is a fundamental aspect of such process, is replacing the traditional practice of the science enterprise.

and the increasing difficulty of the legislation process

Scientific and technical progress has, over time, created a situation where increasing level of scientific and technical skills are required in order to make decisions. But, today, Governments, Academic Institutions and Parliaments have greater and greater difficulty in addressing and dealing with the growing complexity, highly technical character, rapidity of change, and fragility of many developments in modern societies, in particular revolutionary technological and knowledge developments. Recent debates and controversies within the Parliaments on genetically modified foods, human cloning, genetic testing and therapy, New Information Technologies, global warming are all examples of the increasing difficulties Parliaments face.

Uncertainty and debate may be implicit in the nature of scientific inquiry, but a lack of clear scientific consensus makes matters more difficult for decision-makers.

Furthermore, citizens are increasingly concerned about ethical implications arising from the use of science and technologies as well as about the risk and uncertainty associated with them.



A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED

Contemporary legislation process is increasingly characterized by the engagement of multiple agents, not only those formally responsible. These include appropriate government authorities or representatives, scientists, industry, business, media and civil society.

TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE INTO POLITICAL CHOICES

Today's challenge for the Parliaments is to translate knowledge into political choices. While they are expected to assume responsibility in taking decision for and in dealing with scientific and technological issues, most members of Parliaments (and the officials in government) require sufficient scientific education, training, and experience.

Scientists play a key role in providing policy-makers with scientific advice, technical categories, standards, descriptions, assessments, etc. Politicians depend on them, in particular, for analyzing problems, defining their causes, and predicting the consequences or impact of different courses of action.

NEED FOR DIALOGUE

To fulfil the policy making and monitoring roles, decision makers require new types of information and modes for organizing such information, and new mechanisms of dialogue with all the stakeholders.

Science Policy at UNESCO

Taking into account the complexity of today's science and technology policies, UNESCO assists Member States in the formulation of new strategies for science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. The Organization develops and provides new decision-making tools, methodologies and norms for science policy-making. It conducts analysis on global and sectoral science policies in order to provide policy advice on restructuring national scientific systems and to assist in the elaboration of relevant investment programmes.