

ISC DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES ON SCIENCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a new approach to linking science and education with global challenges such as climate and environmental change, food, water and energy security, ocean preservation, disaster risk reduction, and other related issues. It integrates social, economic, and environmental objectives into 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Preamble

Science plays an important role in contributing to and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global agendas. At the ISC GeoUnions meeting held in Paris on 17 July 2022, the GeoUnions Steering Committee accepted a proposal by Alik Ismail-Zadeh and requested that he contacts the ISC to propose the organization of a new ISC programme, the “Distinguished Lecture Series on Basic Science for Sustainable Development” (DLSBS4SD), as a contribution to the International Year of Basic Science for Sustainable Development (IYBSSD 2022).

Launching a new ISC Distinguished Lecture Series

This GeoUnions initiative was approved by the ISC Governing Board, and the ISC DLSBS4SD commenced with its first lecture in early 2023 (<https://council.science/videos/basic-sciences-webinars/>). The principal aim of the DLSBS4SD was to highlight the importance of basic sciences in advancing sustainability. Six lectures were delivered in 2023 by outstanding representatives of ISC Members. Recordings of these lectures are available on the ISC YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIF4ZAQU71ToRRz3AcyL8wjs-LKSMYtCV>

Re-launching the Series

Following the successful Distinguished Lecture Series launched in 2022 in support of the IYBSSD 2022, the ISC GeoUnions re-launched the distinguished lecture series in 2024 to mark the United Nations’ ratification of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (2024–2033). The lectures aim to highlight the importance and role of science in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and are intended for researchers, students, and other stakeholders. Three lectures have been held so far (<https://council.science/news/re-launch-isc-geounions-distinguished-lecture-series/>).

To select speakers, the GeoUnions, through the International Science Council (ISC), invited ISC Member Unions to nominate candidates for the lecture series. Seventeen nominations have been received so far, and a selection committee (of three members), established by ten ISC GeoUnions, carefully selected the first six speakers, followed by another three in a subsequent round.

New development

By the end of September 2025, ISC confirmed that its Secretariat is committed to providing all the technical requirements of the Distinguished Lecture Series in support of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDS4SD), including (i) Setting up the Zoom

meeting and registration; (ii) Publishing the event on the ISC website and advertising it via the ISC weekly newsletter; (iii) Sending reminders to registered participants in advance of the meeting; (iv) Facilitating the technical aspects of the Zoom on the day of the event (recording, admitting participants, spotlighting, making translated captions available); (v) Editing the recording and providing a YouTube link; (vi) Updating the ISC event page to feature the recording and slides (if the speaker agrees); (vii) updating the page of the lecture series to include the recent lectures; and (viii) Sharing the recording with the registrants.

GeoUnions call to support the ongoing ISC-DLS in support of IDS4SD

Based on this new development, the GeoUnions call on all Members of the International Science Council, particularly its Category 1 Members, to contribute to and support the ongoing and successful ISC Distinguished Lecture Series (ISC-DLS), with the aim of making it more inclusive. Expanding the constellation of scientific disciplines can help advance sustainability science and highlight the importance of interdisciplinary and integrated research. Therefore, the GeoUnions suggest opening up opportunities for other ISC disciplines/organizations to actively participate in the ISC-DLS.

Nominations of lecturers and selection committee members

ISC Members are invited to nominate lecturers (see nomination form 1 below) for the ISC-DLS, as well as to nominate a representative to serve on the Selection Committee (see nomination form 2 below). Initially, a Selection Committee consisting of a Chair, Co-Chair, and four members will be established for a three-year term. The proposed composition of the committee will be approved by an ISC representative. The committee will then evaluate nominations for lectures and select lecturers to speak in 2026 and subsequent years, with approximately six lectures scheduled per year. The Chair or Co-Chair of the Selection Committee will contact the selected lecturers to invite them to participate in the ISC-DLS and to coordinate the scheduling of their lectures.

The GeoUnions wish to emphasize their role as initiators and facilitators of this initiative and express their intent to expand the ISC-DLS in support of the IDS4SD, encompassing the expertise of all ISC Members in the promotion of sustainability.

Attachment

Nomination Form 1 (lecturer nomination)

1. Nominating ISC organization
2. Person eligible to nominate (President, Secretary General, or other officer of the ISC organization)
3. Information about the nominee
 - Name
 - Affiliation
 - Professional website and e-mail address
 - Brief CV (1/2 page, A4) highlighting the nominee's scientific contribution to sustainability
4. Information on the lecture
 - Title

- Abstract (1/2 page, A4, in plain language)
- Explanation of the relevance of the subject to the achievement of the SDG targets.

Nomination Form 2 (Selection committee membership nominations)

The Selection Committee members should be experts in one of the SDG target fields to perform peer-review assessments.

1. Nominating ISC organization
2. Person eligible to nominate (President, Secretary General, or other officer of the ISC organization)
3. Information about the nominee
 - Name
 - Affiliation
 - Professional website and e-mail address
 - Brief CV (1/2 page, A4) highlighting the nominee's scientific contribution to one of the SDG target fields.