

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 4 October 2011

Canadian climate scientist elected as next President of the International Council for Science

Professor Gordon McBean, an internationally recognized meteorologist and climate change expert, has been named as the future President of the International Council for Science (ICSU). An established member of the ICSU community, McBean was elected by representatives from ICSU's 120 National Members and 30 International Scientific Unions gathered at the 30th ICSU General Assembly in Rome, Italy, on 27–30 September 2011. He is set to succeed the current ICSU President, Yuan Tseh Lee, in October 2014, and will be the first Canadian to take up this office.

Professor McBean was born and educated in Canada, and obtained a PhD in physics from the University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver. After an academic and research career that included serving as Professor of Atmospheric and Oceanographic Sciences at UBC, he was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister in Environment Canada, and was, from 1994 to 2000, responsible for climate, weather and air quality sciences and services in the federal government. He currently holds chairs in the Departments of Geography and Political Science at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, and is Director of Policy Studies at the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction there. His research interests are in atmospheric and climate sciences, ranging in scope from natural phenomena, and the hazards they generate, to the policies of governments and responses of people to them.

For many years McBean has been involved in ICSU and ICSU-related affairs, including the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and the planning of a new decade-long interdisciplinary research programme Integrated Research on Disaster Risk, whose Scientific Committee he chairs until 1 November. He is also President of Global Change START International, an organization supporting regional networks and capacity enhancement in Africa and Asia, and notably in the context of ICSU's international global change programmes.

His service and achievements in the fields of climate change and natural hazards research have been recognized with the Orders of Canada (2008) and Ontario (2010). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. As a lead author and review editor for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), he was a member of the team that was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

In a presentation to the ICSU membership last week he undertook to devote his full energy to building ICSU's strengths, and addressing issues of concern that had been identified at the Assembly. "ICSU is a unique and rich mixture of Unions and National Members. Each has its own priorities but only through consultation and dialogue can the Council bring forward common values and wisdom central to the decision-making process. We must work together to make our programmes a reality." he said. "I shall work towards ICSU being an ever more effective and responsive organization for all its members, so that there are positive benefits for both science and scientists around the world." he affirmed.

Other Members elected to the ICSU Executive Board

Officers:

Vice-President for Scientific Planning and Review: Malegapuru W. Makgoba (molecular immunology, South Africa)

Vice-President for External Relations: Sergio Pastrana (international cooperation in science, Cuba)

Secretary General: David Black (chemistry, Australia)

Treasurer: Hans Rudolf Ott, (condensed matter physics, Switzerland)

(Yuan Tseh Lee, President, and Catherine Bréchnignac, Past-President, assumed their offices during the General Assembly.)

Ordinary Members:

From National Members

John Ball, United Kingdom; Luiz Davidovich, Brazil; Nicole Moreau, France; Guoxiong Wu, China: CAST.

From Union Members

Orhan Altan, photogrammetry and remote sensing; Maria Carla Galavotti, history and philosophy of science; Dov Jaron, physical and engineering sciences in medicine; Kennedy Reed, pure and applied physics.

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