EU and African Union strive to better integrate evidence into policymaking
For the first time, European and African scientists and policy makers are meeting to better understand the constraints and demands from both the scientific and the policymaking perspective and to develop together new skills in using evidence to inform policy. This capacity building evidence and policy event focusing on water-energy-food security nexus is organised jointly by the EU and African Union (AU), together with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and takes place at the JRC site, in Ispra, Italy, on 31 August – 2 September.

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and responsible for the JRC, said: “We need scientists and policymakers to work more closely together in order to design better policies, responding to citizens’ needs. This event brings together a broad variety of expertise, practice and perspective from the EU and the African Union, and also demonstrates Europe's engagement with Africa”.

Vladimir Šucha, JRC’s Director-General opened the event, together with H.E. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (via a video address), Pavel Kabat, Director-General and CEO of IIASA and Peter Gluckman, Chair of International Network of Government Science Advice and New Zealand’s Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor (via a video address). The following high-level panel included Pavel Kabat, Fravia Schlegel (UNESCO), Claire Craig, Director of Science Policy, Royal Society, UK and Isayvani Naicker, Chief Director of International Resources in the Department of Science and Technology, Government of South Africa. The discussants addressed the challenges for policymaking in the water – energy – food security nexus, what evidence exists and what more is needed to address these challenges and how can policymakers and scientists tackle this together. Vladimir Šucha delivered a keynote lecture on the challenges in informing policy through evidence.

Masterclasses

Over the next two days some 100 participants will do several highly interactive masterclasses. The topics will be grouped around four broad themes: operating at the science-policy interface; providing and using evidence; techniques for co-creating policy, and stimulating effective dialogue; all with the objective of helping develop or improve skills and working practices in better integrating evidence into policy-making. The masterclasses will be recorded, and the material will be made available after the event.

Background

The event is held within the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. The selection of water-energy-food security nexus as the leading topic of the event is in line with the 2014 EU-Africa Summit conclusions to work towards an EU-Africa Research and Innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture, the global Sustainable Development Goals framework adopted in 2015, and the Africa Union’s 2063 Agenda.


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