2026 ISC Meeting & Beijing Science Dialogue Share Global Vision of Growth

THE INTERNATIONAL MONTH 2026
Openness Cooperation Trust

By BI Weizi & LONG Yun

The 2026 International Science Council (ISC) Midterm Members' Meeting & Beijing Science Dialogue opened in Beijing on October 19. Hosted by the ISC, the event was co-organized by the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST), the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the Beijing Municipal People's Government.

The conference, attended by over 1,000 representatives from the Chinese and international scientific and technological communities across 88 countries and regions, was held under the theme "Science in a Complex World — Science for a Better Future". The participants engaged in dialogue and exchange on three major topics — "Science as a Global Public Good", "Responsible Artificial Intelligence to Address Global Challenges", and "Science, Society, and Trust".

According to Peter Gluckman, president of the ISC, people now live in difficult, uncertain, and complex times, and a global voice for science is more important than ever. Ultimately, science clearly asks for a universal language. It has a central role to play in advancing the common good. The challenge is how to ensure that in a more fractured world, science can use its power as a universal language to reduce tensions, focus discussion on long-term thinking, and address the broader sustainability agenda. "If the scientific community is pragmatic in sticking to the principles that allow us to have that universality, we can create a better future," he said.

Salvatore Arico, CEO of the ISC, chaired the keynote session, which began with an introductory address by Robbert Dijkgraaf, president-elect of the ISC. Experts from China and abroad delivered keynote presentations, including Irina Bokova, former director-general of UNESCO; Brian Schmidt, 2011 Nobel Laureate in Physics; and Pan Jianwei, a CAS academician.

During the opening ceremony, five significant scientific achievements in sustainable development, scientific and technological archaeology, scientific journals, and basic research were unveiled via video. They showcased the various ways scientific research contributes to social development and addresses real-world needs. Zhu Yongguan, vice chair of the ISC and CAS academician, presented the Beijing Science Declaration, which calls for a shared vision of global scientific development beyond 2030.

The declaration emphasizes that openness, inclusivity, cooperation, and mutual respect are the cornerstones of scientific progress. It calls on the international community to uphold an open, inclusive, and collaborative global science system, address global challenges through responsible artificial intelligence, strengthen the connection between science and society through trust and participation, and work together to shape the future of science.

The aim of the conference was to promote a new, more open, inclusive, and forward-looking international agenda for science and technology development; uphold an open, fair, just, and non-discriminatory environment for international scientific and technological cooperation; and leverage science's role as a bridge between the state, society, and the people, transforming it into a shared force for promoting peace, resilience, and sustainable development.



Irina Bokova
Former Director-general of UNESCO

Brian Schmidt
President-elect of the International Astronomical Union

Pan Jianwei
Professor at the University of Science and Technology of China

Peter Gluckman
President of the International Science Council (ISC)

Robbert Dijkgraaf
President-elect of the ISC

Science for Better and Shared Future

By LONG Yun, BI Weizi & DAI Xiaopei

"Knowledge is the only resource that grows when used and when shared and when applied," Robbert Dijkgraaf, president-elect of the International Science Council (ISC), said at the opening of the 2026 International Science Council Midterm Members' Meeting and Beijing Science Dialogue in Beijing held on October 19.

He said science had never been more global, with access to a worldwide pool of scientific talent. "China's remarkable rise as a scientific powerhouse is a striking illustration."

Dijkgraaf said the previous century was largely a search for the building blocks of reality, including particles and forces, cells and genes, and bits and algorithms. This century is beginning to explore what can be made with those building blocks as AI, quantum technologies and biotechnology open new possibilities. Science can help build bridges and bring countries together around shared interests.

Protecting the conditions for open science

Dijkgraaf said the scientific community must organize itself, and defend international partnerships, academic freedom, openness, integrity and international collaboration. "We must therefore recognize science as a global public good, part of humanity's collective heritage, and a shared commons," he said.

Brian Schmidt, the 2011 Nobel laureate in physics and president-elect of the International Astronomical Union, said many people have been born into a world of year-after-year progress, including better health, more global cooperation and efforts to make famine a thing of the past. "The future is not just going to make itself in a way we want; it needs to be stewarded," Schmidt said.

Science has a singular role in that stewardship, he argued, because the technical problems are not the limiting factor. "I believe there is no technical problem facing humanity today that we cannot solve together, and AI will help make that easier." He added that the challenges facing humanity are human and depend on the ability to work together.

Schmidt also said astronomy has consistently provided human-to-human links across countries. Such relationships are "a giant buffer to crises that will emerge in the future."

Knowledge infrastructure for multilateralism

Irina Bokova, former director-general of UNESCO, said scientific knowledge had shaped some of the United Nations system's most important achievements, including international climate agreements, the evidence base for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), biodiversity and health work and food-system solutions."Science is not external to multilateralism. It is one of the conditions for making multilateralism work," she said. Science helped make collective action possible by establishing shared knowledge about problems no country can address alone, she added.

Bokova said China's total research and development spending reached 2.8 percent of GDP in 2025, exceeding the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average for the first time. This policy approach, to a very large extent, allowed China to achieve many of the SDGs ahead of the 2030 timeline. Emphasizing equity, inclusivity and sustainability, she said efforts to accelerate their achievement by the end of the decade are critical.

She argued that science should be placed at the heart of UN reform."Renewing the UN is not only about institutional architecture, mandates, structures, and budgets. It is also about renewing the knowledge infrastructure on which effective multilateral action depends," she said, calling for scientific assessment, foresight and data to be linked more systematically with decision-making across the UN system.

She also said the social sciences were indispensable for anticipating how technological change would shape societies and for identifying its benefits, risks and unintended consequences. "Science cannot renew multilateralism alone. But without science and without the international scientific community, the renewal of multilateralism will be ineffective and incomplete."

Keeping exchange open

For Pan Jianwei, professor at the University of Science and Technology of China, the case for international exchange is personal. He said in the coming 10 to 15 years, the scale of quantum systems is expected to expand further to more than one million. With the support of quantum error correction this would lay a solid foundation for universal quantum computing.

The history of quantum mechanics, he said, shows why exchange matters: It was founded by European scientists, developed in the United States and elsewhere, and became a cornerstone of modern science and technology through a century of global academic exchange.

His own career has followed that pattern. "I have always believed that international academic exchange and cooperation are a key driving force for scientific development," Pan said. "I sincerely hope that even in today's very complex circumstances, today's scientists, especially young scientists, can have the same opportunities I had," he said. "We will strive to remain open-minded and actively welcome more peers from around the world to join us in vibrant international cooperation."

In an interview with *Science and Technology Daily* after the meeting, Dijkgraaf said the ISC is the oldest and most comprehensive organization representing the global scientific community, with more members than the UN because it includes disciplines and interdisciplinary bodies as well as countries.

He said the attitude of the Chinese scientific community and the Chinese government strongly promotes international collaboration, which was the ISC's purpose. "Science and technology is the most reliable source of optimism," Dijkgraaf said, because every day, new discoveries can be made and new fields developed.



Open Science Crucial to Scientific Advancements

By LU Zijian

"Open science is very important to the scientific community because the community's progress is achieved by sharing the analysis and results of the research," Nathalie Lemarchand, president of the International Geographical Union (IGU), told *Science and Technology Daily* during the Satellite Symposium on Open Science, Research Assessment and Publishing in Beijing on October 20.

This was echoed by Nokuthula Mchunu, deputy director at the African Open Science Platform hosted by the National Research Foundation of South Africa. "If you open the sciences up, you can have more people participating, more discoveries and more understanding of the challenges that we face in society, and then you can be quicker to find the solutions."

To deal with challenges facing open science development, Lemarchand said a big scientific organization is needed, such as the International Science Council (ISC) and UNESCO. They can collaborate with governments and international organizations to help the scientific community to cope with challenges concerning open science.

Lemarchand, a human geographer, said, open science plays a major role in promoting international cooperation when it is FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable). By good practices, open science can become a global public good for everyone.

Interoperability matters more in quantitative research, she said, as it is a way to standardize the research process and data so that they can be used in different disciplines or sections.

Physical geographers and those working on geomatics and the geographic information systems use a huge quantity of data in their research, and they need to find a good system to make the data reusable between geographers from different countries, such as China and Hungary, Lemarchand explained.

Researchers at California State University- San Bernardino (USA) and Beijing Normal University (BNU, China) compiled a database of more than 1,000 journals under the framework of IGU, and it is now updated by scholars at BNU.

IGU and BNU scholars are searching for open access journals inside this database, and will communicate this information to the whole geographical community, and encourage them to publish in these journals, Lemarchand said.

This is only a glimpse of China's efforts in promoting open science. In November 2024, China, Brazil, South Africa and the African Union jointly launched the *Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science* to build an open, fair, impartial and non-discriminatory global environment for science and technology development.

The Chinese scientific community proposed an initiative named *Towards Open Science Infrastructure Sharing Network: China's Knowledge and Data Sharing Platform — Open for Science10*. It was endorsed by the Executive Committee of UNESCO's International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development in February 2025, and launched in June the same year.

At the symposium, Qu Jiansheng, director of the National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences (NSLC), which coordinated the initiative, launched OPEN SCIENCE, an open-access journal adopting a new publishing model known as meta-knowledge publishing. It is the first scientific journal in the world to be directly named "Open Science," according to NSLC.

The Open for Science10 team released the Open Science Readiness Index framework for geoscience data centers (OSRI-data), together with the results of its first assessment.

It's easy to see why Chinese open science initiatives have taken off and advanced at a rapid pace, Mchunu said. "Because we've seen how they've been participating and making efforts in different initiatives in open science and open access."

Topics such as the reform of research assessment systems, the governance of scientific publishing and the trustworthiness of the scientific record were also discussed at the symposium.

The symposium was held under the framework of the 2026 International Science Council (ISC) Midterm Members' Meeting and Beijing Science Dialogue. It was jointly organized by the NSLC, International Astronomical Union, Chinese Astronomical Society, National Astronomical Observatories, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the ISC.