



## **Credibility across cultures: expertise, uncertainty and the global politics of scientific advice**

Scientific advice has never been in greater demand; nor has it been more contested. From climate change to cyber-security, poverty to pandemics, food technologies to fracking, the questions being asked of experts by policy makers, the media and the public continue to multiply. At the same time, in the wake of the global financial crisis and controversies such as 'Climategate', the authority and legitimacy of experts is under greater scrutiny. And the explosion of social media opens up new channels for debate, enabling, and at times forcing, experts to engage directly with more diverse audiences.

Worldwide, we see novel structures for scientific advice being put in place: both through new institutions like the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); and the appointment of a UK-style 'chief scientific adviser' at the European Commission. These issues were also magnified in the run-up to the Rio+20 Earth Summit in June 2012, and in debates over what should succeed the Millennium Development Goals. Following Rio+20, there has also been a renewed push to ensure that the latest research and evidence informs international policy discussions, with new initiatives such as Future Earth and the UNESCO science advisory board.

Tackling the sustainability and development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will undoubtedly require the 'best available' scientific advice: to measure progress; to predict impacts; to identify solutions; and to evaluate options and pathways for decision-making. But what is 'best advice' – and how might this idea need to be re-thought – amidst the inherent complexities, uncertainties and contestations of knowledge and value that pervade so many of today's challenges? Many questions persist about how to build and maintain robust, open and accountable processes of expert advice that can operate effectively across disciplines, sectors, social contexts and national boundaries. This critical task – of maintaining credibility across cultures – will be the focus of the 2013 STEPS Centre Annual Symposium. The Symposium will take place over a day and a half at the University of Sussex's Conference Centre.

### **About the STEPS Centre**

The STEPS Centre (Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability) is an interdisciplinary global research and policy engagement centre uniting development studies with science and technology studies. Our cross-cutting work covers agriculture & food; energy & climate change; health & disease and water & sanitation. In an era of unprecedented change, we are developing a new '[pathways approach](#)' to understanding and action on sustainability and development, providing new thinking and practical solutions.

Our work addresses two vital global challenges: linking environmental sustainability with better livelihoods and health for poor people; and helping science and technology work for poverty reduction and social justice.

The STEPS Centre launched in 2006 and is based at the Institute of Development Studies and SPRU Science and Technology Policy Research at the University of Sussex in the UK. We work with a [network of partners](#) in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe and are funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Find out more: [www.steps-centre.org](http://www.steps-centre.org)

Follow us on Twitter: @stepscentre

## Symposium Programme

Please note:

1. All speakers are confirmed unless otherwise stated.
2. All sessions and breaks take place in the University of Sussex's Conference Centre on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Bramber House (see map on p.4) unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday 6 February 2013		
12:00	Arrival, registration and lunch	
13:30	Session 1 <b>Promises and paradoxes of scientific authority</b>	<b>Prof Melissa Leach</b> , Director, STEPS Centre, University of Sussex (Chair) <b>Prof Roger Pielke</b> , Centre for Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Colorado <b>Dr Miles Parker</b> , former Deputy CSA, Defra & Associate Fellow Centre for Science and Policy, University of Cambridge <b>Prof Mike Hulme</b> , Professor of Climate Change, University of East Anglia
15:15	Tea break	
15:45	Session 2 <b>Whose expertise counts? Challenging hierarchies amongst disciplines, professions and publics</b>	<b>Prof James Wilsdon</b> , Professor of Science and Democracy, SPRU Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Sussex (Chair) <b>Prof Brian Wynne</b> , CESAGEN Professor, University of Lancaster <b>Dr Alice Bell</b> , Research Fellow & Head of Public Engagement, SPRU Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Sussex <b>Dr Dipak Gyawali</b> , Pragya, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, former Minister of Water Resources, Nepal <b>Jill Rutter</b> , Programme Director, Institute for Government
17:30	Move to Jubilee Lecture Theatre for keynote lecture	
17:45	<b>Public Keynote lecture 'What is the right balance between respecting evidence and living in the real world?'</b>	<b>Prof Anne Glover</b> Chief Scientific Adviser to the President, European Commission
18:45	Drinks reception Jubilee Lecture Theatre Lobby (venue to be confirmed)	

19:30	Symposium Dinner Bramber House 1 <sup>st</sup> floor 'Dine Central' Restaurant
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**Thursday 7 February 2013**

08.30	Tea and coffee available	
09:00	<p>Session 3</p> <p><b>Beyond Rio+20: improving global structures for scientific advice</b></p>	<p><b>Prof Ian Scoones</b>, Co-Director, STEPS Centre, University of Sussex (Chair)</p> <p><b>Prof Johan Rockström</b>, Executive Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre</p> <p><b>Prof Lidia Brito</b>, Director of Science Policy, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)</p> <p><b>Prof Sir Robert Watson</b>, former Chief Scientific Adviser, UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA )</p>
10:45	Tea break	
11:15	<p>Session 4</p> <p><b>From MDGs to SDGs: aspirations, evidence and diversity in setting global goals</b></p>	<p><b>Dr Adrian Ely</b>, Head of Impact, STEPS Centre, University of Sussex (Chair)</p> <p><b>Dr Camilla Toulmin</b>, Director, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)</p> <p><b>Prof Duncan Green</b>, Senior Strategic Adviser, Oxfam GB</p> <p><b>Prof Chris Whitty</b>, Director Research &amp; Evidence and Chief Scientific Adviser, UK Department for International Development (DFID)</p>
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	<p>Session 5</p> <p><b>Power, plurality and uncertainty: opening up expert advice</b></p>	<p><b>Prof Andy Stirling</b>, SPRU &amp; Co-Director, STEPS Centre, University of Sussex (Chair)</p> <p><b>Prof Susan Owens</b>, Professor of Environment and Policy, University of Cambridge</p> <p><b>Dr Jan Marco Müller</b>, Assistant to the Chief Scientific Adviser, European Commission</p> <p><b>Dr Suman Sahai</b>, Convenor, GeneCampaign, Delhi</p> <p><b>Prof David Spiegelhalter</b>, Winton Professor of the Public Understanding of Risk, University of Cambridge</p>
15:45	Tea break	
16.10	<b>Dr Robert Doubleday</b> , Executive Director Centre for Science and Policy, Cambridge University on 'The Politics of Scientific Advice - future plans and opportunities'	
16:15	<b>Closing keynote lecture</b>	<b>Prof Alan Irwin</b> Dean of Research, Copenhagen Business School
17:30	Symposium ends	

# Sussex University Campus Map

