

Think Tank of Science Advice Montreal, June 10, 2014

Summary

On June 10, 2014, the Chief Scientist of Quebec held an international Chief Scientists and Opinion Leaders meeting in Montreal to discuss, compare, and challenge strategic approaches used by different countries and networks to deliver high level scientific advice to their respective governments or organizations. More importantly, they brought to the Chief Scientists and Opinion Leaders table their knowledge, experience, expertise and creative ideas, components of success of the roundtable.

In his opening remarks the Chief Scientist of Quebec introduced the national and international science and science policy journalists from Canada and the United Kingdom as “the people who look at us and speak about us”. In their respective individual presentations that followed, the speakers summarized the structure of science policy and advice in their respective countries/constituencies. The science advisors representing India, Japan, the United States, Belgium, Canada, Quebec, and the International Council for Science presented their own models respectively.

The presentations constituted a natural introduction to the roundtable that followed; it was an open discussion on the pros and cons of existing models and the best means to provide reliable science advice to governments.

The following sums up the discussions:

- Opt for a non-political appointment of Chief Scientists;
- Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of decentralized science advice in government vs. the existence of a chief scientist. Analyze the existing situation in the private and public arenas;
- Determine whether bringing science to government or letting government rule science;
- Consider science advice as the 5th arm of any government;
- Bridge the gap between science advice and politics. Educate policy makers. Organize a 50-50 meeting with policymakers and scientists (via UN Science Board). Make a tool out of research funding taxes (used to promote science outcomes and results) as an incentive to influence impact;
- Emphasize the importance of basic research;
- Build science policy advice on research integrity;
- Support efficient and sound science policy advice with an evidence-based data;

- Engage with stakeholders is key in making science policy and decision-making, as the ultimate beneficiary is the human kind and its future generations;
- Build a network whose main objective is building advice, taking into account the political environment;
- Develop science journalism through educational programs. Strategically mobilize the public by engaging science media in diffusing science. Build public support for science. Work with media to help make science credible (issue or exaggeration in press releases);
- Build international science metrics for developing knowledge-based economies;
- Develop science advice in diplomacy (could create a metric based on GDP of the country);
- Engage young generation who have entrepreneurial drive. Use social media;
- Create a federation of science journalists that will allow linking developed and developing countries;
- Seek crisis unit people in science advice.

In conclusion, the participants agreed that science and science advices are crucial in the viability of our economies, our health, and our lives, as well as essential for transparent governance. Whether delivered through a CSO or an alternative model approach, it is key to secure advice from reliable sources or credible individuals.

As the meeting took place in the context of the Conference of Montreal it was also an opportunity for the participants to be part of different activities of the International Forum of the Americas.

Programme

<i>Time</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Theme Leaders/Participants</i>
8 :00 a.m.	Breakfast	
8 :30 a.m.	Welcome, opening remarks, and objective of the meeting	Rémi Quirion
	Perspective in science policy and giving advices at highest political level – an outsider view	Colin Macilwain , Science Policy Writer, UK Kamiel S. Gabriel , Professor, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Canada Mark Henderson , Managing Editor, ReSearch Money, Canada Valérie Borde , Science Writer, Québec
	International examples - advantages and challenges	Prateek Sharma , India Koji Omi , Japan E. William Colglazier , USA
	Break	
	International examples - advantages and challenges	Frank Monteny , Belgium Robert Dunlop , Canada G. McBean , ICSU
	The Québec model	Rémi Quirion , Canada
	Lunch	
	Round Table - What can we learn from each other? Is there an optimal model? - Pursuing the discussion for the need of a formal mechanism.	All participants
	Press Conference: Providing high-level science advice to our governments.	All participants
4 :30 p.m.	Conférence de Montréal –Concordia University Round-table session: <i>Innovation in an advanced society</i>	All participants
6 :00 p.m.	INRS <i>honoris causa</i> to Mr. Koji Omi	All participants
7 :00 p.m.	Dinner	All participants

Participants

Ms. Valérie Borde	Science Writer
Dr. E. William Colglazier	Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State Assistant to the President for Science and Technology
Mr. Robert Dunlop	Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Innovation, Industry Canada
Dr. Kamiel S. Gabriel	Professor, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Canada
Mr. Mark Henderson	Managing Editor, ReSearch Money, Canada
Mr. Colin Macilwain	Science Policy Writer
Prof. Gordon McBean	President-elect, International Council for Science (ICSU)
Dr. Frank Monteny	Director General , Research Programmes, Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO)
Mr. Koji Omi	Founder and Chairman, STS Forum, Japan
Prof. Prateek Sharma	Dean, Faculty of Applied Sciences, TERI University, India
Prof. Rémi Quirion	Chief Scientist of Québec
Dr. Wendy M. Watson-Wright	Executive Secretary and Assistant Director General, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
Dr. Renaldo Battista	Scientific Director, FRQ - Health
Ms. Marie-Josée Blais	Director of International Collaboration Division, MEIE
Me Mylène Deschênes	Director, Ethics and Legal Affairs, FRQ
Ms. Ramia Jabr	Executive Administrator to the Chief Scientist, FRQ
Prof. Normand Labrie	Scientific Director, FRQ- Society and Culture
Prof. Maryse Lassonde	Scientific Director, FRQ-Nature and Technologies
Mr. Benoit Sévigny	Director, Communications and Knowledge Mobilization, FRQ