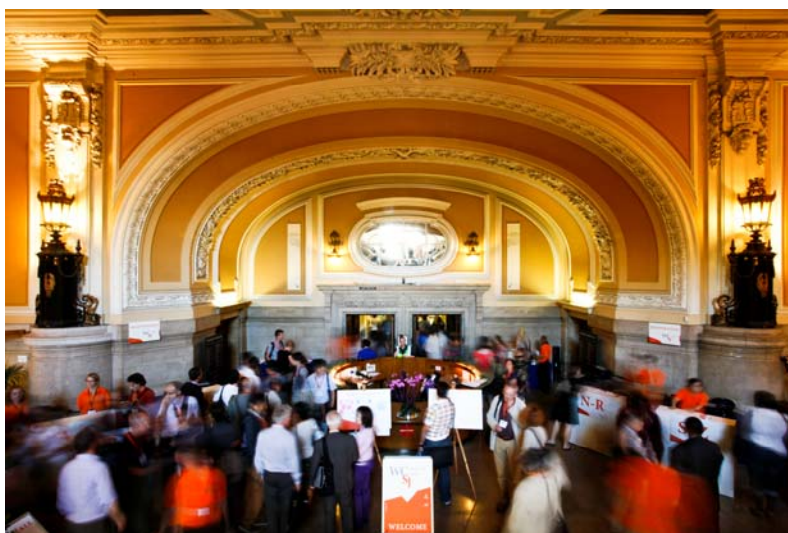


**Report to the UK Department for International Development (DFID) on
The Development Strand of the**

**World Conference of Science Journalists
29th June – 3rd July 2009, London**



WC
LONDON
2009
SJ



World Federation of Science Journalists
www.wfsj.org



Association of British Science Writers
www.absw.org.uk

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Executive Summary: The Development Strand at WCSJ2009 supported by DFID

Aims

The Development Strand at the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists aimed to deliver sessions on the role of the media in reporting on development issues, including food sustainability, climate change, and tropical diseases, and their importance to policy and capacity building.

The strand was intended to be of particular benefit to journalists from emerging and developing countries where these issues are acutely relevant to their audiences and these journalists need to be equipped to cover such issues accurately and critically. The Development Strand also aimed to focus attention of the UK media and journalists from around Europe and North America on development issues. The Strand was to be an opportunity to showcase DFID's ongoing support to the World Federation of Science Journalists' peer-to-peer mentoring programme (SjCOOP) and to the Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net), through discussion panels and in workshops.

More broadly, the strand would highlight DFID policy and projects, and DFID's goal of supporting comprehensive media development (DFID briefing paper "Media and Good Governance" (May 2008).

The Development Strand had 3 main components:

- 1) A pre-conference workshop on "Food Security and Sustainability: Can we avert a food crisis?"
- 2) Sessions in the main conference programme relating to development issues, including climate change, food security and sustainability, and challenges facing science journalists reporting on these issues.
- 3) Funding for journalists from developing countries to attend WCSJ2009

This Report

This report outlines the sessions of the Development Strand at WCSJ2009, the results of evaluations done by questionnaire and interviews on the day of pre-conference workshops (Monday 29th June) and by post-conference questionnaire on Thursday 2nd July and online survey. We also include individual comments from conference delegates and scholars, including those directly supported by DFID via the World Federation of Science Journalists peer-to-peer science journalism mentoring programme (SjCOOP), and transcripts of the Development Strand podcast by Naked Scientists, and the lunch session organised by DFID on Thursday 2nd July, "Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community".

Online Archive

All session summaries, written reports, including external media coverage, audio recordings, video and podcasts, are available online at the specially created conference news website <http://www.wcsjnews.org>.

7th WCSJ in 2011

The evaluation and feedback contained in this report from the 6th WCSJ in London in 2009, including on the conference Development Strand, will form a vital basis for planning the next World Conference of Science Journalists in 2011 will be held in Cairo, Egypt. WCSJ2011 will be organised jointly by the Arab Science Journalists Association and the National Association of Science Writers (USA).

Events of the Development Strand

Summaries, audios and reports on events of the Development Strand are available online at a specially created conference news website at <http://www.wcsjnews.org/events/development>

Workshops

Summaries and reports of all pre-conference workshops can be found at <http://www.wcsjnews.org/events/workshops>

02. Food security and sustainability - Can we avert a food crisis? (supported by DFID)

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/02-food-security-and-sustainability-can-we-avert-food-crisis>

Monday, June 29, 2009 09:00 - Monday, June 29, 2009 18:00

Parallel sessions

04. Great talent, but are they credible?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/04-great-talent-are-they-credible>

Tuesday, June 30, 2009 15:45 - Tuesday, June 30, 2009 17:15

06. Four Journalists who changed the world

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/06-four-journalists-who-changed-world>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 11:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 13:00

08. Recipe for disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/08-recipe-disaster-growing-population-and-climate-change-can-science-serve-solution>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 11:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 13:00

09. Does science need to be highbrow?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/09-does-science-need-be-highbrow>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 11:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 13:00

10. The future of science news?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/10-future-science-news>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 11:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 13:00

15. A drought or a flood? Climate change reporting around the world

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/15-drought-or-flood-climate-change-reporting-around-world>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 14:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 16:00

17. Covering a disaster from Sichuan to Sri Lanka

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/17-covering-disaster-sichuan-sri-lanka>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 16:30 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 18:00

Plenary 3: Climate change: Gearing up for Copenhagen

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/3-climate-change-gearing-copenhagen>

Wednesday, July 1, 2009 10:00 - Wednesday, July 1, 2009 11:00

Lunch Session 9. Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/lunch-session-9-friendship-or-friction-how-media-relates-research-community>

Thursday, July 2, 2009 13:15 - Thursday, July 2, 2009 14:15

Pre-Conference Workshop: Food Security and Sustainability

Supported by DFID and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

Date: Monday 29th June 2009

Venue: Royal Geographical Society

Summary: In the face of an inexorably growing global population, changing diets, conflict and economic chaos, all against the backdrop of climate change, the only certainty we have is the coming crisis in producing enough nutritious food for everyone to eat.

The UK's Chief Scientific Advisor has already called for a 50% increase in global food production by 2030 if we are to feed everyone - despite the challenges of economics, trade, transport and conflict.

The pre-conference workshop "Food Security and Sustainability: Can we avert a crisis?" featured leading experts and scientists who explored food security issues and some of the latest scientific developments that aim to deliver the required production increase. Topics included: increasing primary crop productivity, the use of fertilizers and pesticides, reducing waste in the food chain, the problem of diminishing fossil fuels on food production, the potential for damaging child development and improving food safety and nutrition.

The full-day workshop included ample opportunities for networking, group discussions, and one-to-one interviews with food security and sustainability experts and scientists.

The workshop was organised and sponsored by the UK's main funding agency for research in the biosciences, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the UK Government Department for International Development (DFID).

Speakers included leading experts and decision-makers from BBSRC, DFID, and other key players in the science, economics, and sociology of food security and sustainability.

Producers:

- Matt Goode
- Heather Pillans

Speakers:

- Mike Bevan
- John Foulkes
- Julie Scholes
- Brendan Wren
- Jon West
- Ian Crute
- Douglas Kell

Workshop participants

WCSJ 2009 Workshop registrants

Food Security and Sustainability

Last Name	First Name	Job Title	Organisation
Dickerson	Blair	Vice-President	Natural Sciences Research Council of Canada
Picard	Andre	WCSJ speaker	
Saini	Angela	Science Journalist	Freelance
Barton	Chris	Senior feature writer	New Zealand Herald
Motomura	Yukiko	journalist	The Mainichi Newspapers
Nieuwendijk	Godelief	science journalist	TRITS Scientific - science communication
Campos-Seijo	Bibiana	Editor	Chemistry World
Hey	Nigel	Managing Director	Nigel Hey, Ltd.
Razafison	Rivonala Hévènerdèse Albin	Science Journalist	
Raif Ghosn	Zeinab	Editor	
Malakata	Michael Amos	Science Journalist	
Griffin	Peter	Manager	Science Media Centre
Van Der Meij	Marjoleine Georgette	Student	Delft University of Technology
Axt	Barbara	reporter	Informa
Arnaud	Celia	Senior Editor	Chemical & Engineering News
De Vrieze	Jop	science editor	NRC Handelsblad
Tomita	Makoto	teacher	WASEDA Univ.
Scrase	Richard	Journalist	Science Media Production
Ouellet	Danielle	Freelance journalist	Université du Québec à Montreal

Romeo	Guido	reporter Journalist. Graduate in Social Communication's Sciences	Il Sole24Ore Ciencia que habla Radio Program, FM 90.5
Farré	María Cecilia		
Omungo	Rosalía	REPORTER	KENYA BROADCASTING CORPORATION
Nazaretyan	Karine	science editor	Akzia Mass Media
Matziaraki	Daphne	Journalist	SKAI
Campos	Ioli	Journalist	Freelance
Hotz	Robert Lee	Science Columnist	The Wall Street Journal
Faye	Armand	MENTOR	WFSJ
Lutaaya	Henry	Senior Writer: S&T Magazine	S&T Magazine
Binney	Alison	Project Director	New Science Journalism
Kisolo	Sarah	COMMUNICATION OFFICER	RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION
Mwai	Elizabeth	Journalist	standard Newspapers
Almeida	Carla	journalist	SciDev.Net and others
Chikapa	Charles	Broadcast Journalist	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
Poad	Dale	Deputy Programme Manager	Department for International Developmen
Albright	Kerry	Research Communication Manager	Department for International Development
Harris	Cath	Communications Officer	Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment
Smith	Barnaby	Press Officer	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
Jubb	Imogen	Communication Manager	Australian Climate Change Science Program
Capper	Linda	Head of Press, PR & Education	British Antarctic Survey
McMullen	Catherine	Editor/Writer/Journalist Presenter &producer - Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Allophilia Consultants
Mitchell	Natasha	Executive producer ABC Radio National Science Unit	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Malcolm	Lynne		Australlian Broadcasting Corporation
Lewcock	Anna	News Editor, Chemistry World	Chemistry World

Fowler	Naomi	Radio producer	n/a (various)
Frood	Arran	Freelance journalist	Freelance
Richard	Marie-Josée	Freelance journalist	Agence Science Presse
Lehmkuhl	Markus	Editor	Free University Berlin
Thorp	Susanna	Director	WRENmedia
Oliver	Jeffrey	Corporate Communications Officer	IITA
Hopko	Hanna	journalist	The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
Sempler	Kaianders	Editor	Ny Teknik
Ranscombe	Peter	Business Reporter	
Midori	Aoyagi-Usui	Chief of the Section	
Overkamp	Rogier	Student	
Jingyang	Lim	Student	
Dinar	Athena	Senior Press Officer	
Lloyd-Laney	Megan	Communications Advisor	Department for International Development
Pain	Elisabeth	Contributing Editor	Science Careers
Schmidt	Becky	science writer and editor	CSIRO Land and Water
Douglas	Fionna	Communications Advisor	World Bank
Evans	Christopher	Associate Dean of Science	Ryerson University
Hamilton	Alan	Programme Support Officer	DFID
Pickrell	John	Deputy Editor/Online Editor	Cosmos Magazine
Nayar	Anjali	Print/press	Nature
Saady	Abeer	Print/press	Al Akhbar Newspaper
Fontes	Cristiane		British Embassy
Kanj	Safaa	Online	American University in Cairo AUC

Workshop Report

Food Security and Food Sustainability: Can we avert a food crisis?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/food-security-and-food-sustainability>

Attendees at this workshop had the chance to listen to ten specialists on diverse areas related to food security issues. The presentations covered a great variety of topics, ranging from hunger to the affect of climate change on food production, including nutrition, crop diseases, infectious diseases in the food chain and genetics.

In session one, John Barrett, head of the Food Group at the UK Government Department for International Development (DFID) and Douglas Kell, Chief Executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), presented an overview on the topic of food security and food sustainability. In the face of a rising global population – from six to nine billion people by 2050 – and a greater demand for food, especially meat and dairy, the experts explored the challenges of increasing agricultural production, reducing crop losses (estimated to be in excess of 40%), using less water in agriculture, combating the spread of diseases that affect the food chain and minimizing hunger and poverty.

Barrett and Kell clarified how science is the only way to tackle these problems, through high quality, adequately resourced programmes for food security, agricultural and rural development. They also called for a greater perception of the food issue worldwide, stressing the fact that this is a global problem and that many participants including farmers, consumers, private sector, regional and continental organisations, development finance institutions, donors, scientists and policy researchers, from all countries, need to be engaged and committed.

In the second session, researchers from different institutions shared their attempts to increase primary crop productivity through scientific projects sponsored by BBSRC and DFID – the organisers of the workshop. Ian Crute, director of the Rothamsted Research opened the session exploring the grand challenge for agriculture of producing more crops but with less land, less water, less energy, less emissions and less waste. The technologies currently used are not sustainable, he said, so there is a need to develop new ways of producing efficiently without causing stress and damage to the environment. He mentioned the potential of genetics to help in the search for solutions and the necessity of a greater knowledge transfer through public-private partnerships and a stronger relationship between research and industry.

Mike Bevan, researcher at John Innes Centre, spoke about the relevance of genomics and its ability to accelerate plant breeding by doing faster and more precise selection of desired genetic combinations. “It would take many years to do it naturally. We need to make the process faster”, he said. He talked about his work with the wheat genome, which represents a big challenge for scientists due to its enormous size. He explained researchers are working with smaller genomes, in crops such as rice, trying to understand better the genetic characteristics of the wheat. “The comparison to other grass genomes is key to understand the wheat genome.” Bevan called for new alignments between the academy and the plant breeding industry in order to make ‘elite’ wheat lines available to farmers as soon as possible.

John Foulkes, from the University of Nottingham, presented the four-year project (2006-2010) developed by researchers in his institution, in collaboration with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), in Mexico. He explained in the UK wheat grain yield is generally limited by the number of grains per unit land area, a barrier his team is trying to overcome by combining Mexican wheat traits with elite UK varieties. They have tested 138 'combined' lines in field tests in Cambridge and found that 31 of them are more productive and viable to be developed in the UK.

Julie Scholes, a researcher at University of Sheffield, presented a three-year project called "Sustainable agriculture for international development", aimed at defeating the witchweed famine threat in sub-Saharan Africa. Witchweed (Striga), she explained, is a root parasite that severely attacks cereal crops in Africa. This parasite steals nutrients and water from the crop plant and also injects toxic compounds of growth inhibitors into the crop, severely damaging it and affecting yield. According to her, it is very difficult to control it due to factors such as big variability and infestation – it is spread through 100 millions hectares of African land. Researchers from University of Sheffield, in partnership with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Africa Rice Center WARDA/ADRAD and NIAB, a plant science research organisation, have screened 1000's of varieties (and wild relatives) of rice, maize and sorghum to discover new sources of resistance to witchweed.

Completing the panel, Andrew Dorward, from the School of African and Oriental Studies, talked about the impacts of agriculture on climate change – 30% of 2004 human induced GHG emissions from agriculture and land use – and the impacts of climate change on agriculture – changes in average rainfall, temperature, crop pests, among others factors.

On the final session, experts discussed the challenges of delivering enough safe, nutritious food for the growing world population. Brendan Wren, from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, talked about how pathogens pose threat to the food chain, urging the need for surveillance and new intervention strategies. "The real millennium bug are the bugs themselves", he said. According to Wren, the problem with the pathogens is that they have very dynamic genomes with multiple mechanisms for change. He advocated the importance of basic research that can lead to conjugated vaccines aimed at animals, which he considers a good strategy to reduce human food borne diseases. He mentioned as an example the triple poultry vaccine, which protects poultry from *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Clostridium perfringens*.

Nick Mascie-Taylor, from the University of Cambridge, emphasised the need for social protection programmes to take into account the relationship between nutrition and disease, as inadequate dietary intake increases susceptibility to diseases and diseases lead to a worse nutritional status on the population. He mentioned a good example of combining social protection and health aid; the DFID funded Shiree project, aimed at bringing 1,000,000 people in Bangladesh out of poverty. The programme's strategies include de-worming population on a regular basis, giving essential vitamins and minerals weekly for 3-12 months, providing flip-flops twice a year, promoting exclusive breastfeeding and regular hand washing. Jon West, from Rothamsted Research, the last expert to speak in the workshop, brought some controversy to the debate by defending the use of fungicides and stating that it is time to move away from the idea of going 100% organic. According to him, the more fungicide applied, the bigger the yield, with the impact on the environment being relatively low. The problem with organic farming, he argued, is the amount of land



needed, which goes against the efforts directed to production efficiency and lower damage to the environment. When a journalist in the audience asked if he had to choose between organic and non-organic in the supermarket what he would do, he said he would go for the non-organic option.

Carla Almeida

Session Reports from the Development Strand

Written summaries, news reports and audio recordings from each session of the Development Strand are online at <http://www.wcsjnews.org>.

Who You Gonna Call? (Great talent, but are they credible?)

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/who-you-gonna-call>

We all know them: The scientists whose research is always exciting and who are never stuck for an interesting opinion. You can call them anytime and their quotes are always pithy. But can you really trust such sources? How do you know whether the researcher you're relying on is truly brilliant, just a marginal figure in his field, or even a complete idiot?

Such questions were at the forefront and centre of the workshop "Great talent, but are they credible?" held on Tuesday afternoon at the WCSJ. To demonstrate the importance of the issue, session chair Robyn Williams of ABC Australia recounted how for many years, he had a great rapport with a researcher working on controversial topics such as cancer, the pill, and vitamins. Until one day, the scientist was unmasked as a fraudster, Williams said—"one of those people who are so insightful about the science that they don't really need to do the research."

To set the stage, Colin Blakemore, a neuroscientist at the University of Oxford, gave an overview of three science-related controversies that have rocked the U.K. in recent years: mad cow disease, genetically modified crops, and stem cells. Blakemore showed that scientists have, over time, become more used to talking to the media, in part because they were urged to do so by several influential reports. Scientists clearly have the public's trust as well. Blakemore said: One opinion poll showed that 64% of those surveyed trusted scientists to tell the truth, whereas journalists scored a measly 13%.

Scientists' increased participation in science communication has some clear advantages. For example, Blakemore explained how their voices help the public better appreciate how science works. But the drawbacks are clear as well. Some scientists become showmen, and some will abuse their position because journalists often aren't qualified to evaluate their merit. So-called 'mavericks'- people who go against the conventional wisdom - pose a special problem, because they often make for good stories but it's hard to assess whether they have a case. "Today's maverick might be tomorrow's genius," Blakemore said.

Alok Jha, Science and Environment Correspondent at The Guardian, offered some tips on how to tell the 'wheat from the chaff'. If a researcher gets published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal, that's reassuring, he said. At conferences, Jha asks around what other people think about a certain study or a scientist.

And how about mavericks? "If somebody says something absolutely crazy, you normally ignore it," Jha said, because checking wild claims takes too much time and there are plenty of other stories to do. But if there's a chance that someone might be that genius after all, Jha says he will make the investment to find out more. He mentioned Nobel laureates Barry Marshall and Robin Warren—who discovered that a microbe causes ulcers—as a great example of mavericks who turned out to be right.

In many countries, however, questioning authority has its limits. The next panelist, Diran Onifade of the Nigerian Television Authority, explained how he got into hot water for his critical reporting on a scientist who claimed to have discovered a cure for AIDS. Jeremiah Abalaka became a celebrity after he announced the miracle drug in 2000, said Onifade, but he never presented proper proof that it worked. (There's a long and sad history of such "breakthroughs" in Africa.) But after Onifade's critical reports—a true breakthrough because it included the first interview on Nigerian TV with someone who was open about his HIV-positive status—Abalaka sued both the reporter and the TV station for libel.

The case still hasn't ended, and Onifade said he was advised by his lawyer not to talk about it. "We're working through a minefield," he said. In general, however, Nigerian reporters are ill-equipped to investigate far-fetched claims like Abalaka's, he said, because they don't know how the process of science works. "Journalists don't know how to ask the right questions," he said. "Capacity, capacity, capacity will be the issue in the developing world."

The question-and-answer session resulted in several more suggestions on how to tackle the credibility problem. Australia and the U.K. now both have a science media centre, which puts scientists and journalists in contact with each other. They often react to news stories fast: When someone claims to have developed an AIDS cure, for instance, the centres will immediately put out four of five statements from credible sources about whether the scientist is "kosher or not," Williams said—although he acknowledged that this could lead to a certain "establishment bias" against newcomers. Jha suggested another way to find credible sources to comment on breaking science news: Befriend universities' press officers and ask them to provide a good scientist to comment. Many can do so quite quickly.

The bottom line of the session: Always try to verify what scientists are telling you—as Jha put it, "organize your own peer review"—and beware of mavericks. Even when they might make a perfect front-page story.

Martin Enserink

Four journalists who changed the world

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/four-journalists-who-changed-world>

It was a confirmation of the age-old journalism school lesson – that the best stories are often the ones that directly impact us; this session featured four science journalists who have 'changed the world' with their incisive reporting. The panel was made up of three specialists in health and medicine - issues everyone effortlessly relates to. The fourth journalist on the panel has consistently crossed the line between good science journalism and good science by backing up her stories with personally conducted research surveys, complete with bar graphs and pie charts.

What drives these award-winning best-selling journalists and writers? "The wish to be the voice of the voiceless, give power to the powerless," said André Picard, a Public Health Journalist with 'The Globe and Mail' in Canada.

It was the 'claim game' by his country's scientists that spurred Alexander Abutu Augustine, Science Correspondent with the government News Agency of Nigeria, to challenge unscientific data behind a

proposed AIDS vaccine. “Scientists in my country come up with lots of claims everyday and we in the media were happily reporting them until my story busted some of these claims,” Alexander said. He went on to point fingers at the misuse of funds by the Nigerian government and also forced its health ministry to revoke a controversial sickle cell drug. Though he received life threats by vested interests and lost his job with the news agency, Alexander continued to segregate science from non-science in his future investigations.

Shannon Brownlee, Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation quit an earlier job to go freelance. Reason: the editor said ‘I don’t believe this’ to a story she wrote saying early detection of prostate cancer was actually doing more harm than good to the Americans. “It was about the futility of prostate specific antigen (PSA) tests. My editor slashed the story heavily and so I wrote a whole book on it,” she said.

Shannon’s best-selling book ‘Why Too Much Medicine is Making Us Sicker and Poorer’ talks about the myths surrounding health in rich countries. “USA spends more per capita on useless care than many countries actually spend on useful care. We tend to imply through our reporting that medicine is a breakthrough and miraculous. We put halos around doctors. However, much of medicine today is no better than 17th century blood-letting surgery and is based on invalid science – science that is being used as propaganda to sell a product,” she noted urging fellow journalists to start writing about medicine more critically.

Picard began writing about tainted blood in Canada 20 years back and is still probing the issue. It is important that journalists continue to ask tough and probing questions, he said. “Don’t write that the incidence of a particular disease or condition is one in a million if that doesn’t ring true to your own ears.”

While investigating the number of people infected with tainted blood, André came up with startling figures that did not match any of those provided by national organisations or voluntary healthcare associations. His investigation resulted in the infected people getting compensation and the International Red Cross taking some of its officials to task.

“It was not emotion or politics that drove the story, it was only science done badly. If you make a scientifically accurate point, any story stands its ground,” he said. The greatest impact of such investigations in Canada has been the way ‘we report health in our country now’.

André urged that reporters reach across borders for stories. One such emerging international story is the scarcity of medical isotopes across countries.

For Yukiko Motomura of The Mainichi Newspapers of Japan, science writing began with an idea to clear prejudices about scientists among the Japanese. “The Japanese people have a notion that scientists are difficult to understand and are boring. So I thought it would be good to introduce them to the dramatic side of scientists,” she said.

Gathering solid evidence through meticulously designed surveys around the trials and tribulations of women in science, the problems of post-docs in finding jobs, the passion and creativity of scientists and the relationship between science and politics, she strives to bridge the gap between science and culture.

Undoubtedly among the most popular sessions, it left delegates with one take home message – nothing can stop a well-researched, evidence-backed story from being published.

Subhra Priyadarshini, editor, Nature India

Recipe for a Disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/recipe-disaster>

The recipe for feeding and supporting the world's growing population will require using all the ingredients available in the scientific pantry, a group of agricultural experts contended at a WCSJ 2009 panel.

Although organic farming and genetically modified crops are often portrayed as competing approaches to agriculture, they in fact complement each other and will both be needed to meet the needs of a global population growing from 6.7 billion people today to 9.2 billion in the future, said Pam Ronald, author of the book *Tomorrow's Table* and a professor of plant pathology at the University of California in Davis.

Dealing with water scarcity may in fact be the most worrying problem facing our planet in the coming decades, according to John Beddington, Science Advisor to UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, although he added coastal vulnerability and ocean acidification to a "perfect storm" of challenges that will be hitting by 2030.

The oceans' absorption of anthropogenic carbon dioxide is driving acidification to levels not seen for 150 million years, he said, a period during which 95 percent of the world's species died off. This threatens the world's coral reefs, on which an estimated 1 billion people to secure their supply of protein.

Beddington also warned that the world's food reserves – currently estimated at 14 percent or approximately 60 days' worth of global food supply – is dangerously low, which will inevitably lead to future spikes in the price of food, as witnessed last year.

The panelists – who also included Paul Temple, a British farmer and director of Farmway; George Mukkath of FARMAfrica, an agricultural aid organization; and moderator George Conway, until recently the chief scientific adviser for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which sponsored the panel – were speaking at a session called "Recipe for Disaster". They were unanimous in supporting the use of genetically modified (GM) crops, and there did not seem to be any critics of genetic modification in the room.

Ronald's research work has focused on taking rice strains known to be tolerant of saltwater flooding, isolating the key gene, and propagating it into GM rice. Field trials of the resulting strain in Bangladesh led to crop yields three to five times better than conventional rice after flooding, she reported.

According to Ronald, the use of BT cotton, another GM crop, has led to dramatic reductions in the use of pesticides: by 150 million tons in China in one year alone. By comparison, she said, California uses 180 million tons of pesticides every year to grow half the US's fruits and vegetables.

"We are currently cultivating almost all the arable land on the globe, so we'll have to increase food productivity using roughly the same amount of land and water as today," said Ronald.

Mukkath reported on how his group is managing to support increased productivity in Africa, where the prevailing trend has been a steady decline in the availability of locally grown food over the last two decades.

Introducing disease-resistant strains of cassava have reportedly increased yields by as much as 400 percent.

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2009

Ronald also touted the benefits of organic farming, explaining that such techniques can be carried out using 97 less pesticides than – and provide 45 to 97 percent as much crop yields as – conventional farming. And yet, she added only 1 to 3 percent of total global agriculture practice such techniques.

James Fahn, www.earthjournalism.org

Does science need to be highbrow?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/does-science-need-be-highbrow>

In this session, four journalists from different outlets discussed if reporters should take an elitist and an intellectual stance when writing about science. The consensual answer was “no”. They all agreed that science journalism cannot afford to be highbrow if it wants to reach the masses.

Nalaka Gunawardene, co-founder and director of Television for Education in Asia Pacific, opened the session saying that journalists should experiment and show the public that science can be fun. Different than what is happening to the media in the US and the UK, this sector is not going through a crisis in Asia. According to Gunawardene, there has been a newspapers boom and an increase in newspaper subscriptions in some countries. He reminded, however, that this does not mean that there has been more coverage of science-related topics, but it is certainly a great opportunity for science journalism to improve in the region.

Paul Sutherland, freelance journalist and writer – frequently bylined “The Sun Spaceman” – showed some of his favourite science stories, full of superlatives, weird illustrations and humour. In his opinion, these are important ingredients to attract the interest of more people towards science.

Christina Scott, African news editor of SciDev.Net, said going lowbrow was the only option to get science in African media. In her opinion, all efforts to put science in the news are welcomed, no matter if it is just a small note. In the current celebrity culture, in which science competes with Britney Spears for space, the more coverage the better, she said. “There is a brutal competition. If we go highbrow, we’ll end up as the dinosaurs.”

The last one to talk, David Derbyshire, environment editor of *The Daily Mail*, said he has no problem reporting thunder stories in a fun, excited way, as long as they are accurate. He said he actually finds reporting science in the popular media much harder than going highbrow, since their readers are not particularly interested in science and the space to deal with complex scientific issues is very small. “We have to give our readers reliable science stories in a way they can understand”, he said.

In the debate that followed the presentation, many other topics were addressed. Discussing the issue of press releases, the presenters tended to agree that even though they are important, reporters cannot rely entirely on them. Christina, on the other hand, said in South Africa most of the press releases have very bad quality and end up being useless.

On the relationship between scientists and journalists, Paul Sutherland argued scientists should be left to do what they do well and so should journalists, with no place for bad interference between the two professions.

Christina, however, said it is very difficult for journalists in South Africa to talk to young scientists. According to her, only the top scientists, who hold a safe job position, feel comfortable to talk with the media, which results in building a gap between these two actors.

Carla Almeida

The future of science news?

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/10-future-science-news>

The pioneers of news organizations that have gone from traditional news format to news ways of delivering news will tell us how they did, what they did and what will come next.

A number of different kinds of stories will be told: From the transformation of *Scientific American* from a stodgy print magazine to a multimedia news organization to the new effort to organize thousands of bloggers around the world and then to bring journalists to the bloggers as sources.

The changing world of news will be described, from the booming blogs of China to the *Guardian's* award winning website.

A Drought or a Flood? Climate change reporting around the world

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/15-drought-or-flood-climate-change-reporting-around-world>

This session explores climate change reporting in settings as varied as urban China and rural Uganda. It examines how journalists are working together and whether this creates barriers as well as benefits. It compares ways of building journalists' capacity to cover climate change and asks if the media is failing the vulnerable by neglecting to report on adaptation.

Session producers were James Painter (BBC) and Mike Shanahan (International Institute for Environment and Development). The chair was Roger Harrabin (BBC) and speakers were: Cristiane Fontes (British Embassy, Brazil), Esther Nakkazi (journalist, Kenya), Jia Hepeng (journalist, China), Paddy Coulter (Univ of Oxford), Patrick Luganda (editor, Uganda), Rod Harbinson (Panos, London) and Saleemul Huq (IIED).

SciDev.Net networking event

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/scidevnet-networking-event>

Over 60 delegates including science journalists and scientists from different countries attended the luncheon working session with Scidev's editorial board.

Representatives from Scidev, the London based website for science and development, have highlighted accomplishments of the leading online website on science and development within the last five years and are committed to its intensive growth in years to come.

Serving its development amidst the tougher and tougher context in the online communication, Scidev will pay special attention to its growing and consolidating networks and contacts of freelance journalists around the world. Now it is so developed in China with a coordinator in charge.

Aisling Irwin, Scidev.net's news editor said: *"For the time being we are focusing the Middle East but we are also aware that South East Asia including emerging countries is important as well for our consolidation of contacts and news coverage there."*

Nguyen Dang Vu Long

Achieving global coverage for science

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/content/achieving-global-coverage-science>

A room full of sweaty press officers, eager to learn more about the international media climate and how to achieve 'Global Coverage for Science' weren't expecting to hear about powerful and rich PRs in Nigeria. But these sessions often contain surprises, and after being lulled into the international media scene with case studies on outreach to international media by BAS's Linda Capper we met Mohammad Kaswar Uddin from Bangladesh and Diran Onifade who took us further from our comfort zones.

Science journalism is not yet recognised in much of South Asia, and media often reel out the government line. Health and science are more likely to be translated versions of UK, US, Canadian or Australian news articles. But this seems tame compared to Diran Onifade's depiction of a corrupt media where in order to achieve coverage money needs to change hands. PR, it seems, can involve more negotiation skills than many of us currently employ.

With costs increasing and the PR middlemen benefiting more than anyone else in the equation, some are earning more than their CEOs. Diran tells us that we can write as many press releases as we like but a great photo of your CEO with, say, Bill Gates, would make more of a splash as you could pay to have it appear on the front pages.

But, let's not forget this is a skills building workshop, intended to help find solutions rather than wallow in problems. What are the answers? How can this grim picture improve?

Certainly one solution offered for the South Asian scene is that UK and other developed world press officers could help with training and mentoring (count me in!). For Nigeria and other nations with corrupt media the picture seems more complex but there is light at the end of this tunnel.

Capacity building is crucial to improving the scene. Onifade says he's been inspired by the force of the Arab Science Journalism Association and that different African countries' associations are looking to merge and create a powerful network.

Previous President of the Arab Science Journalism Association, Nadia El-Awady was also on the panel and agreed that although training is key, the language barrier is a huge problem in her region. Her Associations' media list is a fantastic tool to help local reporters understand material that is rarely provided in their mother

tongue. Members forward information, with a short summary of what it is, why it's important and if it's relevant in the region. Discussion follows and other members add further translation and information.

ION
2009

The panel pondered issues of mentoring, and organisations like SciDev.net and the International Development Research Council who provide similar services for journalists but not press officers.

Training of press officers is vital also in Latin America where Luisa Massarani says journalists are hungry for stories but can have trouble finding them. PRs are uncommon and have low self esteem in her region. Currently they have to look to international science if they are to feed their editors' and readers' thirst.

The message of the morning seems that the problems are similar wherever you look and that press officers wanting to achieve the desirable 'Global Coverage for Science' need to understand the landscape in the target region, provide translation of material, or translators for interviews. First and foremost, though, is training. Training of reporters. Training of press officers. And training of scientists to speak out about their work.

Ruth Francis
Head of Press, Nature

Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community

Lunch session supported by: Department for International Development (DFID)

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/lunch-session-9-friendship-or-friction-how-media-relates-research-community>

Thursday, July 2, 2009 13:15 - 14:15

Summary

The relationship between the media and the academic science community is seldom easy.

The media, academics argue, do not engage with 'proper' science and when they do, they over-simplify and distort the research. Academics, retort the media, cannot communicate clearly, do not understand how the media works, and are unwilling to engage with journalists in real time.

The truth lies somewhere in-between.

Academic research is often difficult to access; researchers have no incentives or reward for communicating with the media; and journalists do not have the resources to find it and translate it for their specific audiences.

The session will explore how this relationship can be improved. It will debate the practical challenges for each community, and showcase techniques used by DFID funded research to communicate science, creating a win-win situation for both parties.

[see transcript in Appendix 1]

Video and Podcasts

The video and podcasts were produced by the Naked Scientists and are also available via the Naked Scientists website <http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

Podcasts include a special 30 minute documentary on the Development Strand supported by DFID

What challenges do science journalists face in the developing world? In this special documentary covering the Development strand of the World Conference of Science Journalists, Naked Scientists have interviewed key players in the international science media to discuss the challenges of getting the right coverage for their region, including on how to find credible sources. Plus, the big issue of Climate Change and how to link researchers with journalists...

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/aggregator/sources/11>

or

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

[see Transcript of this podcast in Appendix 2]

Video

See the sights of the World Conference of Science Journalists, meet some of the delegates and discover the key themes discussed throughout the week. From the importance of communicating science well, through to frivolous (but desirable) USB earrings, Naked Scientists give a snapshot of what the World Conference of Science Journalists was like to attend. <http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

Podcasts:

10-minute daily news podcasts:

Tues 30th June 2009

The World Conference of Science Journalists 2009 was an international gathering of science journalists from across the globe who came together to debate and discuss the scientific issues affecting the world today and how they should be reported. In this first podcast Naked Scientists bring the highlights from the pre-conference workshops and meet some of the conference delegates at the media party to find out what they were hoping to get from the week ahead.

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

Weds 1st July 2009

“Predicting the Future of Science Journalism”

We hear about the current state of science journalism in countries like the US and predict the future of the profession given the increasing emergence of new media such as online news and social network sites. Plus we find out the hurdles science journalists have to overcome in developing countries and how they tackle reporting on sensitive topics such as creationism.

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

Thurs 2nd July 2009:

“Public Relations and Investigative Journalism at the World Conference of Science Journalists”

Revealing the winner of the bid to host the 7th WCSJ conference in 2011 as Cairo (representing a partnership between the Arab Science Journalists Association and the National Association of Science Writers, USA. Also in this podcast: the role of public relations and investigative journalism in the media, and a debate on whether the British Media know their science!

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

Fri 3rd July 2009

“Embargoes, Pharmaceuticals and Blogs at the World Conference of Science Journalists”

We discuss the public image of the pharmaceutical industry and the role of the media in shaping public opinion, as well as debate the use of the embargo system in science journalism. Continuing the investigation into the role of new media, we look into the impact of the science blogger.

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

30-minute podcasts on other major programme strands

Biomedical Science Strand

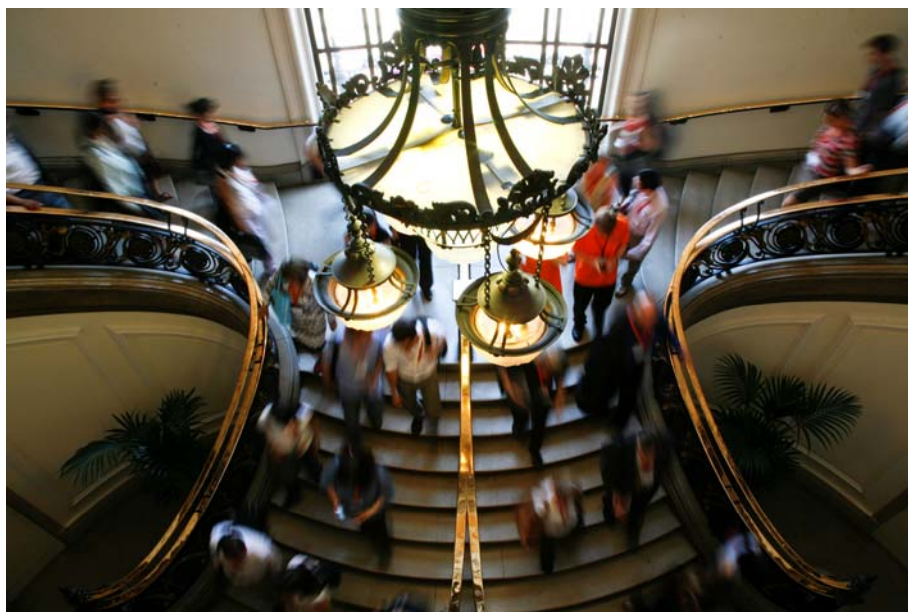
The Wellcome Trust supported a series of events discussing the reporting of biomedical science at the World Conference of Science Journalists. Kat Arney takes us through the opportunities, responsibilities and controversies of biomedical science in the media.

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

New Media Strand

What is the Internet, new technology and increasing citizen journalism doing to the world of science publishing and reporting? In this special documentary from the 2009 World Conference of Science Journalists, London, Chris Smith talks to the reporters at the leading edge of the new media wave, as well as freelancers who are worried they might get washed away by the tide of content...

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>



Evaluation of Pre-Conference Workshop: Food Security and Sustainability

Supported by DFID and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

A survey was undertaken of delegates attending pre-conference workshops on Monday 29th June 2009. A total of 37 participants completed the survey (an anonymous paper questionnaire), including 8 participants of the workshop on “Food Security and Sustainability: Can we avert a crisis?”. The respondents were all journalists who had received scholarships to attend the workshop and conference, the majority being from developing countries.

Questions regarding the workshop “Food Security and Sustainability: Can we avert a crisis?”

Q 1.3 How useful was the workshop information?

When selecting statements that most represented their views about the workshop, 4 out of the 8 respondents answered ““At the workshop, I learned about an area of science that was one of my main interests as a journalist over the last 6 months”. This suggests that the content of the workshop was of a high enough level to inform those who were already well informed about the subject. Furthermore, 5 out of the 8 respondents ticked the statement “I learned about an area of science that I have been following with some interest”, while 1 indicated that “I learned about an area of science that was not one of my interests as a journalist over the last 6 months”.

Q1.4 about the interactions the respondents had with other participants at the workshop

Among the participants who attended the workshop, 6 out of 8 responded “At the workshop I had a face-to-face conversation with a scientist”, 6 out of 8 had “a face-to-face conversation with a science journalist I did not know before the conference”, 2 out of 8 reported that they had “a face-to-face conversation with an editor I did know before the conference”, 2 out of 8 said they had “a face-to-face conversation with a press officer I did know before the conference”.

Q1.5 Future value of the workshop?

When asked which resulting action they intended to take over the next 3 months, 6 out of 8 respondents selected that they would “prepare a story about the topic of the workshop”, and 6 out of 8 intended to “look for people to interview on the topic of the workshop”.

Further specific comments from workshop participants on future plans:

"I intend to look for scientists on climate change and food security, and develop more ideas for my segment."

"I intend to do a story on the impact of Climate Change on farmer's lives."

"I chose this workshop because I didn't know much about the issue; now I know more, and I think I will try to make a story about it, interviewing both the scientists I have met here and some specialists at home."

"I will prepare a new idea for a science program about food, the target consumers with it [sic] and to show them how to get the most benefits of what they have [sic]. I have a good idea in my mind and am planning to discuss it with my team as soon as I get home."

"I shall look for people to interview on the topic in my country"

"I'll pitch a story to SciDev Net on one of the researcher(s) reported."

Other comments from workshop participants:

Hannusia Hopko (Staff Journalist, "The Day" Newspaper, Kyiv, Ukraine)

"Everything [at the conference] was interesting...I want to organise and campaign to make science journalism real and accurate in the Ukraine."

The topic of the workshop is relevant to Ukraine, Hopko says, because there is a lot of unused soil in her country that could be made fertile. At the workshop she also met the BBC online environment correspondent, Alex Kirby, and 3 scientists who she plans to stay in touch with. She was also pleased to learn of international case studies of the problems surrounding food security and sustainability, such as the case of Brazil.

Armand Faye (Freelance Science Journalist and Journalism Trainer, Dakar, Mali)

"9 speakers of the booked-workshops 2 and 7 met my expectations as the Editor-in-Chief of the quarterly Newsletter, Coraf Action, at the point that they committed to send me across their presentations if I ask for from home."

Expectation of the Main Conference Development Strand (supported by DFID)

The 37 delegates who took part in surveys on Monday 29th June 2009 were asked twice about their preferences for attending sessions in the conference Development Strand: once to find out which sessions they thought they would attend, and again to identify 2 sessions they expected to attend. The answers given are in the table below.

Question 2.1 Expected attendance

Question 2.1a Below are the Conference events in the Development Strand. Indicate which events you think you will attend.

Question 2.1b. Select the two sessions from the Development Strand that you are most likely to attend.

Answer Options	Question a Responses		Question b Responses		
	Response Percent	Response Count	Session 1	Session 2	Total
Great talent, but are they credible?	27.3%	9	2	4	6
Climate change: Gearing up for Copenhagen	45.5%	15	11	5	16
Four Journalists who changed the world	36.4%	12	6	3	9
Recipe for disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution?	36.4%	12	3	5	8
Does science need to be highbrow?	15.2%	5	2	2	4
The future of science news?	30.3%	10	3	5	8
SciDevNet Networking Event	36.4%	12	6	3	9
A drought or a flood? Climate change reporting around the world	27.3%	9	3	4	7
Covering a disaster from Sichuan to Sri Lanka	3.0%	1	0	1	1
Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community	30.3%	10	1	3	4
answered question	33				37
skipped question	5				1
Average per session	9.5				7.4

Results of main delegate evaluation, post-conference

Including results for the Development Strand

Background

The aim of the Delegate Evaluation Form was to get feedback about the conference in general and the Development Strand in particular, as well as some data about the role of Associations of Science Journalists at the Conference.

The Evaluation Form targeted all delegates (not just scholarship winners) and was distributed on the last day of the conference (in paper form) and after the conference (as an online survey). There were 210 respondents in total, including 116 who filled in the paper form and 94 who filled in the online form.

The data on the 116 paper forms was entered into a virtual version of the form on the online SurveyMonkey tool (www.surveymonkey.com). The full report of the results is a combination of data drawn directly off SurveyMonkey and analyses of that data.

Summary of results

Below is a summary of the results of the three main sections of the questionnaire. More detail, including tables, graphs, and further comments on the results, can be found in a separate full report (see Excel Spreadsheet).

Respondent profile of main conference evaluation

Q 2.1 Region of residence The respondent pool was clearly dominated by delegates from Europe (including Russia). This was probably due partly to the large proportion of Europeans at the conference, but also to the form of the evaluation - the evaluation was distributed by email after the conference (and just under half the Respondents filled out the form online), and this may have made it harder for delegates from developing countries to fill out.

2.2 Funding sources Most of the respondents were evenly spread between having no funding support, getting funding from their employer, and getting funding from a WCSJ scholarship.

2.3 Occupation 57% of Respondents indicated that journalism was their main occupation, and the bulk of these were specialised science journalists. Public relations officers with an interest in science made up nearly a quarter of the pool.

2.4 Media outlet 80% identified themselves as working for a media outlet, freelance or otherwise. 48% identified themselves as working for specialist science media or for the science section of a general media outlet.

Question 3: Development Strand

3.1 Preferred sessions

According to data, the most highly valued sessions in the Development Strand were:

Climate change: Gearing up for Copenhagen (plenary session 3)

Four Journalists who changed the world (parallel session 6)

The future of science news? (parallel session 10)

All of these sessions were highly valued by those who attended. Nearly a quarter of respondents selected **Four Journalists who changed the World** as their most valuable session in the strand.

Also relatively highly valued were:

Does science need to be highbrow? (parallel session 9)

Recipe for disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution? (parallel session 8)

Food security and sustainability - Can we avert a food crisis? (workshop 2)

3.2 Value of sessions

55 delegates gave short written descriptions of why they valued a session in the Development Strand.

According to these accounts, a range of sessions were valuable for their relevance to the respondent's current work, whether as a source of information, business models, story ideas, or online resources. Seven respondents valued the depth or breadth of the session. Others found the content inspiring for their work as a journalist, though these respondents were almost all attending the session **Four journalists who changed the World**. A fairly large proportion of the respondents commented on the presentation of the session, either because of a slick delivery or good choices of speakers. A few found the sessions useful for its timeliness; and a few noted that the discussion had been especially thought provoking or lively.

Negative comments

One respondent attended some of the sessions of the Development Strand but "didn't find any of them valuable." Others reported not attending any sessions in the Strand, and the chair of the Disaster Reporting session was disappointed by the turnout.

High praise was especially forthcoming for:

The future of science news? (parallel session 10)

Four Journalists who changed the World (parallel session 6)

Recipe for disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution? (parallel session 8)

Does science need to be highbrow? (parallel session 9)

Climate change: Gearing up for Copenhagen (plenary session 3)

Individual comments on the Development Strand from the main delegate feedback forms:

Workshop: Food Security and Sustainability workshop (workshop 2)

"The session was valuable because cover the issue in different aspects but some cases was very specific to some regions and didn't include Latin America, a food-producing region."

A science journalist from South and Central America

"Useful, relevant content. Well organised."

A public relations officer from Europe

SciDevNet Networking Event (lunch session 4)

"I learnt a great deal at the SciDevNet networking event"

A science journalist from North America

Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community (lunch session 9)

"The discourse was very in depth and shows the way to promote science and research"

Science journalist from Southern Africa

Great talent, but are they credible? (parallel session 4)

"Great discussion, very good moderator, good choice of panel"

A scientist from Europe

The future of science news? (parallel session 10)

"I have been writing a lot about the future of newspapers, and the session was important for me to know successful stories about the transition to new media."

A science journalist from South and Central America

"Gave me ideas on business models for future science journalism projects"

A general journalist from Europe

"The broad range of speakers, their depth of knowledge, their interesting take, their engaging manner. The fact they were senior gave the impression this really was what the future held."

A science journalist from Asia/Pacific

A drought or a flood? Climate change reporting around the world (parallel session 15)

"The session gave me an insight in the climate change field which until then was not very clear to me yet it is affecting us in the developing world."

A science journalist from Southern Africa

Covering a disaster from Sichuan to Sri Lanka (parallel session 17)

"I chaired it. I also learned a lot from it, regarded the theme as important not just in a development sense, but because natural disaster is, sooner or later, a story for every journalist, and I was sorry that it was (comparatively) poorly attended"

science journalist

"The trembling voices of the reporters convinced me about their earnestness and felt fear of life. But how they are needed"

A science journalist from Europe

Four Journalists who changed the world (parallel session 6)

"It covered my interest areas. Journalists are reflecting their work, challenges and outcomes. The cases were really well chosen."

A science journalist from Europe

"I've learned things about which I knew very little, about the way in which science journalism can get involved in society. Until now I had been preoccupied only with popularizing science."

A science journalist from Europe

"It was very encouraging to see journalists who refused to accept the usual barriers and challenges in their search for the real story"

A public relations officer from Europe

"Inspiring to hear of brave reporting, especially in Nigeria"

A science journalist from Europe

"Made me believe in investigative science reporting and science journalists being really able to make a difference."

A science journalist from Europe

"it showed how science journalism can discover truths that would not have been revealed without it"

A science journalist from Europe

"It was great to hear from science journalists that are passionate about what they do. It was also good to hear that journalism can be used to expose injustice and initiate change in public policy."

A scientist from Europe

Recipe for Disaster: A growing population and climate change. Can science serve up a solution? (parallel session 8)

"The wide range of views presented in short and sweet style"

A student from Europe

"It gave the sense of complexity of the problem"

A science journalist from Europe

"Stellar line up and interlocking but always relevant points of view"

A delegate from Europe

"This was an interesting debate from a variety of people who work around this topic. Brought up quite a few questions and ethical considerations and generated a couple of story ideas."

A science journalist from Europe

Does science need to be highbrow? (parallel session 9)

"Insight into how science stories can get past tabloid news desk"

A science journalist from Europe

"It gave me a better understanding of the audiences that journalists are writing for and therefore what level of detail is needed to interest them." A public relations officer from Europe

"I am interested in how to engage more people in science and valued the debate over the importance of different audiences in science communication."

A student from Europe

"Good to hear how David Derbyshire justifies his work"

A science journalist from Europe

"Brought down to earth the value of writing for the masses"

A science journalist from North America

"Interesting views from journalists who had experience both in high- and lowbrow media. Interesting to think about this."

A science journalist from Europe

Climate change: Gearing up for Copenhagen (plenary session 3)

"That kind of program is very much important for country like Bangladesh"

A general journalist from Asia/Pacific

"Valuable tips and advice concerning reporting about climate change"

A science journalist from Europe

"To have better understanding and hope that Africa gets a good deal out of Copenhagen in December"

An educator from Southern Africa

"It is a hot topic and the session covered important points we need to know."

A science journalist from North Africa and Middle East

"Very articulate views on the process and the way media are used for propaganda."

A science journalist from Europe

Feedback from Ralph Akinfeleye, professor of science journalism from Nigeria about sessions on climate change at WCSJ – part of the Development Strand.



- Yes, the conference was an eye-opener in the special area of reporting climate change.
- The presentations were of superb quality with added value to my knowledge in the genre.
- A lot of networking was made during the conference.
- I have shared the experience gained at the conference with all our teaching staff here. We have incorporated some into our curricular at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- As part of our course on Reporting Population Issues (MAS 406) climate change reporting has formed an important part of the course.
- I have made special talks on our campus Radio Station (Radio Unilag – 103.1fm) on climate change
- We plan to create a pullout on climate change reporting in our campus *Newspaper – UNILAG SUN and Magazine. (MASCOPE)*
- I have tried to educate our audience on the global importance of climate change particularly as the world prepares for the December 2009 conference. Hope I would be considered as one of the participants from the academia for the world congress on climate change in December 2009 - Please process!!!
- Our team has done some reports on climate change since arrival
- I have encouraged one of my final year students to write on climate change reporting as his topic for the final year thesis – under my supervision.
- A local society of climate change reporters is being formed. Will keep you informed.

Prof. Ralph Akinfeleye, Ph.D., Chair and Head, Dept of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

3.3 Omissions from the Development Strand

30 respondents indicated that some important issues were missing from the Development Strand. (50 indicated that the strand covered the issues well, while 130 gave no response to this question).

A few respondents stated that there was too much emphasis on climate change, at the expense of other environmental issues such as water and biodiversity. Respondents also cite economics, energy policy, medical malpractice, and women and children.

Some respondents felt that developing country issues were neglected overall at the conference. Others seem to say that issues facing the profession in developing countries were neglected, rather than particular science-related topics.

Two suggest that the conference should give a region-by-region overview of the state of science journalism.

Other science journalism issues that were cited as underrepresented at the conference: understanding science, science journalism training, radio programmes, the educational role of media, PR vs. science journalism, and radio journalism.

Two respondents use the comments form to state that the Development Strand covered its field well.

Support for developing world journalists to attend WCSJ2009

22 science journalists from Africa and the Middle East attended the conference as part of the SjCOOP peer-to-peer mentoring programme of the World Federation of Science Journalists (others were invited but had difficulty with visa and travel). The journalists attended skills building workshops on 29th and 30th June, followed by the main conference at Central Hall Westminster from the afternoon of 30th June to 2nd July, and post-conference trips to various sites of scientific interest on 3rd July 2009.

Science journalists supported by DFID to attend WCSJ2009:

Mr. AUGUSTINE Alexander Abutu	Abuja	Nigeria	lexyabutu@yahoo.com
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Ms. SHEY Dora	Yaoundé	Cameroon	sheyilla@yahoo.fr
Mr. SIMIRE Michael	Lagos	Nigeria	msimire@yahoo.com
Ms. ADELAJA Abiose	Apapa,Lagos	Nigeria	abioseadelaja@yahoo.com
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Mr. YA David	Abidjan 01	Côte d'Ivoire	aoumya@yahoo.fr
Mr. AL-DWIRI Mahmoud Mustafa	Amman	Jordan	mmdwiri@hotmail.com
Ms. AL-RAMAH Hanin Fahmi	Amman 11118	Jordan	hanon246@hotmail.com
Mr. BOUMEDJOUT Hichem	Alger	Algeria	hichem222@hotmail.com
Ms. GHOSN Zeinab	Cairo	Egypt	zeinabghosn@gmail.com
ELKHEIR FADL ALLA Musa	Khartoum 11111	Sudan	musaelkheir5@yahoo.com
TOTAL attending: 22			

Individual interviews with DFID-supported scholars on Thursday 2nd July 2009

Method

Interviews with conference scholars (including some of those supported by DFID) were conducted by volunteers and WCSJ staff at the conference venue on Thursday July 2. Other interviews were completed by email. Interviewers spoke to the delegates and recorded their answers in note form on a response form. Four of the interviews (involving delegates from French-speaking countries) were conducted in French, with the responses recorded in English.

The Questions

The interview was in three parts.

First the delegates were asked to identify and briefly describe two key events during the conference that were most likely to make a difference to their work as journalists in the next 3-12 months. For each event they were then asked what difference the event was likely to make to their work in this time period.

Secondly, the delegates were asked to identify gaps in the programme – examples where they expected the conference to make a difference to their work but where in fact it did not do so.

Thirdly the interviewer recorded a summary statement from the delegate to describe the difference they expected the conference to make in their work as a science journalist.

TWAHIRWA Aimable

Local Correspondent

Pan African News Agency (PANA), Inter Press Service (IPS), Integrated regional Information Network (IRIN), Agence Rwandaise d'Information (Kigali, Rwanda)

Twahirwa could freely interact with scientists at the conference, and hopes to do so with scientists on his return to Rwanda. "Once researchers interact with science journalists, [we have] a new era in science journalism."

Highlight 1: Human Disease Genetics and Emerging Infectious Diseases; other sessions

Workshop

Wellcome Trust Mon 29 June

Part of the Biomedical strand

Relevant to the Development strand

Twahirwa attended the workshop and learned about health issues that affect his home country [Rwanda]. He also spoke to Chris Drakeley, a researcher at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He reports having great trouble contacting scientists for interviews or information in Rwanda. He says that scientists in Rwanda are reluctant to work with journalists unless they are speaking at a press conference that they (the researcher or research institute) has arranged to communicate their research to the public. This workshop gave Twahirwa a chance to interact face-to-face with working scientists -- the first time he has been able to do this, he says.

In Rwanda there is a lot of research focussing on health problems that effect the region, such as swine flu, AIDS and diabetes. Twahirwa is aware that many UK researchers have links to Rwandan researchers, and by meeting some of these researchers in London he feels more comfortable about approaching Rwandan researchers for information. For example, the UK researcher Chris Drakely (whom Twahirwa spoke to at the conference) has links to the Rwanda Centre for Health Communications and the Rwanda Reference Laboratory [these agencies are part of the Rwanda Biomedical Centre, which oversees research and communications on health topics in Rwanda].

Highlight 2: A drought or a flood? Climate change reporting around the world

Parallel session

Central Hall, Westminster Wed 1 July

Part of Development strand

Aimable attended the session and spoke with DFID representatives, including Julie Jones and Kerry Albright from DFID's Research Into Use programme [Jones is the Interim Head of Publicity and Promotion for RIU; Albright has been the Senior Advisor on Policy and Partnerships and Task Team Leader for the "Influencing the Agenda" component of RIU].

He is interested in the agricultural research conducted by DFID, and found out about this research by speaking to Jones and Albright. Albright also introduced him to the Rwandan researcher David Kanyarukiga, and Twahirwa hopes to get in touch with this scientist on his return to Rwanda.

Aimable Twahirwa received a full travel scholarship from the Department for International Development. Interview conducted by Michael Bycroft on Thursday 2nd July, in English.

FADL ALLA Musa El kheir

Environmental Journalist

Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (Khartoum, Sudan)

Highlight 1: Four science journalists who change the world

Parallel session

Central Hall, Westminster Wed 1 July

Part of the Development strand and Biomedical strand

The workshop included speakers from developing countries (China, Nigeria, and Brazil). The session was very interesting, Fadl Alla says, because it gave advice about how to overcome difficult political conditions for science writers (in particular, censorship).

Some of the problems raised in the session exist in Fadl Alla's country [Sudan]. "Sometimes when I write one little bit that is political in a half-page article, the editor decides not to publish the whole article, often because of money. The advice given [at the session] on how to overcome this censorship was really important: try lobbying, advocacy, and certainly don't give up!" More generally, attending the conference helped Fadl Alla to make contacts, and he sees such contacts as valuable when forming pressure groups in countries like Sudan.

Highlight 2: A drought or a flood? Climate change reporting around the world

Parallel session

Central Hall, Westminster Wed 1 July

Part of Development strand

Fadl Alla found the section on media fellowships especially useful, and he learnt tips on how to gain fellowships and why they are important for those who win them.

Criticisms

Fadl Alla would have liked to go to the BBC offices, especially those of the BBC science section. He was really expecting to be able to visit the offices of the BBC and other London media outlets with science sections, as well as meet BBC editors at the conference to find out more about their work for the broadcaster. [The interviewer reports that this comment -- the lack of trips to major UK media outlets such as the BBC -- was endorsed by the group of 5 or 6 delegates who looked on at the interview.]

He also had limited access to the conference computers, and at the time of interview had not accessed his emails for 2 days.

Musa El kheir Fadl Alla received a full travel scholarship from the Department for International Development. Interview conducted by Natacha Postel-Vinay on Thursday 2nd July, in English.

MAME ALY Konte

Journalist Geographer

Newspaper Sud Quotidien (Dakar, Senegal)

Highlight 1: Confronting the killers: European health research leads the fight

Press Briefing, Central Hall, Westminster, Wed 1 July

Part of the Biomedical strand

Infectious diseases are important because they are a world problem, Mame Aly says, and are not confined to particular countries or regions. He has been reporting on AIDS and Tuberculosis for the last 10 years, and at the conference he made contact with the scientists Stewart Cole from the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne [Cole has been the Scientific Director of the Institut Pasteur in Paris. He is an expert on tuberculosis and other infectious diseases and is now working with a team of scientists at the Global Health Institute to find solutions to these problems]. Mame Aly also spoke to Andrea Alunni [Alunni is the Seed Investment Manager for Isis Innovation, Oxford University].

Through the workshop he learned of the development of a TB vaccine, and plans to report on this key development on the website he works for, the Sud Quotidien, www.sudonline.sn.

Highlight 2: Exhibition

Exhibition Hall, Central Hall Westminster; Mon 29 June -related to Development strand

Aly met representatives of the Qatar Foundation and EurekAlert. He also made contact with the Dominique Leglu [a journalist at the French magazine Sciences et Avenir] and David Dickson [Director of SciDevNet]. Mame Aly has sent articles to SciDevNet before. But at the conference he met the staff in person and discussed details of the website (eg. audience numbers) that are useful to his work. He believes he gained more from a face-to-face meeting with SciDevNet staff than he could have gained by email correspondence, and plans to send more articles to SciDevNet in the future.

Mame Aly discussed with Dominique Leglu the possibility of meeting her in Dakar (she plans to travel to Dakar in the near future, he says). He is especially interested in science education and would like to work with Leglu on this topic. He thinks EurekAlert will be a useful source of information and resources in his work as a science journalist.

Konte Mame Aly received a full travel scholarship from the Department for International Development.

Interview conducted by Michael Bycroft on Thursday 2nd July, in English.

RAZAFISON Rivonala

Science Journalist, Redactor in Chief

Ny Vaovaontsika (Antananarivo, Madagascar)

Highlight 1: SciDev.Net Networking Event

Lunch Session

Central Hall, Westminster, Wed 1 July - relevant to the Development strand

Razafison thinks he will now be able to write articles for SciDevNet as a freelancer. SciDevNet has asked him to write for them before, but he had not felt ready and had held back because of the language barrier and the pressure he felt to meet an international standard of science writing. But at the conference SciDevNet distributed leaflets, documents, advice on how to write, and also talked to him and asked delegates for their details. Razafison got some of his early science journalism training from people who now work for SciDevNet, and because of this he has always dreamed of working for the website, he says. And now thanks to the conference this dream is almost becoming true -- he reports that he now feels more confident about writing articles for SciDevNet.

Highlight 2: Reporting on Climate Change

Workshop

Royal Geographical Society, Mon 29 June - Part of Development strand

In past years Razafison has participated in many events on climate change, at home and abroad eg. in Nairobi [the 2006 United Nations conference on climate change], Melbourne [the 5th WCSJ, held in Australia in 2007], and Potsdam [an event at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research]. This workshop reinforced his knowledge (including technical knowledge) of climate change, he says.

He is preparing a small project on the efforts to find solutions regarding marginalised communities who are victims of climate change, and he expects to be able to integrate some elements from the workshop into the project. The workshop helped to summarise the problem of climate change, he says, and it also gave him new information that he thinks will be useful in his work.

Criticisms

"The organisers should have thought more about the problem of translation, and the topics tackled at the conference were too often generally Western problems. For example, paludism [malaria] is important in developing countries, but here they talked mostly about cancer, [a disease] which is probably mostly due to industrialisation."

Rivonala Razafison received a full travel scholarship from the Department for International Development. Interview conducted by Natacha Postel-Vinay on Thursday 2nd July, in French.

11. BOUMEDJOUT Hichem

Reporter

Newspaper Almassaa (Alger, Algeria)

Highlight 1: Reporting on Climate Change

Workshop - Royal Geographical Society, Mon 29 June - Development strand

Boumedjout reports gaining a lot of information on the topic of climate change at the workshop.

He also spoke to the scientist Saleemul Huq [Huq is a Senior Fellow in the Climate Change Group, and works for the Institute for International Environment and Development (IIED). Huq is a specialist in links between climate change and sustainable development, with a focus on the perspectives of developing countries.] Boumedjout interviewed Huq after the workshop and asked him about the situation in his (Boumedjout's) home country [Algeria].

"Huq is known worldwide," Boumedjout says, "and he will very useful in the future to answer my questions about climate change...this will improve the quality my articles."

Highlight 2: Qatar Foundation

Exhibition Room, Central Hall Westminster

Boumedjout met a manager of the Qatar Foundation, the leading funder of research in the Arab world. He also spoke to the Director of Communications from the Foundation to ask what the Foundation has been doing in Algeria. He says: "I will stay in contact and will always know about this major foundation for researchers."

Criticisms

Boumedjout sees the lack of translation at the conference as a problem. "Why was the conference was so anglo-centred?", he says. "I have participated in a number of world conferences, and this is the first time that there was no translation system. It is a world conference, and there should be [translations available in] at least 3 languages!"

Hichem Boumedjout received a full travel scholarship from the Department for International Development. Interview conducted by Natacha Postel-Vinay on Thursday 2nd July, in French.

Further feedback via email to Jean-Marc Fleury, Executive Director of the World Federation of Science Journalists, from SjCOOP scholars (the peer-to-peer science journalism mentoring programme, supported by DFID to attend WCSJ)

Magdy Said, Egypt

Q: What were your expectations coming to London?

Magdy Said: I was expecting more "educational" workshops, more "world" conference rather than "northern" one, more "culturally sensitive" conference rather than "native English speaking" one.

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

Magdy Said: Only 60%- 65%

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Magdy Said: Yes, mostly

Which sessions were most interesting?

Magdy Said: Genetics & Infectious Diseases – Four Science Journalists who have changed the world, Reporting on Engineering projects

Which sessions were not interesting?

Magdy Said: Philanthropists, climate change

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities, etc.?

Magdy Said: Mostly logistics were wonderful, only I was preferring either to have translation, or to ask lecturers and/or presenters to make a written presentation rather than oral ones, which were difficult for me sometime as non-native speaking

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting to you?

Magdy Said: If such conferences provide us with journalistic experiences & success or even failure stories from different parts of the world (regarding science journalism and/or associations management) & more capacity building workshops

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

Magdy Said: Sure

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

Magdy Said: Being the current ASJA president my contribution in Cairo conference would be determined after discussion with Nadia El Awady (the Cairo Conference Project manager)

Aimable Twahirwa (Rwanda)

Bonjour Jean-Marc,

J'aimerais vous faire le point de mon appréciation sur la conférence de Londres:

Attentes

- ** Rencontre et discuter avec les chercheurs
- ** Participer aux sessions animées par des chercheurs et qui focalisent sur des recherches en cours dans mon pays et dans la sous-région en générale
- ** Reseautage avec d'autres journalistes scientifiques
- ** Jumelage avec d'autres structures associations des journalistes scientifiques
- ** Bourses en perpectives

Londres a répondu à vos attentes?
Certainement!

Les ateliers pré-conférences

Oui, car ces ateliers ont servi de forum de rencontres entre les journalistes et chercheurs..

Les ateliers et les sessions les plus intéressants

Presque tous les ateliers étaient intéressants, mais il y avait des sujets, les plus intéressants comme le changement climatique, la recherche sur la santé (Cancer), la fabrication des médicaments etc..

Les moins intéressants?

N / A

Commentaires sur la conférence, traduction, logistique, logement, per diem, visa, etc.?

Tout était bien organisé surtout avec l'organisation des visites sur terrain... Mais faute de disponibilité, on n'a pas pu participer à certaines sessions aussi intéressantes compte tenu qu'elles (les sessions) étaient organisées en parallèle et parfois dans des endroits différents et parfois éloignés..

Comment de telles conférences pourraient être encore plus utiles pour vous?

Qu'on accorde plus de temps à certains sessions qui parlent des sujets fascinants comme le changement climatique, la santé... car il s'est avéré que le temps était trop limité afin qu'on puisse poser certaines questions pertinentes en rapport avec ces thèmes..

Voulez-vous venir à la Conférence du Caire? Pourquoi?

Oui, car je crois qu'à la conférence du Caire, il y aura de nouveaux sujets scientifiques fascinants que les chercheurs pourront échanger avec les journalistes..

Est-ce que vous pourriez contribuer à la Conférence du Caire?

Oui absolument.. J'aimerais surtout y proposer un exposé sur un sujet qui sera annoncé ultérieurement

Bien à Vous

Aimable

David Ya (Côte d'Ivoire)

Conférence de Londres

La conférence de Londres a répondu à mes attentes qui étaient de m'imprégner des dernières nouvelles en matière de science. J'ai été également heureux du contact que cette réunion a permis de créer entre nous journalistes scientifiques, et entre journalistes scientifiques et scientifiques. Cela a donné lieu, à côté des conférences, à des échanges privés très importants et très intéressants.

Oui, les ateliers pré conférence ont été intéressants, parce qu'ils ont permis, dans un cadre plus restreint de travailler sur des sujets que nous avons, nous-mêmes choisis.

N'ayant pas suivi toutes les sessions, je dirai que j'ai trouvé très intéressant l'atelier pré conférence et les sessions suivantes: « Human disease genetics and emerging infectious diseases » ; « the big debate : Is the british media the best or worst in the world at covering science ? » ; Investigative science reporting : Does it exist ? » « climate change coverage : the messy marriage of science, policy, and politics »

Mes commentaires sur la conférence : La traduction en français a manqué à cette conférence. Car pour les journalistes francophones, notre compréhension était limitée. Des termes scientifiques nous étaient inconnus en anglais. Cela dit, ça été une belle occasion pour nous, de pratiquer notre anglais et de connaître une belle évolution dans cette langue. Pour le reste, je félicite la fédération qui nous offre le nécessaire pour avoir un séjour agréable pour un travail de qualité.

Participer, contribuer à la Conférence du Caire serait un grand plaisir et un honneur. Car je pense que c'est en participant à ces Conférences, de façon régulière et active, que nous pourrions accroître notre connaissance et participer au développement du journalisme scientifique dans nos pays.

Je voudrais vous remercier sincèrement pour l'opportunité qui m'a été offerte d'asseoir ma qualité de journaliste scientifique, d'abord à travers l'excellent programme de mentorat qui vient de m'ouvrir un nouvel horizon dans la pratique du métier de journaliste; ensuite, par ma participation à la Conférence mondiale des journalistes scientifiques, qui a été rendue possible par le travail que vous avez entrepris pour trouver à tous les mentorés des prises en charges compétentes. Je voudrais vous remercier également pour l'effort supplémentaire que vous avez consenti pour me permettre de participer au voyage poste conférence à Genève et à Grenoble sur ces sites scientifiques les plus réputés au monde. L'expérience exceptionnelle que j'ai vécue à travers les rencontres avec ces grands scientifiques qui nous ont reçu avec courtoisie, et disponibilité, pour nous expliquer leurs travaux ; leur besoin de communiquer au monde extérieur toutes les recherches qu'ils conduisent à la faveur d'un futur meilleur de l'humanité, m'ont définitivement fixé sur le rôle important qui est celui du journaliste scientifique. Pour tout cela, je voudrais vous remercier et vous témoigner ma reconnaissance, ainsi que mon engagement à contribuer au développement du journalisme scientifique en Afrique, dans la sous région ouest africaine, et en particulier dans mon pays la Côte d'Ivoire. Toute ma prière est que bien d'autres journalistes puissent, grâce à vous et ce fabuleux programme, connaître la joie d'acquérir les connaissances que vous nous avez transmises de manière si originale.

Esther Nakkazi (Uganda)

Q: What were your expectations coming to London?

My expectations for the London conference included networking with other journalists, hearing about the latest science news from all over the world and enjoying London.

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

Yes it did.

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Yes they were useful.

Which sessions were most interesting?

New media tools, climate change and health.

Which sessions were not interesting?

None.

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities, etc.?

Yes the inside travel was not handled we did not have maps and no one to welcome us or show us how things work.

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting to you?

More visits or field trips which should not be held at the end of the conference like it was done in London.

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

Yes.

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

I would love to make a presentation.

Ravinola Razafison (Madagascar)

Quelles étaient vos attentes?

Premier point : la rencontre directe avec les équipes des organisations comme SciDevNet figurait dans mes aspirations avant la tenue de la conférence. Deuxième point : je m'attendais également à rencontrer des gens impliqués dans les domaines de l'environnement et de la biodiversité. Chez nous, les touristes anglo-saxons sont réputés être les plus respectueux de la nature à l'opposé de leurs homologues de tradition francophone.

Est-ce que Londres a répondu à vos attentes?

Oui. La rencontre avec SciDevNet fut chose faite. Les résultats sont même allés au-delà de mes attentes car un organisme traitant du paludisme m'accorde une inscription gratuite à ses listes d'abonnés. De plus, je suis invité à apporter mes contributions aux publications de cet organisme. Mais le deuxième point n'était pas satisfait.

Est-ce que les ateliers pré-conférences ont été intéressants? Pourquoi?

Oui surtout ceux consacrés au climat et à la sécurité alimentaire. Les thèmes retenus correspondent à la problématique des pays en développement dont fait partie le mien. Les débats ont donc fourni un plus dans le corpus d'informations utiles pour améliorer la qualité des articles à écrire.

Quelles étaient les ateliers et les sessions les plus intéressants? Les moins intéressants?

Franchement, les ateliers et sessions étaient tous intéressants mais l'appréciation dépendait de là où l'on vient. Par exemple, l'atelier sur le podcast de mercredi de 11 à 13 heures était moins intéressant pour moi car le niveau d'utilisation du multimédia de chez moi est loin de celui observé ailleurs. Par contre, la couverture d'un cataclysme de Sichuan à Sri Lanka de la même journée de 16h30 à 18h00 était intéressante pour les journalistes des pays en développement qui restent vulnérables et dont la capacité à encaisser les coups demeure insignifiante.

Avez-vous des commentaires sur la conférence, traduction, logistique, logement, per diem, visa, etc.?

Traduction et logistique : la langue de conférence (anglais) a été toujours une source de frustration pour certains francophones en particulier. L'anglais est parmi les langues les plus faciles à apprendre surtout pour ceux qui maîtrisent bien le français. En réalité, à plus de 70% des cas, le système de vocabulaire de la langue de Shakespeare se confond avec celui de la langue de Molière. C'est une proposition sociolinguistique valable. Les deux langues partagent une même racine latine. Cela est dû à des faits historiques hérités de la conquête menée par la France en Angleterre dans le passé. A ce titre, on aurait bien pu remarquer dans toute Londres les affiches concernant le roi Henri VIII. Théoriquement, ceux qui ont une maîtrise parfaite du français ne devraient pas connaître une difficulté majeure avec l'anglais. Un tout petit peu d'effort suffit donc et ça doit passer. Seulement le malaise se pose au niveau de l'écoute qui requiert une habitude et un certain degré de concentration. Plus souvent, l'écoute et la concentration sont perturbées par les bruits générés par le cadre physique de la conférence lui-même. J'entends par là la sonorisation de la salle et on ne peut pas non plus empêcher les confrères de se parler entre eux, de rire, d'applaudir, de se lever pour prendre des photos... Quand on a visité Oxfordshire vendredi, on nous a distribué, à un certain moment donné de la journée, des récepteurs écouteurs pour que l'on ait pu mieux entendre les explications des chercheurs, qui étaient eux aussi équipés d'une sorte d'émetteurs radios. Tellement les bruits à l'intérieur du centre rendait impossible une écoute sans gêne de leurs dires. Je crois qu'un tel procédé pourrait aider la compréhension de ceux ont du mal à suivre un discours en public durant la conférence.

Logement : Je m'attendais à une chambre hôtel avec toutes les facilités qu'il fallait. Pourtant, on était logé(e)s dans des chambres pour étudiant(e)s qui n'étaient pas mauvaises du tout. Tout était là sauf l'Internet et l'interphone pour arranger des programmes « extra » avec les autres. Ce qui aurait toujours rendu plus agréable le séjour en terre étrangère. Tout bien réfléchi, personnellement, j'ai bien compris que ce n'était pas facile du tout pour les organisateurs de mettre plus de 900 individus à un même niveau de satisfaction. Déjà ils s'étaient beaucoup investis pour toutes les tâches qui s'imposaient. D'ailleurs, on connaît très bien la cherté du coût de la vie et des services à Londres et aussi... à New York. Concernant le Central Hall London, je me sentais honoré d'avoir été autorisé avec mes ami(e)s à investir pendant trois jours ce site ô combien chargé de symboles et valeurs historiques. C'était le must à mon sens.

Per diem, visa : J'ai reçu ce qu'il fallait. Mais le jour du retour, je crois avoir été abusé. J'ai dû payer 90 livres pour le taxi qui m'a déposé au terminal 5 de Heathrow (cf. pièce jointe). Mon vol était dimanche à 10h45. J'ai quitté la résidence à 06h15 du matin espérant pouvoir y être à temps après les cache-cache avec les underground. Car l'enregistrement du bagage commençait 3 heures avant le décollage. Mais, à ma grande surprise, la bouche du métro la plus proche de chez nous ne s'ouvrait ce jour qu'à 07h30 selon une affichée accolée à l'entrée. Prendre les bus serait moins sûr à cause du temps que ça aurait pris jusqu'à la destination finale. Par ailleurs, leurs horaires du week-end, surtout le dimanche, sont différents de ceux des jours ouvrables. Finalement, le taxi était une option inévitable même si elle a causé un dégât important dans le restant des per diem déjà échaudés.

Comment de telles conférences pourraient être encore plus utiles pour vous?

Avant d'aller à une conférence et après chaque conférence, je me suis toujours posé la question suivante : « Comment dois-je faire pour faire profiter de cette conférence à ma famille, à mon pays et à l'humanité ? »

Voulez-vous venir à la Conférence du Caire? Pourquoi?

Oui, en effet. On a assisté à la conférence de Melbourne en 2007. Cette année, on était à Londres. La prochaine fois, ce sera au Caire. Les avancées scientifiques dans les deux premiers pays sont formidables. Le pays du kangourou faisait sensation. Le pays natal de la révolution industrielle méritait une exploration bien dosée. Et celui des Pharaons qui était aussi le berceau de grandes civilisations basées sur la culture mathématique ? Justement, ce sera pour la première fois que la WCSJ débarquera en Afrique. Je profite de cette occasion pour vous demander les informations concernant lieux et les périodes des précédentes WCSJ, i.e. les première, deuxième, troisième et quatrième éditions.

Est-ce que vous pourriez contribuer à la Conférence du Caire?

Oui. Je voudrais proposer un thème sur « la perception publique des informations scientifiques dans les pays en développement ». Je crois que d'ici là, j'aurai le temps suffisant pour la collecte des données et précisions nécessaires.

SVP, prenez qqs minutes pour me faire connaître vos suggestions et commentaires

Ceci est une suggestion. Il serait souhaité que la WFSJ fasse connaître de manière officielle les nouveaux journalistes scientifiques et ceux en cours de formation de chaque pays auprès des ministères chargés de la Recherche et les prie de diffuser les informations transmises auprès de chaque centre de recherche ou organismes rattachés. Cette suggestion concerne les pays en développement où l'accès aux informations est souvent restreint. Une telle démarche pourrait servir de clé aux journalistes et lui dicter une clause de conscience adéquate par rapport au contexte de la production et de la diffusion des informations qu'il publiera.

Content de lire vos réactions.

Hichem Boumedjout (Algeria)

What were your expectations coming to London?

I'm very happy, I have meet many scientists and journalists from all the word. It's a big opportunity to change idea and experiences.

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

Yes

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Yes

Which sessions were most interesting?

Climate change

Which sessions were not interesting?

N/A

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities, etc.?

No

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting to you?

I hope if you can associate a scientists from the poor world from Africa for example.

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

Yes it's very important for me to attending the Cairo conference.

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

Organisation

Christophe Mvondo (Cameroon)

Pour ce qui est de la Conférence de Londres, je l'ai déjà dit ce matin, elle a été organisée comme toutes les autres. Le contenu scientifique y était. La seule fausse note viens de l'hébergement. Les participants logés au Geat Dovers Street n'étaient pas très content de l'exiguïté des chambres et des lits. Personnellement ça ne m'a pas posé un problème particulier, car la WFSJ nous a toujours bien logé. J'ai compris qu'il y a peut-être eu un problème.

Le deuxième problème était l'absence de la traduction. Moi je suis un peu bilingue mais certains de nos amis Congolais, Ivoiriens, Sénégalais et même Arabes disent n'avoir pas pigé grand chose à cause de l'accent british qui ne permettait pas de bien décoder les communications..

Pour le reste je crois mes responsabilités à l' Executive Board m'oblige à être présent à toutes ces rencontres.

Michael Simire (Nigeria)

Q: What were your expectations coming to London?

Meeting new people, getting to know London and further expanding my scope of core science issues

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

To a large extent, yes.

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Yes, it did.

Which sessions were most interesting?

I found the sessions that explored the prospects of science journalism/media rather interesting.

Which sessions were not interesting?

There were some sessions that appeared a bit too technical.

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities?

No TV and internet connection where I was lodged at Great Dover Street. I was unable to do further work that required internet connection as the conference venue closed and vacated everyone around 6pm.

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting to you? Internet connections are vital even in hotel rooms and even we have to pay for it. Closing time at conference venue/press centre should be more flexible.

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

Yes, I would.

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

General pre-conference preparations and organisaions/arrangements during and after the forum.

Regards,

Michael Ohioze SIMIRE

Dora Shey (Cameroon)

London Conference

As to my expectations concerning the London conference they were many folds.

- I expected to come back with lots of documentation concerning the conference to be used sooner or later for our associations
- Expected to meet many scientists

- Expected to meet many journalists
- Expected to learn more about science journalism from high profile journalists
- Expected to have more insight into major scientific issues

My expectations were partially met

- I did attend the sessions cause not all of them were interesting

Yes the pre-conference sessions were interesting

Most Interesting sessions

- Reporting on climate change
- Journalism skills
- Human disease genetics and emerging infectious diseases
- Pitfalls on reporting on clinical trials
- New media tools
- Getting global coverage for science
- Building research capacity and healthcare solutions in Africa to fight TB, river blindness, malaria

Less interesting

- Science on TV here today gone tomorrow
- Four science journalists who changed the world
- From quantum to Cosmos, new frontiers in science
- Meet the editors forum
-

As for lodging we were a little disappointed because conditions for once were not the best.

Did not seem to have seen any translation during the conference

As travel arrangements they were good for me

Visa arrangements were also good as I received my documents to demand a visa well ahead of time

Wish that the per diem could be improved

As for other facilities like the internet, access to radio or TV they were absent especially in the rooms. This was difficult for journalists who are expected to keep abreast with news

What you need to do to make future conferences interesting

- Have copies of exposes after the presentations
- Have less presentations going on at the same time so we can benefit from most of them.
- Arrange for decent lodging facilities taking into consideration the fact that we are journalists
- Have translations for francophones and Arabs
- Interaction between organisers and guests should be a little close. They were very distant

Yes I will be interested in attending the Cairo conference

I would like to do a presentation or help in the organisation.

Musa Fadl Alla (Sudan)

What were your expectations coming to London?

To pay visits to famous media institutions such as the Guardian, BBC...etc

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

Yes, it did, apart from what I mentioned in Q.1

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Yes, they were useful

Which sessions were most interesting?

Four Journalists have changed the World

Which sessions were not interesting?

All sessions were interesting

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities, etc.?

I met some journalists who could not understand the session due to absence of simultaneous interpretation, particularly some of the Arabic and French speaking participants

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting to you?

Providing simultaneous interpretation

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

Yes

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

I can participate in the organizing committee; I can also give presentation on topics on science journalism and play the role of key speaker in some sessions.

Onche Odeh (Nigeria)

What were your expectations coming to London?

I expected that London would cap the union that has been built by SjCOOP, beginning in Nairobi, extending to Doha.

Did the London Conference meet your expectations?

In a way

Did the pre-conference Workshop prove to be useful?

Very

Which sessions were most interesting?

I enjoyed the Sessions on the Four journalists who changed the World

Which sessions were not interesting?

Can't think of any particularly

Do you have comments on the translation, logistics, travel arrangements, visa, lodging, per diem, facilities, etc.?

I was not really impressed by the fact that SjCoop fellows were kept in scattered accomodation. This took away the oneness that has characterised the programme. The visa was okay, no problem although we anticipated some in Nigeria. The Hotel (hostel) facilities was restrictive. We couldn't do extra work because we were not allowed to use internet facilities. Some of us were forced to go across and browse at a pub opposite (after buying yourself a drink anyway). This is because the conference venue closed too early.

What do we need to do to make sure such conferences are useful and interesting?

Good accommodation, maybe transportation could be arranged like it was in Nairobi. We had more group coherence and were able to remember a lot about ourselves because we always had to move together on our way to conference venue.

Would you be interested in attending the Cairo Conference?

I am already dreaming of Cairo and hope to make the best of it

In which way could you contribute to the Cairo Conference?

I wouldn't mind being a speaker on a particular topic there.

Highlights of the Development Strand according to other conference scholars – from individual interviews on Thurs 2nd July 2009

Contacts

"I know so many people now. I have so many great contacts, and that is what is important to me as a journalist" - Ernest Cho Chi, Cameroon

Many scholars named contacts that could make a difference to their work over the next few months. Many of these contacts were fellow journalists, for example, Hannusia Hopko from Ukraine met up with Deborah Blum, the Pulitzer-prize winning journalist from the USA. A number identified SciDevNet staff as key contacts, including those who had had previous contact with the editors but had written few or no articles for the website or who had not had any previous contact and wanted to contribute (Ernest Cho Chi of Cameroon, for example). Regular contributors who found it useful to meet and speak to the staff in person.

Scientists

Several scholars reported having made contact with scientists. For some this contact was immediately fruitful. Lazarus Laiser spoke to Dr. Karen Buttigieg, a researcher from Imperial College London, and found out about a vaccination for poultry that can be made using materials available locally to farmers in Laiser's home country, Tanzania. Others met scientists who could give them information in the future about events that affect their (the scholar's) home country. For example, Hannusia Hopko met 3 scientists at the Food Sustainability and Security workshop who she hopes to contact about land use issues when she returns to the Ukraine. Some scholars had previously had little or no face-to-face contact with scientists, and they welcomed the chance to meet and converse with working researchers at workshops and other conference sessions.

Skills and stories

"I am going to use these skills and impart them to others. I have a network of five radio stations [in Tanzania] that immediately I will impart knowledge to...it is really needed [in Tanzania]." – Lazarus Laiser, Tanzania

Some scholars mentioned specific stories that came out of the conference sessions, for example, Lazarus Laiser's story about poultry vaccinations. For other scholars the conference will make a difference to a story because they have new skills (as opposed to new subject knowledge). Mohammad Suhail Yousuf of Pakistan attended the parallel session "Investigative Science Reporting: Does it Exist?" and hopes to use the lessons from the session in one of his current investigations, a report on conflict between Indian and Pakistan fisherman brought about by the pressures of climate change on the river delta at the border between the two countries. The session "gives me the power to think more precisely about how to do stories like this", he says.

Building associations

"I want to organise and campaign to make science journalism real and accurate in the Ukraine" – Hannusia Hopko, Kiev

A number of the scholars came away from the conference with broader goals to build science journalism in their country or region. Hannusia Hopko has "drafted project ideas" on a national conference on science journalism in Ukraine, which she would like to organise to "help establish professional science writers and improve the dialogue between scientists and science journalists." Lazarus Laiser is interested in reviving the Association of Science Journalists in Tanzania, and plans to be in contact with the presidents of the Finland, Egypt and UK Associations about this project.

Solutions to problems

Some conference scholars suggest that the conference may help with problems in reporting science in developing countries. Ernest Cho Chi, for example, has trouble getting stories into print due to a conservative editor, and hopes that the use of anonymous reporting and decoy stories can help overcome this problem.

SISSOKO Bande Moussa

Journalist Specialising in International News, L'Essor (Bamako, Mali)
www.essor.gov.ml

Highlight 1: Reporting on Climate Change; Climate Change: gearing up for Copenhagen

Workshop; plenary session, Royal Geographical Society; Central Hall, Westminster; Mon 29 June and Wed 1 July, Part of the Development strand

Climate change is a major problem in Sissoko's country [Mali]. Agriculture has been damaged, so have cattle and the fishing industry, and desertification has increased there in the past one or two decades. Sissoko plans to write more articles on the topic of climate change, with a view to taking action. He already knew we would write on the topics, but the workshop "really showed me how important the issue is and how important it is to act." Sissoko also met researchers and journalists with an interest in climate change, who will be able to provide him with more information on the topic in the future, he says.

Highlight 2: SciDev.Net networking event

*Lunch session, Central Hall, Westminster Wed 1 July
 Related to Development strand*

Sissoko already writes for SciDev.Net, but he met the SciDev.Net staff in person at the event and says he now has a better idea of the sort of articles the SciDev.Net editors want to publish. He says he can now write better articles for the website, and expects to be asked to write more of them. "Meeting the SciDev.Net team in person is important because it reinforces my confidence and now they [the SciDev.Net staff] know better who I am."

Criticisms

The conference could also have had more content on agriculture, the science of the Arctic, and new technologies, Sissoko says.

Sissoko found that there were not enough computers in the Media Room.

He would also prefer all of the conference events to be in one place, and found it hard to find the Royal Society for the breakfast on Wednesday July 1.

Bande Moussa Sissoko received a full travel scholarship from International Institute for Environment and Development. (Interview conducted by Natacha Postel-Vinay on Thursday 2nd July, in French.)

CHIKAPA Charles

Staff Journalist, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (Blantyre, Malawi)

"An eye-opener into science journalism."

Highlight 1: Food sustainability and security

Workshop at Royal Geographical Society, Mon 29 June - Development strand

As well as attending the workshop, Chikapa met a leading representative of DFID, an organisation that has a strong presence in Malawi and is working to combat poverty in the country, he says. He made a pitch to the DFID representative for support for a science communications project in Malawi that Chikapa hopes to work on. He would like to gain support from DFID and the World Bank to bring together a network of scientists and science journalists in Malawi.

Highlight 2: Reporting on Climate Change

Workshop - Royal Geographical Society, Mon 29 June - Development strand

Chikapa reports that he now "understands better" the problem of climate change, and thought the booklets and handouts at the workshop will be useful for his future work. He found the summary of the Copenhagen conference produced by SciDev.Net especially useful. Writing articles for SciDev.Net is now "one of my priorities", he says.

Criticisms

Chikapa would have liked to get more time on the conference computers.

Charles Chikapa received a full travel scholarship from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

Interview conducted by Michael Bycroft on Thursday 2nd July, in English.

Overview: 6th World Conference of Science Journalists 2009

The 6th World Conference of Science Journalists took place in London at Central Hall Westminster, 30th June – 2nd July 2009), with pre-conference workshops at the Royal Geographical Society, Imperial College London and the Wellcome Trust on Monday 29th June 2009.

The aims of WCSJ2009 were to bring together established and aspiring reporters, writers and science communicators from around the world to debate the big issues facing science journalism, network, develop their professional skills and report on the latest advances in science and technology.

The conference attracted over 1000 participants, including more than 100 journalists supported on scholarships.

“This is a meeting that really has changed the way science journalists thought about the way they work. It's a conference that inspired as well as informed and its impact will be felt across the world for many, many years to come.”

Pallab Ghosh

Science Correspondent, BBC News

& Past President, World Federation of Science Journalists

Acknowledgements

Organising Committee:

Steering Committee

Phillip Campbell, Editor-in-Chief, *Nature*

Clive Cookson, Science Editor, *Financial Times*

David Dickson, Director, *SciDev.Net*, UK

Jean-Marc Fleury, Executive Director, *World Federation of Science Journalists*

Pallab Ghosh, President, *World Federation of Science Journalists* and

Science Correspondent, *BBC News*

Sir David King, Director, *Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University*

Ted Nield, Chair of the *Association of British Science Writers*

Jeremy Webb, Editor-in-Chief, *New Scientist*

Executive Organising Committee

Julie Clayton, Conference Co-Director, *WCSJ2009*

Sallie Robins, Conference Co-Director, *WCSJ2009*

Barbie Drillsma, *ABSW* and *EUSJA*

Ruth Francis, *Nature*

Martin Ince, *ABSW*

Claire Jowett, *ABSW Science Writer Awards*

Lisa Melton, *Nature Biotechnology*

Frank Nuijens, *Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands*

Ginger Pinholster, *AAAS*

Mike Shanahan, *International Institute for Environment and Development*

Andrew Sugden, *Science, Europe*

John Travis, *Science, Europe*

Bob Ward, *Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science*

Pete Wrobel, *ABSW*

Programme Team

The programme development has been overseen by Fiona Fox, Director of the *Science Media Centre*, Sallie Robins and Julie Clayton, in consultation with various ABSW members and partner organisations, both in the UK and abroad.

Full background details about WCSJ2009 can be found here <http://www.wcsj2009.org>, and news reports, podcasts, audio recordings, video and photographs here <http://www.wcsjnews.org/>

Other Acknowledgements

Steering Committee
Executive Organising Committee
Programme Team
Partners, Foundation Partners, Seed Funders
Sponsors and Exhibitors
Friends of the Conference Programme
Session Producers, Chairs, Speakers
Workshop Facilitators
Media and Marketing Partners
Natural History Museum/Darwin200
Imperial College London
Wellcome Trust Collection
Science Museum
Visit Britain and Visit London
Chris Ledger Photography
And our many helpers and volunteers

Speakers: The WCSJ committee would like to thank all the conference producers and speakers who made the conference such an outstanding success.

Foundation Partners: We wish to acknowledge support from the following organisations that endorsed and supported our bid to bring the 2009 World Conference of Science Journalist to London.

ABSW
British Council
Commonwealth Press Union
Darwin200
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Guild of Health Writers
International Institute for
Environment & Development
Internews Network
Nature
Novartis Foundation
Office of Science & Innovation
Open Democracy
Pallab Ghosh, President, *World
Federation of Science Journalists* and
Science Correspondent, *BBC News*
Research Councils UK
SciDev.Net
Sir Paul Nurse
President Rockefeller University
The British Science Association

The Royal Society
Visit Britain
Wellcome Trust

Seed Funders: We wish to acknowledge support from the following organisations who provided seed funding to help us in the early stages of development of the WCSJ2009 Conference.

Nature
The Royal Society
Wellcome Trust
World Federation of Science Journalists

Partners: We wish to acknowledge support from the following organisations who have provided a donation or grant in support of the WCSJ 2009 Conference:

Burroughs Wellcome Fund
Danida via the Danish 92 Group
International Institute for Environment and Development
UNESCO

Sponsors: We would like to thank all our conference sponsors and partners. It was these organisations that made the event financially viable. We would particularly like to thank our Lead and Major Sponsors:

British Council Darwin Now
Department for International Development (DFID)
European Commission - Directorate General Research
European School of Oncology
Johnson & Johnson
Joint Research Centre, European Commission
Qatar Foundation
Research Councils UK

Delegates

Participant Information:

Type	No
Paying Delegates	520
Speakers & Producers	258
Scholars	107
Stempra workshop additional delegates	12
Free places (committee/VIPs etc)	38
Free places for sponsors/exhibitors	58
Special access	48
Volunteers/stewards	23
Total Participants	1064

Geographical location of delegates:

We had data for 888 conference participants (delegates, scholars and speakers) and the breakdown of home country is split out below by numbers of participants and by country.

38.7% of conference participants were from the UK with the next highest representation being the USA (6.42%), Canada (3.6%) and Belgium (3.4%).

The following countries only had one representative in attendance:

Benin, Botswana, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Rwanda, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam.

Country	Number	%
Algeria	2	0.23
Argentina	5	0.56
Australia	19	2.14
Austria	7	0.79
Bangladesh	6	0.68
Belgium	30	3.38
Benin	1	0.11
Botswana	1	0.11
Brazil	6	0.68
Bulgaria	3	0.34
Cameroon	5	0.56
Canada	32	3.60
Chile	4	0.45
China	11	1.24
Côte d'Ivoire	2	0.23
Cyprus	2	0.23
Czech Republic	5	0.56
Denmark	8	0.90
Egypt	12	1.35
Estonia	5	0.56

Country	Number	%
Finland	15	1.69
France	17	1.91
Georgia	1	0.11
Germany	38	4.28
Ghana	4	0.45
Greece	1	0.11
Guatemala	1	0.11
Hungary	5	0.56
India	3	0.34
Indonesia	1	0.11
Iraq	2	0.23
Ireland	5	0.56
Israel	1	0.11
Italy	17	1.91
Japan	12	1.35
Jordan	2	0.23
Kenya	5	0.56
Korea, Republic Of	11	1.24
Latvia	2	0.23
Luxembourg	1	0.11
Madagascar	1	0.11
Malawi	2	0.23
Mali	1	0.11
Mexico	5	0.56
Morocco	1	0.11
Namibia	1	0.11
Netherlands	24	2.70
New Zealand	2	0.23
Nigeria	10	1.13
Norway	13	1.46
Pakistan	3	0.34
Poland	4	0.45
Portugal	3	0.34
Qatar	11	1.24
République Démocratique du Congo	2	0.23
Romania	5	0.56
Russia	4	0.45
Rwanda	1	0.11
Senegal	2	0.23
Singapore	3	0.34

Country	Number	%
Singapore	2	0.23
Slovakia	1	0.11
Slovenia	4	0.45
South Africa	9	1.01
Spain	21	2.36
Sri Lanka	1	0.11
Sudan	1	0.11
Sweden	10	1.13
Switzerland	14	1.58
Tanzania	3	0.34
Turkey	2	0.23
Uganda	6	0.68
Ukraine	1	0.11
United Arab Emirates	1	0.11
United Kingdom	344	38.74
United States of America	57	6.42
Vietnam	1	0.11
Zambia	2	0.23

Journalists press type:

Of the 314 paying journalists who attended, we collected data on the journalism type for 291 of these:

Journalism Field	Number
Broadcast	39
Online	58
Print/Press	159
Other	35
Total	291

WFSJ Associations – number of delegates per association:

We had 151 delegates from WFSJ member associations and the breakdown per association is as follows:

Association	Number	%
Brazilian Association of Science Journalism	1	0.66
Catalan Association for Scientific Communication	8	5.30
Chilean Association of Science Journalists	1	0.66
French Association of Science Journalists	4	2.65
Arab Science Journalists Association	4	2.65
Association des Communicateurs Scientifiques du Quebec	3	1.99
Association of British Science Writers (ABSW)	29	19.21
Australian Science Communicators	5	3.31
Bangladesh Science Writers & Journalists Forum	1	0.66
Canadian Science Writers' Association	4	2.65
Chinese Society for Science and Technology Journalism	6	3.97
Czech Science Journalists Club	1	0.66
Danish Science Journalists' Association	5	3.31
European Union of Science Journalists Associations	9	5.96
ISJA/ISTJA	3	1.99
International Science Writers Association	2	1.32
Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists	8	5.30
Korea Science Reporters Association	6	3.97
Medical Journalists Association of Japan	1	0.66
Nigerian Association of Science Journalists	1	0.66
National Association of Science Writers (USA)	15	9.93
SciLife (Cameroon)	1	0.66
Science Journalist Club	1	0.66
South African Science Journalists' Association	1	0.66
Swiss Association for Science journalism	3	1.99
TELI (Germany)	1	0.66
The Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists	17	11.26
UGIS (Italy)	2	1.32
VWN (Netherlands)	7	4.64
WPK (Germany)	1	0.66
Total	151	100

"I would like to congratulate you and thank you for an absolutely fantastic conference. London was a dream-come-true.

London is the cradle and birth place of science journalism. Even 'troublemakers' like Ben Goldacre are contributing immensely to science journalism and continue to make London a very creative place for the profession. That is to say that my expectations for the Conference were huge.

You delivered much more than I expected. The benefits for the Federation are immense and we will discover more and more in the coming months and years. Today, I received an email of someone who wants to make sure she is informed about the Cairo Conference and does not miss it!"

Jean-Marc Fleury, BellGlobemedia Chair in Science Journalism, Université Laval (Québec)
Executive Director, World Federation of Science Journalists

Journalism Scholars

The scholarships competition was launched in January 2009 with a deadline of 28th February 2009. Over 400 applications were received and 145 scholarships were granted for scholars from over 50 different countries. These included 22 scholars from Africa and the Middle East who were participants in the World Federation of Science Journalists' peer-to-peer science journalism mentoring programme SjCOOP, supported by DFID.

Scholarships were generously supported by Friends of the Conference as well as major conference sponsors:

Organisation
<i>Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council</i> (BBSRC)
British Council
CERN/ILL/ESRF
Department for International Development (DFID)
European Commission – Directorate General Research
European Union of Science Journalists' Associations (EUSJA)
International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) – Danida 92 Group
Joint Research Centre – European Commission
Kavli Foundation
National Association of British Science Writers (NASW)
Nature
Royal Society of New Zealand
UNESCO
World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ)

The following costs were covered for scholars: Visas, flights, airport transfers in home country and the UK, per diem, accommodation for up to 7 nights per person.

[PICTURES IN HERE]

Conference Programme

Fiona Fox, Director of the UK Science Media Centre, chaired the programme committee and led the compilation and structuring of the programme, and appointment of producers for individual sessions. The programme ran over a full week, from Monday 29th June to Friday 3rd July 2009.

There were **258** speakers and producers of whom **23** were plenary speakers. The programme consisted of **12** skills building workshops on Monday 29th & Tuesday 30th June. The main conference between Tues 30th June and Thurs 2nd July consisted of: **5** plenary sessions, **34** parallel sessions, **12** press briefings, **8** sponsored lunches, and **3** sponsored breakfasts, followed by **10** post conference trips on Friday 3rd July.

Full background details about the conference programme, speaker biographies and session abstracts can be found on the main conference website at <http://www.wcsj2009.org>

Skills building Workshops:

Workshops were all extremely popular with very few places still available on the day. Most were oversubscribed.

Monday 29th June: Six skills building workshops took place in 4 different venues: Royal Geographical Society, Wellcome Collection, Imperial College London and the Science Museum's Dana Centre.

- Reporting about climate change
- Food security and sustainability - can we avert a food crisis?
- Human disease genetics and emerging infectious diseases
- Pitfalls of reporting about clinical trials
- Journalism skills
- Podcasting skills

Media Reception: Science Museum, Making the Modern World Gallery

Tuesday 30th June:

Morning – Six workshops took place at Central Hall Westminster, the main conference venue.

- From quantum to cosmos: New frontiers in science
- Green energy technologies
- Informing attitudes and beliefs about cancer
- New media tools
- Getting global coverage for science
- Heritage science: What next?

Main Conference programme:

Tuesday 30th June:

Afternoon – Included the Opening Plenary 1, Welcome Tea Party, 5 parallel sessions, Plenary 2

Evening - Welcome Reception at the venue, hosted by: Quentin Cooper, Presenter of the BBC's Material World

Wednesday 1st July:

Morning – 1 breakfast session at the Royal Society, 3 Press briefings, Plenary 3, 6 Parallel sessions

Lunchtime – 4 lunch sessions, 1 parallel session

Afternoon – 11 parallel sessions, 3 press briefings

Evening – Gala Reception at the Natural History Museum

Thursday 2nd July:

Morning – 2 breakfast sessions, 3 press briefings and fringe events, Plenary 4, 5 parallel sessions

Lunchtime – 4 lunch sessions, 1 press briefing, 1 parallel session

Afternoon – 5 parallel sessions, 1 press briefing, Closing Plenary 5

Evening - Farewell Party at the venue

Speakers and Producers:

There were 62 producers and 196 speakers in total including for workshops, lunches, breakfasts and press briefings. Some producers however were also speakers and some people produced or spoke at more than one session.

All workshops, plenary sessions and parallel sessions had at least one session producer each and some had two or three. The sponsored sessions also had a session organiser or producer.

Post Conference Trips:

Friday 3rd July: 11 post conference trips to various locations within the UK and further afield in Europe:

British Antarctic Survey & Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
 CERN, ESRF and ILL – European laboratories of the Alps (4-6 July)
 Delft University Water Research Centre
 Fusion, Materials, the Environment and Much More. Inspiring Science (and Oxford)
 Diamond Light Source, Central Laser Facility, ISIS, JET (Joint European Torus)
 Imperial College, South Kensington, London
 Laboratory of the Government Chemist
 The National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS)
 Norwich Research Park
 Rothamsted Research
 The Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition, London

Comments:

"I thought the conference went terrifically well. The folks who attended our sessions were interested and engaged and asked questions until questions had to be cut off. The sessions were also a chance to bring in some journalists from developing countries, and that worked out well."

Phil Hilts, Director, Knight Science Journalism Fellowships, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, producer of the pre-conference workshop on "New Media Tools".

"I'm glad the conference was such a success, and was very glad that the Royal Society provided an impetus (and pleased that I was able to participate in a session myself)."

Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal, President, Royal Society

"A heart-felt thanks for all of your work at the WCSJ. I really had a very interesting and fun week, and I feel lucky for having won that scholarship. See you in Cairo, I hope!"

Martin Enserink (freelance correspondent, Science magazine)

"Congratulations on a fantastic conference.

It's generated a great buzz and everyone was raving about it the other night. It's a shame I was stuck in the office writing about shrinking sheep and wheelie bins cos I'd have loved to have come along to more sessions."

David Derbyshire, Environment Editor, The Daily Mail

I've become fairly jaded about conferences but this one was really outstanding. I learned something new at every session I attended (which will teach me something).

Deborah Blum, Pulitzer Prize-winner, journalist, Professor of Journalism, Univ. Wisconsin-Madison

WCSJ 2009 was a superb conference. The content, logistics and hospitality all worked very well, which I'm sure was due to all the planning and hard work you invested... So thank you very much!

Nalaka Gunawardene, Director, TVE Asia Pacific

Evaluation of the Overall WCSJ2009 Conference Programme

– via feedback questionnaire distributed to all delegates on Thursday 2nd July, and online via Survey Monkey.

Question 5: Overall Conference Assessment

5.1 Importance and success of conference goals

The success of the conference in achieving its key goals varied but was mainly satisfactory. Moreover, the conference met or exceeded expectations for those goals that really mattered for the delegates.

8 goals were identified:

- Informing you about important issues facing science journalism
- Helping you to make contacts with science journalists and editors
- Informing you about important science-related issues facing society
- Giving you data or ideas for stories that you will follow up in the next six months
- Helping you to improve your skills as a science journalist
- Helping you to make contacts with scientists
- Informing you about technical innovations in science

For all goals the majority of respondents indicated that the conference had met their expectations in achieving the goal. However in some cases the number of those for whom the conference clearly exceeded their expectations was greater than the number of those for whom it fell below their expectations. These cases were: **informing delegates about important issues facing science journalism** (the conference exceeded the expectations of 38% of respondents in this respect), and **helping delegates to make contacts with science journalists and editors** (exceeding the expectations of about a quarter, 23%).

In other cases the situation was reversed, with the unsatisfied delegates clearly outnumbering the satisfied delegates. Such was the case for these goals: helping delegates to make contacts with scientists, and informing delegates about technical innovations in science.

For 6 of the 8 goals, 70% or more of the respondents thought the goal was quite important or most important. The two most important goals were **informing delegates about important issues facing science journalism** (60% regarded this as the most important goal), and **helping delegates to make contacts with science journalists and editors** (50% thought this the most important). These two key goals are also the goals that were met most successfully at the conference. For all 8 goals, success is roughly proportional to importance. Skills-building is the only goal for which the success of the conference was significantly lower than its importance to the respondents. Nearly a half (46%) of respondents reported that skills-building was the most important goal of the conference, but nearly a third (29%) reported that the conference did not meet their expectations in helping them to build their skills as journalists.

5.2 Omissions from the overall conference programme

55 delegates indicated that some important debates or issues in science journalism were not well-covered at the conference. 49 indicated that there were no such gaps; the rest did not respond to this question.

In the written feedback on this topic, recurring comments were that the topics were too focused on UK and the Western world, there was a lack of skills-based (rather than knowledge-based) workshops, and that journalists were not well-served by sessions on freelancing, teaching science journalism, scientific research into science journalism, and the relationship between science journalists and the PR world (including the issues in professional ethics this relationship brings up).

Other science journalism issues (ie. issues facing the profession) cited as poorly-covered, were: business models for new media (including non-profit media), defining science journalism and its audience, science journalism on the radio (rather than podcasts), and language issues (translation and interpreting).

The respondents cited a range of different fields of science as being under-covered at the conference. Some general comments were that applied physical science/materials topics, topics outside biomedicine/physical sciences, and "Environment as a whole" (presumably meaning non-climate change environmental issues) were not well-covered. More specific topics cited were the military industry and science, chemtrails/geo-engineering, future technologies, science and politics, history of science and technology, risk and statistics, and synthetic biology.

5.3 Further remarks

112 respondents gave a written response to the question asking for any further feedback on the conference. The majority of the comments are critical, though these are partly balanced by some high praise. The complaints are mostly more specific than the praise, so this summary focuses on the criticisms.

Respondents commented on conference logistics, session content, networking opportunities, and the delivery or presentation of the sessions. Common criticisms were: a lack of space and air conditioning in some sessions; a small number of laptops in the media room; session content was biased towards UK and Western topics; presenters were mostly men; sessions were not interactive enough; and some speakers appeared ill-prepared and required more aggressive mediators and producers.

Other criticisms of content were:

Too much focus on climate change; neglect of Space and related topics; UK media other than the BBC and Guardian were neglected; more "hot topics in science" were needed; sessions on SJ training (cf. Q5.2) neglected; events for student journalists and early-career journalists were lacking; sponsored content was intrusive at some points; practical skills-based sessions were lacking (cf. Q5.2); radio was neglected (cf. Q5.2); and that the conference focused on science journalism at the expense of the large proportion of science communicators/PR officers/Press Officers who attended (although worried that the conference had "let PR people run riot"). More than one criticised the final plenary as boring and/or superficial.

Other logistical complaints were: Lack of translation system and poor enunciation made some sessions hard for non-native speakers; networking journalists at receptions drowned out the speakers; lack of facilities for recording interviews; there should have been more time between sessions to relax, write reports, and explore the city; some thought that the food was inadequate (others praised the food); admission issues (restricted admission, delayed notification of workshops, space limits on sessions causing some to miss out) caused some complaints; one thought the conference handbook was hard to read.

Comments about the staff and stewards at the conference were all positive.

Some offered specific suggestions for the next conference. These included: having a central "pin board" (or other bulletin board, real or virtual) to help delegates make contact with delegates with similar interests; having "speed dating" type sessions for those who lacked the time or talent for informal networking; better labelling of delegates to show their interest/media type and to help journalists identify scientists, and better labelling of speakers.

Question 6: Associations of Science Journalists and WCSJ

6.1 Membership of Associations

Just over half of all respondents were members of Associations of Science Journalists, including 5 from the Netherlands Science Journalists Association, 7 from the National Association of Science Journalists (USA), 6 from the Japanese Association of Science Journalists, 4 from the Arab Science Journalists Association, and 30 from the Association of British Science Journalists.

6.2 Interest in Associations

Of those who responded to the question, 41% indicated that they would like to become a member of a science journalists' association. 18% did not want to become members, mostly because they were not journalists.

6.3 and 6.4 Association events at future WCSJs

Among those who responded, opinion was fairly evenly split between those who thought that a WCSJ should include meetings, workshops or events specifically for Associations of Science Journalists, though the majority were in favour (40.5% for, 34.8% against).

71 respondents gave a short written account of the kinds of activities they thought should be organised for Associations at the next WCSJ. In these accounts, some points recur from the feedback on the conference in general: the need for more workshops focusing on journalism skills rather than science topics (for "a more practical view", as one respondent put it); sessions on how to train journalists; trips to visit editorial staff of science media; and sessions on the history of science and technology and on science and policy.

16 suggested that a session or sessions on running an Association should take place, to help with issues like fundraising, motivating volunteers, managing Association events, staffing, and starting a new Association.

21 thought that networking and sharing events would be useful, both for general meeting and greeting and for structured events where representatives from different Associations exchanged ideas and learned about the activities of other Associations through country summaries or case studies.

6.5 Aims of Association representatives at WCSJ 09

8% of respondents indicated that they represented an association of Science Journalists at the conference. Fundraising, networking with members of other Associations and journalists, and skills building were the most commonly stated aims of the 16 representatives of Associations who gave a written account of their aims at the conference.

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Appendix 1: Transcript from DFID-supported lunch session on “Friendship or Friction: How the media relates to the research community”

<http://www.wcsjnews.org/session/lunch-session-9-friendship-or-friction-how-media-relates-research-community>

Thursday, July 2, 2009 13:15 - 14:15

Summary

The relationship between the media and the academic science community is seldom easy.

The media, academics argue, do not engage with ‘proper’ science and when they do, they over-simplify and distort the research. Academics, retort the media, cannot communicate clearly, do not understand how the media works, and are unwilling to engage with journalists in real time.

The truth lies somewhere in-between.

Academic research is often difficult to access; researchers have no incentives or reward for communicating with the media; and journalists do not have the resources to find it and translate it for their specific audiences.

The session will explore how this relationship can be improved. It will debate the practical challenges for each community, and showcase techniques used by DFID funded research to communicate science, creating a win-win situation for both parties.

TRANSCRIPT

Megan Lloyd Laney: “I work for the DFID Research Department – I belong to the Uptake Team – we’re about understanding and communicating about research so that it gets used in development terms. We’ve recognised over the last 3 days that we weren’t really using all these people from all around the world and asking what are the main challenges in reporting about research. I’m a science journalist from 20 years ago. It’s not an easy job. There are challenges, and we’re trying to work out how best to meet those. So we gave some of you cards – to find out what journalists feel are the main challenges in reporting about science. We get the old nuggets and they are four-fold. The biggest challenge is that, you believe, researchers don’t have a big enough commitment to communicating about research. Seven or eight of you said they don’t try hard enough, that they don’t understand media - they don’t understand that there are deadlines, and that you have to pitch to editors. Thirdly, they are not prepared to dilute their messages – they want you to report their PhD verbatim and you don’t have enough space. The fourth is a fear of misrepresentation – of their content or of their person. This is not a scientific survey, this is a broad brush stroke with you guys in the room who are trying to report on scientific research and you’re having a difficult time. Some of you are trying to communicate about your research. That’s who we are, that’s our burden. The session is chaired by Chris Witty – an academic researcher in malaria. From his side of the fence there isn’t much criticism about the way the media report on academic research.

Chair: Chris Witty, Scientific Advisor to DFID

"I'm speaking in 2 roles: one is that I do academic research and I'm driven bonkers by the media. And I'm going to explain from our perspective what the 4 big problems are. The second point is that I'm speaking on behalf, to some extent, for the Department for International Development, but actually I'm also speaking more widely for people who fund research and research for more generally. We recognise that the endpoint is not the research itself. The end point is when it's put into use. The media are the intermediaries that allows that to be possible. You are the people who will inform the informing policy makers, the practitioners and the public in general. So from our perspective it's really critical that we actually get this right.

"We're also aware that the media is not there to put out public broadcast messages – or at least they will do it, but only if they get paid. Therefore we have to find a relationship where you get what you want and we get what we want, which is accurate reporting of stories. I would say probably, speaking as a researcher, my counterfore would be firstly, when the media gets the story wrong, it's deliberately got the story wrong. I would say that's rare among science journalists. It's less rare among the general journalists who have got a space to fill and want a good shock story. I come from health – you can all imagine the kinds of stories I'm talking about – some papers make a habit of it. Secondly, it's surprisingly rare when people get it wrong by accident. I'm amazed at how much science journalists don't misreport what they're told.

"Two other things are more common. One is when people are not interested at all – there's not much we can do about that, except to make things as accessible and as useful to you as possible. And one which is a *folly a deux*, where we're both at fault, when the media go for completely the wrong story.

"I can remember the first time I was put in front of a large number of media in Africa – at a press conference on HIV. People had been rolling out fantastic stuff – about how to prevent HIV, new drugs for HIV, a whole lot of social stuff about how HIV was caused. I had an hour with journalists and was asked no questions about any of those things at all. The only question I was asked is, "When is an HIV vaccine coming and what's it going to be like?" I told them very conservatively – in 1999 – that I thought it was very unlikely that there would be an HIV vaccine in the next 10 years. I think I was pretty safe in that statement and if I were asked the same question now I would say exactly the same thing. And yet that was the same story that everyone wanted to focus on, despite the fact that this was at least 10 years away. And yet the needs that were absolutely immediate – people were less interested in.

"I then swapped fields for a while and went to a malaria conference the next year, and was put in front of a press conference – and the first and the last question were about - in this case about a malaria vaccine – still more than 5 years away. We in the research community said that there are so many questions, and this is important for policy makers and researchers to know about, this is really exciting, really solid stuff. Why do you only want to know about something that is only important to rats and mice in Oxford and Cambridge and Harvard? Yet that is what people want to go for – the stuff that is high tech, way into the future stuff, not stuff that actually has practical reality.

"For us I think that is the biggest challenge, and I would like to have a dialogue with you about what are the most important stories. DFID take research into communication about research that people fund very seriously, and up to a third of our research budget is devoted to this. We've got an expert panel of 4 people who are going to give an example. We want questions and statements for how we can make this mutual – slight antagonism sometimes, more generally indifference – slightly more productive for both of us."

Susanna Thorpe: "Good to see you all here. I'm from Wren Media a UK-based multimedia company. We mainly work in the field of agriculture both in the UK and overseas. We do a number of different things. One is, as a journalist, I edit a DFID-funded magazine called the "New Agriculturalist". For a number of years we've been working with journalists. I work with journalist – pleased to see Patrick Luganda - I've worked with Patrick and other journalists in Uganda on reporting about sleeping sickness – with funding from DFID.

"I'm going to tell you about one particular initiative DFID funded, in providing capacity for journalists in Africa for better science reporting. I do think it's the case that for science journalists it is slightly different in Africa. Many of the journalists aren't trained in agriculture or science. Many have an interest in reporting on science, or are given a column, but don't necessarily have a science degree behind them. So some of the problems that Chris described come more to the fore in terms of the conflict that the media and researchers. We've

been involved in some training to try to improve that. We've had 4 training workshops with African radio and print journalists across regions, bringing them together to work in teams, but embedding it in a scientific event. So holding these at an international conferences on under-utilised crops, the second on bananas, and the third one just recently with young journalists, on sustainable agriculture.

"We are in the business of building skills, enhancing the presence of these journalists, and nurturing partnerships with scientists. Besides mentoring them individually, we also get them to work as a production house. The objective is to concentrate on collecting stories together for a resource pack for other journalists to use. Here we have two such resource packs: "Making the most of bananas", and the second, "Sustainable agriculture". We discuss, as a production team, the stories that go into it, and we work on producing that during the course of the week.

[Images] "Abi was at Arusha – print journalist – making sure she has all the relevant details before she launches into her article. And Pious – a radio journalist from Kenya - became one of our co-trainers in the next workshop.

"One of the key objectives apart from training the journalists was to work with conference organisers to raise the profile of the journalists at the conference. So we weren't just a satellite activity but we were integrated into the whole event. One of the things we did was to introduce the journalists at the beginning of the week, so that the science delegates knew who we were, and encourage researchers to come and see us in the press room if they had particular stories to tell, because the journalists were also collecting other stories to take back to their media houses.

"The second event was called Making the Most of the Media. Normally an evening session but at the last conference it was integrated into the main conference programme. This was looking at the problems we've just discussed between the views of the media on accessing information from the science community, and from the science community the problems they sometimes have dealing with the media.

[Image] "Here are a group of journalists preparing a sketch, looking at the problems – not being prepared, not having a proper briefing, not knowing name of person to be interviewed – all the serious things they could put into one sketch. And we did the same with scientists. We used it as a light icebreaker at the media sessions to get them talking about it as well.

[Image] "You can see here they are doing the sketches on stage. Then each journalist hosted a discussion group with some of the journalists. We got comments from researchers 6 months after they had taken part. So what was the impact after this very brief session? I've asked Lazarus Laizer to read some of these out."

Lazarus Laizer: "I work closely with Wren Media – these are some of the feedback from Arusha: "I remember how practical the session was, the session helped me learn the importance of simplifying the message from our findings, and focusing our minds on the research findings, on the impact of findings of research development...." Interaction with the media since the workshop: "I have contacted the media because I wanted them to publicise my research to the wider public. The outcome: two media people came to interview me. As a result – research published in 5 print media." The last one is from Mombassa. "The media is a mouthpiece and window to a nation. If they can get the correct information to a nation, they would have more informed choices about research, for example in the area of biotechnology."

Susannah Thorpe: "I'm going to ask Lazarus how he felt about being involved in the course, what's happened since, and why he is now involved in this event.

Lazarus Laizer: "It was so great that I learned a lot and got a chance to meet with the scientists and interview them. It was a time to learn and improve my journalism skills. I got connected to science journalists outside and inside the country, so I was able to know which topics to cover. In Tanzania we cover most of the agriculture issues, so it was a good opportunity for me to know which topics I could cover and which are the sources for my programmes. But also I had time to interview farmers together with editors – they were able to show us how to interview and create questions on the hard topics. I did not study science, so how can I go deeper into the new topics? I got these techniques under my belt and I used them, and I produced one of the topics about the jatropha – which we learned about at the conference and workshop. I produced a

number of programmes which have been so effective – we got 200 letters from the listeners asking how they can grow this crop. We also got 100 emails, and calls. So it was so great – just because of the workshop. Then how did I get here? From that conference and the workshop I kept looking on the internet, and the contacts that I got – we are connected to scientists around the world. It was easier for me to get a wider perspective.”

Susanna Thorpe: “Lazarus is here sponsored by the BBSRC and will go to Rothamsted to interview some of the scientists there. Some passing comments: we were only scratching at the surface in terms of supporting African journalists, but we believe that the time is really now. One – for better and more agricultural science reporting in the mainstream media across Africa. Two – to start responding to the scientific community’s willingness to collaborate – they are opening up and responding to working with the media. Thirdly, as Lazarus shows – taking advantage of all help and opportunities to enhance their skills.”

Annie Hoban (Programme Officer for RELAY – based at Panos and funded by DFID.) “The core business of the RELAY programme is developing links between researchers and journalists and editors. We produce resource guides for journalists and researchers and media training on how to report better.... We also run workshops. The purpose of the programme is to improve media and public debate around critical development issues, particularly informed by development research. We work with a network of Panos partners in over 12 countries, and we have offices in East Africa, Southern Africa, Asia, and now the Caribbean as well.”

Alexandra Hyde (Overseas programme coordinator for a programme called Targets at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine): “Our main purpose is to develop new knowledge and tools for the communication about research into TB. We partnerd with ZambART, together with Panos Southern Africa. Zambart and TARGETS recognise the need to work on a local and national level with the media in-country. It’s very important for transmitting new knowledge, but we don’t really know how, so we are working with Panos who have networks and expertise in media training in a developing country context that we thought would be fruitful. The workshop was aimed at building on trust between researchers and journalists – from Panos Southern Africa – for researchers and journalists to work more effectively together; to raise TB issues for debate in the media, and to establish a cadre of journalists better informed about TB research and health in general. So I’m going to show a little film from the workshop.

[Vox Pops from workshop participants...] “The point was to get researchers and journalists together... it is very important for journalists to sit down and look at how best to report”... “HIV and TB are a moral issue. Journalists want to get information as quickly as possible. They end up doing superficial stories.”... “We hope to have more. Researchers want to know how they can talk to journalists.”... “We have a common goal – to inform the public... It is not one group separate from the other.”... “If we have more training we will ... disseminate the info more fully.”

Alexandra Hyde: “It really threw up lots of open-ended questions. The first was how can we convert the enthusiasm from our pre-workshop questionnaires into a working relationship - every-day journalistic practice? One of the critical barriers was scientific language and what journalists perceived as jargon. Journalists had to come up with definitions for scientific terms.

“We did Q&A – each side rethinking the meanings they thought were obvious. Eg, acronyms used in TB treatment – for a journalist wanting to know what it means, and for the researcher it means a 5-point treatment strategy being rolled out across Africa. Where do you fit that into an article?”

Annie Hoban “Another finding was the question of where does the responsibility of researchers end, and that of journalists begin. For example, we’d done work with researchers ahead of the workshop in trying to distill their key messages with presentations that would be no more than 10 minutes long. Of course several were longer – the journalists in their feedback said that the very last slide was really all they wanted to hear and to follow up with more Q&A.

Alexandra Hyde “The third point was, “Don’t forget the Media”. The workshop used as its content ZambART’s work with the AIDS Alliance regarding some of the stigma between HIV and TB. It was an

obvious conclusion that journalists were not first thought of as a group to roll this campaign out, with community groups, there is a large project building capacity for community members to pass on messages about stigma, but we found a lot of the same misconceptions and myths amongst the journalists and the journalists were saying we need to learn ourselves what the facts are. So for AIDS Alliance and for ZambART there is a whole group that we have not been communicating with, and we need to address that pretty quickly.

“Another point was learning from similarities and differences with sessions on ethics. For researchers this is such a strong field – ethical committees for every step. For journalists with a tight deadline it was acknowledged that covering [ethics] was difficult. For the different perspectives, there is an ethics stand for both professions. An ethics framework protects the credibility of both the researchers’ and the journalists’ work. So it brought these very nicely together, and that session was very productive.”

Annie Hoban: “From the feedback – pleased with what was accomplished in 2 days. It’s important to think how we institutionalise reporting on research – into existing programmes in journalism schools and with communication built into the research project – not just tacked on at the end.”

Chris Witty: “Questions please?”

Robert Walgate: “I was an editor at Panos – where I created a network of journalists reporting on the environment, I published a book, then I went to WHO and worked on communications. Gradually it became clear that there was an issue – the lack of a medium to communicate between the researchers and the policy makers in developing countries. Not just uni-directional, but bi-directional – tri-directional – we need a medium able to cover concerns of policy makers about research, as well as delivering research information to the ministries. At the moment we’re not seeing that in the media. This is an unfilled niche. I started a magazine called Real Health News, a demonstration project, with interviews with ministers, scientists. You can demonstrate a real need for this kind of medium. Where is it?”

Claire Arthur: “I’m a journalist from the Thomson Foundation, I have done journalism training in Asia. When you train just journalists together, you get a completely different outcome compared to when you train journalists and NGOs together – they’re both good working models if done with a conscious decision about what the outcome is. But what I’ve consistently found is that journalists go back to their news rooms with new skills, connections with scientists and NGOs, but they get back into their newsroom and the editor has not changed at all. Often they’re very young and don’t have the negotiating skills to sell those stories in-house. So I think we need to look at how you can get editors to look at things a little differently. I know there’s a new push to get more training into journalism schools – with limited resources – but is it better to put that into schools where for example only 30 per cent go on to become journalists, or into training qualified journalists?”

Alexandra Hyde: “On our Arusha course, a colleague from Dar Es Salaam persuaded their producer to start a programme on indigenous crops in Tanzania. This is one example – you can do training, but you can’t necessarily train editors.”

Lazarus Laizer: “To me in that area – having that knowledge is important – but also the combination for journalists to meet scientists. This helped me to get confidence that scientists have something to say to my audience. Journalists have to go to the field – they can share together.”

Alexandra Hyde: “We aimed for a mix of journalists new to health and a range of junior and established editorial people – invited key editors along. We had an editorial team to try and focus throughout the workshop on bringing out story ideas. The issue of going back to the editor came up early. Sessions on how to pitch your idea would have been useful - not just how to find your story. Can TB ever become front page news? It depends on how you pitch it. Take information from researchers and convert it – from the researchers point of view you can’t spin everything into a front page story.

Audience member: “There are other factors – such as competition with the sports story, or that Jackson has died. If we tried to do stories for page 1 most researchers would shun us...”

Nalaka Gunawardene: I'm from Sri Lanka, I work in Asia using TV, video and new media to communicate about development. I don't agree that journalists are not trainable. It depends on how you reach out to them. I've been through both good and unproductive training. It depends on how you engage. Journalists are very proud, egotistical people and need to be treated as specialists in their own profession. We need to meet them on their own terms. Secondly, the media as plural – when we talk about 'engaging', or 'capacity building in the media', we need to recognise that there are many different types of media. Their needs are different. Take print, broadcast and new media. Parallel to developing the capacity in the media profession to communicate, we need to build capacity in the research community to work more productively with the media. Last December, I worked with Annie Hoban on a training funded by IDRC in Hyderabad, where we brought together senior research managers and leaders, and exposed them to different types of communications frameworks and methodologies.... the "Hitchhikers Rough Guide to the Media". We introduced other technologies and different platforms and frameworks. This is an ongoing process. We've been asked by CGIAR to train researchers in how to handle TV interviews including very hostile interviewers, how to develop the art of the soundbite – when a senior researcher is put on the spot on live TV or radio.

"The point is what we've heard at this conference is that increasingly researchers are reaching out to policy makers and the wider public without necessarily going through us – the science journalists. I say this with some concern – because of the new media opportunities and platforms. How do we live with that reality and how do we – with the formal structure and training we're talking about – more and more researchers and the public are bypassing the bridge that has been there all this time – the science journalists?"

Ester Nakkazi: "I'm a science journalist in Uganda. I appreciate the panel – as a science journalist I read a lot of bad stories from my fellow journalists and myself. So I want to appreciate their efforts. My question is, even if we have tried to bridge the gap between local journalists and scientists we usually don't have access to foreign scientists, who are usually the PI's of the researchers. So if the research has been published it is on the website. You access the local scientist and they don't want to talk to you and they refer you to the international scientist and somehow you cannot access them. How can you help us?"

Annie Hoban: "It's interesting but an opportunity also that you can access international researchers via online but local ones are difficult. The RELAY programme tries to broker individual contacts and connections – a facilitation role via Panos and resource materials – researchers who have a willingness to be contacted. Access is a real issue."

Alexandra Hyde: "ZambART researchers don't have time. ZambART has its own policy and communications advisor."

Audience member: "Many times there is internationally led research done in local [African] countries. When you try to contact the local partners – for example circumcision research on HIV transmission, and transmission from mother-to-child – that is led by US researchers. The local collaborators would not want to comment on the outcome of the research, and they refer you to the press release or the international researchers and you don't have access to them. So how do you localise the story? The researcher does not feel confident to stand up and speak about the research."

Suzanna Thorpe: "Be persistent. I think it's developing your approach – going first to the international scientist saying "We want the story – please can you give your local partner permission?" They are often not confident. To get approval takes longer - it takes persistence - pitching why you want to do the story and how you're going to benefit."

Lazarus Laizer: "To me, in Tanzania, it's really the worst. It's true that we don't have access to research results. I used to get information from Susannah at Wren Media. Researchers in Tanzania are not really aware. They are not contacting science journalists. It's something we really need to look at – it's a big challenge to myself and to my country. How am I going to do this? No science journalists are active. We really need education – it's a big challenge. If journalists can wake up and if there was government leadership to make sure those researchers can at least share --- but that maybe difficult."

William Odinga: “I’m from the Uganda Science Journalists Association. What about media houses and how they make money? Someone pays for a quarter page advertisement in a newspaper – if there is competition for space the editor is forced to take a story, for example a business story, because it is paid for.

Chris Witty (chair): “That’s a controversial comment.”

Annie Hoban: “That’s major issue. We’re supporting 10 fellowships – editorial mentoring, with stipends for fellowships. There is controversy that this is not enough. We have two TV fellowships – sponsorship is expensive....We needed to approach different media differently. Regarding sustainability... it’s common practice in Zambia for donors to support the media. It’s difficult to reverse the situation. It’s definitely controversial. We try to work with media houses. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with media houses in getting buy-in.

Chris Witty: “But it’s dangerous if the researcher that can afford to pay for advertising gets coverage, whereas the researcher who cannot afford it does not. That would be extremely dangerous direction to go in and I would be strongly opposed to it.

Appendix 2: Transcript of the Development Strand Podcast

<http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/specials/wcsj/>

The 2009 WCSJ featured a Development Strand supported by the Department for International Development (DFID). With guest speakers from all over the world, the Development Strand covered issues in science journalism, challenges facing science journalists world wide, the problem of finding credible science sources and the opportunities for collaboration between researchers and journalists in the developing world. In this special podcast, we'll be discussing these and hearing from speakers and delegates.

Ben Vasler (interviewer): What draws international visitors to the WCSJ?

Cecilia Rosen, science journalist, Mexico City

"I'm interested in not only practicing but also researching science journalism, so I'm interested in discussions about how we as science journalists work and how we can improve our work."

Akin Jimoh, Programme Director of Development Communications Network

"There are a lot of commonalities when it comes to issues around the world – science is the essence of life. It is very important to know what is going on. Whatever happens in the northern part of the world has relevance to what goes on in the southern part of the world. We have a lot of commonalities, and this is really an opportunity to learn what is really going on and how we address those issues. We think globally, but we have to act locally."

Laura Garcia Oviedo, freelance science journalist, Argentina

"This is the second time I have attended this conference. I went to Melbourne in 2007. That was the first time I felt I was not a strange thing. There were many other science journalists that were thinking about how to improve their skills in covering science. I said "this is amazing". This time I applied because I wanted to be here, meet and learn from other people. It's very exciting. There are many things going on like climate change, and Darwin, it's really a very good opportunity to be here with other colleagues from around the world."

BV: But it's down to a real understanding of problems facing science journalists, especially those in the developing world. Nadia El-Awady, now President of the World Federation of Science Journalists, explains.

Nadia El-Awady: "The problems we have in the Arab world relating to science journalism are several. We have a large number of science journalists – especially in Egypt – that are now focusing on covering science, health, environmental issues. And it's increasing in the Arab world as well. And we have some training opportunities giving journalists some skills building in these issues. But this does not mean we don't have problems. The main problem is language – a problem because it means we don't have access to information. Another important problem is training – we have training in the region but we need more. We need our journalists to be trained in basic journalism and in the science issues – they need to have capacity building in the issues – they need to be able to understand them and to be able to simplify them for a general audience."

"There's a difference between what what is happening and what should be happening. There should be more coverage of issues of importance to the region like hepatitis C, biharzia, TB. These are very relevant to our audiences but they're not getting enough coverage. What issues are our journalists focusing on? I find they're copy-cattng international media. They're following the international media agenda. They tend to do that rather than focus on internal issues because it's easier that way. They can take a story off the news

wires, put it into the newspaper, get a little quote from a local scientist, and you're done. It's much harder to find the local story, in depth, get your background information, and then get it published."

BV: Pushing the boundaries can leave you exposed to manipulation... be it someone with a product to sell, a political agenda to push, or a ground breaking discovery that may or may not be true. The credibility of sources is vitally important. Diran Onifade from the Nigerian Television Authority explains why credibility is a particularly prickly issue for African journalists.

Diran Onifade: "We are largely a developing society. There is a whole lot of confusion around issues of science and innovation on the whole of the continent of Africa. There are policy people, there are media people, who are ignorant of the trends. There are even people in the scientific community who are ignorant of the current issues in their specific field. Amid all these plethora of confusion you have the kind of situation where things happen in such a way that there are things happening that should not happen."

BV: So people who are not credible would take advantage of this confusion to spread lies, sell products?

Diran Onifade: "Definitely - people who are media savvy who know how to manipulate the media – they have an inroad, they appeal to listeners, to journalists, they get air time, they get space in the newspapers to promote their agenda – often for money."

BV: Often when science is involved we're talking about medicine, and they're putting people's lives at risk?

Diran Onifade: "It often has to do with the regulatory environment. Things get politicised. You find people who otherwise are from the scientific community maybe not practicing in their specific area of science, but they have at least some knowledge of science, actually going about what they do not have expertise in, or they do things wrongly and they are not facing sanctions from their colleagues because the regulatory environment is loose. All these need to be worked on by professional bodies and the scientific community. But even with policy makers and governments, standards have to be set. In many cases these standards are not there yet."

BV: "How do you make sure that somebody you are talking to is actually credible?"

Diran Onifade: "By being informed yourself and asking the right question. For instance, it does happen in Nigeria that people call press conferences to announce research results. Some people call journalists to a nice lunch, and say they have now solved a problem that Einstein couldn't solve, or they have found the answer - a cure - for diabetes. They do it and get away with it simply because they do not have colleagues who are willing to sanction them, or even willing to challenge them. That's not the way it should be. And the liars can carry on with their lives."

BV: So personal education and having the knowledge of how science works is the key to avoid being taken advantage of?

Diran Onifade: It's really the key. When you have a journalist who knows that a press conference is not the place to announce a scientific result he's going to ask, "Has this study been peer reviewed? What was the sample? How did you conduct the research? What was the population? What are the specific samples?" Ask all these questions that a layman should want to understand. You ask all these questions and get the answer as to whether this is a credible person or should they just be ignored."

BV: Whilst peer review should help safeguard against manipulation, it's imp't to keep an open mind to catch the ground breaking science before it becomes mainstream. ABC's Robyn Williams explains.

Robyn Williams: "I'm keen on mavericks - people who say something outside the box. When I've spotted and see that they are people who are willing to say something fairly bold I make a decision about whether it's going to threaten someone's life. For example, in Perth, there is a doctor and a physicist, who say that HIV is

not the basis of AIDS. And so I will think, if I give the wrong impression to people on air – this goes round the world – then I could really be risking somebody's life if they refuse treatment. My understanding is that there's a problem about fluoride in the water – it seems a lesser problem, but if your teeth are bad, and the germs go systemic, and you have a dodgy heart valve with a hole, then you have risk. So I find out what the gang says about so and so, and I get the gossip factor. Is this a sensible person, or just a mouth-for-hire? A lot are in the main areas of climate, genetic engineering, GM, etc. You can find out very quickly if they are part of lobby groups, and if so, be very wary."

BV: So it's all about context, the impact these people could make, or if they are just puppets whose strings are being pulled?

Robyn Williams: "Sure. There is massive manipulation of journalists all over the place... if I something on any of the big topics, my email will be swamped. For example if you were a political journalist and did something on peace in the Middle East, within minutes you are submerged with emails from people who are standing by on either side of the question. But it means also that people like us – I've been in the business since 1972 with a science show for 35 years every week - we can so easily become part of the establishment. There's a body of old men – who work out what the orthodox view is... for example, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren who got the Nobel prize for *Helicobacter pylori* and stomach ulcers – for 20 years fighting to get recognised."

"My father got treated by having all his teeth taken out, milk slop diet. Robin Warren and Barry Marshall did research.... Barry Marshall published a book after getting the Nobel Prize showing how 20 different people in science had recognised something but were refused to be accepted as credible witnesses because the establishment was against them. But seems to me that science in its search for the truth will pick what is right."

BV: Science is conservative and surely the decision about what is right should be made in the scientific and not in the media arena?

Robyn Williams: "You're not going to get the Nobel prize by following someone else's work. That's Hwang in South Korea publishing work on stem cell research was allowed to go for so long. Schoen was publishing in the area of nanotechnology and electronics – publishing every 9 days and somehow getting away with it. Getting credibility by piggy backing onto someone else's work. Science journalists do have a role – when you see a superstar – what's going on?That took 2 or 3 years. Science journalists do have a role there but when you see a superstar... think what's going on? But we are so flat-out having to service all the outlets that we can barely keep up with the straight forward let alone the wonky...."

BV: So what advice can you give to young science journalists on knowing how to pick the right people?

Robyn Williams: "You need to develop a bullshit filter. Unlikely stuff really needs strong evidence for it. Then you need to get a network of people who can tell you what's really going on in labs. A few questions about what's behind the scenes – a few questions down the pub – somewhere where they have an association, or even students. If you find yourself in the precinct, talk to some, follow them up with the hard questions. A lot of these guys are amazingly plausible and spend their lives defending their case. But keep at it and it's worth the trouble."

BV: Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. But if you find it, you could have extraordinary science journalism.... Reporting climate change is a thorny issue. Climate issues are enormously complicated and have enough caveats to scare off all but the most hardened reporters. Both the science of climate change, and the way it's covered by the media were both up for discussion at the World Conference. Mike Shanahan from the International Institute for Environment and Development...

Mike Shanahan: "We've been looking at the latest science of climate change, looking at the impacts and some of the vulnerabilities that differ around the world. But not just looking at the bad news, we're also looking at some of the positive things that people are doing to adapt to climate change or to mitigate climate change such as renewable energy or avoiding deforestation. We've had scientists and we've had journalists

– so the two camps that don't often come together and meet. We've had people who are members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, someone from the Met Office here in the UK, and Chris Rapley who's the Director of the Science Museum now but he used to be the Director of the British Antarctic Survey. So people have got their hands dirty on the science, but also the pen carriers, we've had journalists who have been reporting on climate change for many years.

They've been talking about the issues but they've also been talking about how the media carries the story and what could be done better. Journalists have been explaining some of the problems they face, like their inability sometimes to get through to editors that this is actually a story and something important. And also scientists having trouble communicating about risk, or getting rid of jargon and explaining things in a clear way that everyday people can understand. This afternoon the journalists are going to be in smaller groups so that people can talk amongst each other, to talk about the barriers they face in reporting about climate change, in very different settings – this can be an Australian rural journalist or somebody in Kampala, Uganda. So they've got very different perspectives but we hope to come up with some solutions that will be applicable across the board so that people can go back to their jobs and think in a different way about climate change and get more stories out into the papers and on TV.

One of the most important things is that they leave this conference and this workshop with a bunch of contacts that they can stay in touch with for the years to come because it's often a very lonely beat reporting on environment and science issues, especially in developing countries, and there's very little support in a country, but when you know you've got friends around the world in the same position as you and you can call upon them with a quick email, I think that's the strength of a conference like this. People make lots of good friends and stay in touch for years."

Cecilia Rosen: "The most difficult part of reporting on climate change will be sometimes the science itself because sometimes we as journalists are not sure how to manage these uncertainties, and how to turn a global story into a local story and get readers to care about these issues. That is the hardest part."

BV: Climate change is an enormously complicated issue, feeding into food sec, water availability and population. Gordon Conway, former scientific advisor to the DFID chaired a session in which this potential 'perfect storm' was discussed.

Gordon Conway: "In this session we had Professor John Beddington - he says we're heading for a perfect storm in which the increase in population, increasing demand for water, food and energy, will start to come together in a way that really could be extraordinarily difficult for all of us. He is very depressed about that and I understand why he is depressed. On the other hand, he does acknowledge that science and technology have got answers to this and we need to spend more on science and technology to solve all these problems. We need to solve the problems here in the West, in Britain and Europe, but in particular we need to solve them in the Developing Countries because that's where the poor are. The recent increase in food prices that occurred last year added over 100 million more people into the pool of the chronically hungry. So there are over a billion people in the world who are chronically hungry."

BV: So are we going to have to make big compromises in order to let the world develop in a more sustainable way?

Gordon Conway: "Not necessarily. It depends upon what we do. What we have to do in this country is define what we mean by a low carbon society. It's the biggest challenge that we face – it's much bigger than the food crisis, or the financial crisis, or the terrorism crisis. The biggest challenge that we face is how do we achieve a low carbon society. Achieving that society not just in terms of energy or industrial production but also in our institutions – how do we change our institutions so that we can the way we live. It's a huge challenge for the next 30 years, and so far we're only paying lip service to it."

BV: And how do u see the role of science journalists or reporter fit into this?

Gordon Conway: "I described the different challenges in my talk this morning as being like English Cottage Loaves. An English Cottage loaf have the small loaf on top of a big loaf. The small loaves are the immediate crises – terrorism or banks failing or car companies going broke, but underneath those are the big chronic

crises. The problem is that politicians go from immediate crisis to immediate crisis. They wake up each morning, “What’s the immediate crisis?” Then they deal with that and go on to the next one, and the media follow them, because that’s what makes headlines. But what the science media in particular need to do is to analyse the chronic crises underneath.... Water shortage, climate change, food security. What are the factors and the drivers under those and what can we do about them? That is what science journalists should be doing.”

BV: Gordon Conway explains why science journalists should get at the root causes of the big issues, rather than concentrate on the shorter term consequences... Farm Africa encourage farmers to work their way out of poverty with improved ways to manage crops, livestock, forests and access to water. George Mukkath, their Director of Programmes, explains how investment and proper dissemination of scientific research, should help (see also session “Recipe for Disaster”).

George Mukkath: “There are very big challenges and expectations around, for example, maize production because of climate change in Southern Africa but East Africa also, is severely affected. But the problems are many. To start with, the investment in agriculture is pretty low. Southern Africa used to be a net exporter of maize in the 1970s. Then Structural Adjustment happened and that took the wind out of the sails. Any investment in agriculture started dipping, and dipped so low in 25 years it’s gone down to 25%. That as a percentage of the GDP is pathetic. Governments have not given any attention to investment in agriculture. International agencies have paid lip service to it. I know there are other pressing problems in Africa - water supply, education, infrastructure. But Africa can’t merely survive on these things. It needs its belly to be full. And to fill its belly, it’s got to produce food. It can’t remain a net importer of food with all the land and the resources in Africa. It’s a crying shame that that continent is still a net importer of food.

“Lots of things have led to this state of affairs. The green revolution happened in India. Small-scale farmers were targeted, and that’s when the output increased. We didn’t learn any lessons from that. African small farmers were left by the wayside. Most governments, particularly in Asia, subsidise farm imports. In any other country, eyebrows are raised at farm imports. It is happening in other parts of the world: “Why should African small farmers, particularly, benefit from farming subsidy?”

“Making sure that small-scale farmers – who are the majority in Africa - have access to influence is critical. That’s where not only policy change but also investment is needed to make sure that agriculture becomes sustainable.”

BV: And food insecurity leads to other problems?

George Mukkath: “It’s frightening. The recent hike in food prices has affected Africa very badly. Donors are putting in some money to cushion the poor from the impact of this crisis. But these fiscal measures are not going to solve the problem. At the end of the day, Africa does have the potential to produce enough food. If the investments are not made, particularly in the small-scale sector, then improvements are not going to improve.”

BV: so assuming that investment can be found, what are the scientific problems we need to solve?

“The research is there – the agricultural research institutes are really good. We don’t need a big challenge in terms of importing scientific equipment or scientific knowledge from other areas. There is enough on the continent. If we put that into practice, a lot of the problems would be resolved. But getting that knowledge from the research institutes to the farmers, the end users, that’s where the problems are.”

BV: Linking journalists with researchers – be it agriculture, health or other areas - has unique challenges. Alexandra Hyde works for the TARGETS Health Research Consortium at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, developing new knowledge and tools for more effective communicable disease control. And they sometimes encounter problems bringing these sometimes disparate groups together.

Alexandra Hyde (who presented results of a workshop that brought together scientific researchers and journalists): “They’re not used to each other. Traditionally they’re in different spheres. In our experience doing pre-workshop questionnaires with researchers and journalists, there wasn’t much exposure or opportunity for them to get together. I think the way research is perceived by journalists is as something quite remote. Firstly, as very accurate, remote, a good source in theory, but pretty inaccessible. The language was also a challenge – the scientific jargon. Researchers not being able to condense or reduce their ideas to manageable snippets. But on the researchers’ side, being very wary of journalists considering their engagement with researchers very superficial, and not able to understand the nuances that have taken them 10 years to research.”

BV: Are there more challenges in the developing world?

Alexandra Hyde: “Certainly. We’ve found more tendency for journalists to be more general. Less of an emphasis on having an expertise – even if you’re working for a health publication – there did not seem to be a structure or culture for specialising in one particular area or niche. The idea that you would be an expert in health issues we really found that lacking. Compared to publications in the UK where there’s more of a tendency to have certain reporters working in particular areas.”

BV: “Working alongside the TARGETS Consortium is the RELAY Communicating Research with the Media Programme at Panos London. Running workshops worldwide, and recently in Zambia, to build relationships between researchers and the media.

Annie Hoban: “In our experience, forming personal relationships between researchers and journalists is extremely valuable particularly in the developing world. Some of that information is not readily available online. Having databases with journalists with telephone numbers, what that journalist’s interest is, and how to get in touch with them. One-on-one relationships and having that institutionalised – so going back to their media houses or research organisations and say, this is a real opportunity for us to engage. Also, I think that helps us to establish trust and work through the issues. And it’s a good way to understand one another. It’s a good opportunity to talk through these issues directly.”

BV: Should we encourage researchers to be more proactive and find journalists to publicise their work, while at the same time helping journalists to use the right techniques and have the right tools?

Annie Hoban: “I think that’s absolutely critical and it won’t work if you only work with one side. For instance, if you only work with researchers to help them communicate research, to condense key messages and put themselves out there to journalists and then journalists have no training, they don’t engage properly with the material and take it seriously enough. Then you’ll have a backlash from the researchers when they see the outputs from that, which would reverse the goals. So I think it’s really important to work with both sides at the same time to get each side to see a common purpose in communication for improved development outcomes. You need to get a cultural shift to help each other go the extra mile to help one another as well as help themselves.”

BV: Are you confident that we really can bridge this divide? With constant efforts and a bit more work, bring the two camps together to improve not only the quality of science reporting but also generally the science knowledge of those people who read the newspapers?

Alexandra Hyde: “I think we have to – the emphasis on communications from DFID - who fund our programme - is enormous. Filtering that to our partners in India - our partners are focusing on communicating their research more, and also communications into the research process to get information in the first place. It’s just becoming much more of a common currency. Also, with multimedia and the internet it’s really trickling through so you can’t avoid it. From my side, seeing researchers, they’ve heard it again and again and it’s getting through.”

Annie Hoban: “There was enthusiasm, even before workshop, on both sides. To be invited to an event like this and work together. The enthusiasm is really there so it’s the practical skills and facilitation to make that happen in a practical way is needed.”