



A usage unique de : Anne ROY

## Climate: the Science summit brings together decision-makers and scientists "to find concrete solutions" (Pavel Kabat, HFSP)

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On June 27, 28 and 29, 2023, at the Academy of Sciences in Paris, the Human Frontier Science Program, created by the G7 in 1987 to support frontier research in life sciences, brought together world experts in the field as well as environmental sciences, with government representatives and their scientific advisers. "This summit and this symposium are intended to mobilize the best science in the world, not to produce an additional evaluation report, but to present proposals and find concrete, measurable and achievable solutions", explains to AEF info the Secretary-General of HFSP. In an interview, the former chief scientist of the World Meteorological Organization of the United Nations in Geneva explains the genesis and the ambition of this summit: to create bridges between disciplines and bring science closer to the decision makers.

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**AEF info: The Human Frontier Science Program is an organization created by the G7 nations in 1987 to support the frontier science on the biology of molecules, the functioning of the human brain or cooperation between viruses. Why does he dedicate his Science Summit to the climate crisis?**

**Pavel Kabat :** Before joining the HFSP as Secretary General in July 2021, I was, for two and a half years, scientific director and chief scientist of the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva, the organization authority of United Nations on weather, climate and water issues. I know how much change climate, as well as other global challenges, such as that of the oceans or global security, are at the heart of the international discussions, in particular via the 2030 agenda adopted by the United Nations in 2015. And the whole discourse political, societal and economic is supported by climate science or food security science.

When I took up my duties at the HFSP, I discovered that this scientific community, which works on niches in life science, is almost entirely disconnected from the community that supports the climate debate, among other things. We need to build a bridge between two very large scientific communities, one being basic biology for life sciences, the other being environmental sciences.

This bridge must be built at all levels. At the scientific level, through global research funding, and at the political and strategic discussion level with the idea of a special United Nations year. The science summit and the symposium are a concrete contribution to this approach.

### **AEF info : What is the first assessment you draw from this?**

**Pavel Kabat :** We were delighted to have ministers, chief scientists and major funders of research around the world, as well as some of the best researchers in their field and even an award Nobel! We have also invited top scientists from both sides, from environmental science and life sciences, to illustrate what can be achieved by cooperating.

I hope that this symposium will lead to cooperation between scientists who had never met before, not only to better understand the climate system, but also to find new solutions to mitigate climate change and craft a new discourse on research funding. This one should be much more horizontal and include all the disciplines I mentioned, as well as environmental and sustainable development policies.

Moreover, since this summit is being held in France, this is an opportunity to say that you have already, in France, set up very horizontal and inclusive scientific and environmental policies, which fall under the ministry in charge of the Environment, but also those in charge of the Economy, Transportation and Education. This is exactly the spirit that we want to promote.

For us, this is not just a symposium: it is the start of a new response. After this conference, we will continue to set up concrete activities, to carry out concrete projects together involving the strategy, the policy, basic science and new funding. What we are doing here is fundamental: it is about bring together, not only to discuss, but also to come to an agreement.

### **AEF info : Is your goal to achieve scientific consensus?**

**Pavel Kabat :** Our desire is not only to contribute to a new scientific understanding, but above all to help to find rapid solutions for this great challenge of climate change. We want to bridge the gap between public decision and expertise. Politicians have repeatedly agreed on the major global challenges — the French government even welcomed the Paris agreement. So we know what need to be done. Now it's about to know how to do it. The 1.5 degree warming target set by the Paris agreement remains unchanged, but with the current knowledge of how to reduce emissions, this goal is unattainable. So we have to speed up the knowledge that will allow us to achieve this. This summit and this symposium are therefore intended to mobilize the best science in the world, not to produce an additional assessment report, but to present proposals and very concrete projects, to find concrete, measurable and achievable solutions.

### **AEF info : Does accelerating knowledge to find these solutions require more funding? A new organization?**

**Pavel Kabat :** Certainly not a new organization: we already have too many of them, working in silos. Regarding funding, we don't need more money, we have to find a way to spend the money in a smart way. Currently, most research agency funds are allocated in a very traditional way, very disciplinary, very compartmentalized, with scientific publications as the main result. We need to renew these models, rotate the system 90 degrees from vertical to horizontal, gather funding to form a collaborative ecosystem. We have to be brave enough to change the system.

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