



On 6 May 2019, a conference on sustainable science and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) was held in Brussels. The conference was presented by Professor Jean-Paul Moatti, CEO of the French National Research Institute for Development (IRD), and Member of the independent group of scientists charged by the UN Secretary-General to draft the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR).

Professor Moatti outlined the main themes of the world report which will be published later this year. This report is supplementary to Agenda 2030 and provides a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers. “All countries are concerned by the SDGs because in a way, all countries, including France and European countries are developing countries when it comes to sustainable development. Indeed, even those that are quite good in terms of socio-economic development, are not very good in terms of their environmental footprint,” stated Professor Moatti.

According to Moatti, it is high time to sound the alarm as most of the SDG targets are far from being on track. While a limited number of SDGs, such as child mortality, have progressed, the other SDGs have gone backwards. In fact, since 2015 there has been an increase in malnutrition, intra-country inequalities, greenhouse gas emissions, and loss of biodiversity and soil erosion. He added that while limiting global warming to 1.5° is not impossible, it will require an unprecedented transition in all aspects of society and with no further carbon being taken from the ground.

Moatti highlighted the need to focus on the interlinkages rather than on the individual SDGs. In order to realise the SDGs, actors must focus on the interactions between policies and different actors. It also requires seeing the SDGs as being interdependent instead of being separate goals.

Professor Moatti also noted that finance plays a large role in realising the SDGs. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the annual financing gap for sustainable development in developing countries until 2030 is \$2.5 trillion. This inevitably draws attention to the fact that the annual commitment of advanced countries for climate financing to developing countries (\$0.1 trillion) could be significantly improved. He stated that the funds exist, but need to be shifted, calling to “mobilise for billions, shift the trillions,” to change the current global line of investments.

In closing, Professor Moatti explained how science can play a role in systemic transformation. Promoting the field of sustainable science will help identify complex causal chains affecting planetary boundaries and human well-being. Increasing research programs that focus on problem-solving, in partnership with scientists at local levels, will contribute towards realising the SDGs. The priority is to now surely strengthen scientific capacities and expertise in developing countries, in particular in the Global South.

The Global Sustainable Development Report will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019.

For more information:

Watch the [video](#) of the conference

Read up on the [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#)