

Email: [iap@twas.org](mailto:iap@twas.org)  
[secretariat@iappartnership.org](mailto:secretariat@iappartnership.org)  
Twitter: @IAPartnership  
Website: [www.interacademies.org](http://www.interacademies.org)

**iap** SCIENCE  
HEALTH  
POLICY

the interacademy partnership

# IAP Statement on Science and the Media

**04 December 2013**

Should the scientific community interact more closely with the media in efforts to explain the work of scientists to a larger public?

Of course, it should. But the more difficult questions involve the responsibilities that the scientific community should shoulder in such efforts and the concrete measures that should be taken to enhance the capabilities of both scientists and scientific institutions in their interaction with the media.

On the one hand, the public often turns to science for answers to difficult issues that science itself may not be able to provide. On the other hand, today's cutting-edge scientific research does not readily lend itself to explanations that can be easily conveyed through the media, especially broadcast media. Today's cutting edge scientific research, moreover, often raises ethical issues that must be discussed among a broad cross-section of society before a consensus can emerge. In a sense, advances in science have raised immensely complicated issues that science alone cannot answer.

Fierce public resistance to the cultivation and distribution of genetically engineered food crops, even in developing countries suffering from malnutrition and hunger, indicate that the public - both in the North and South - is increasingly unwilling

to assume that the products of scientific research are safe just because scientists say so. Likewise, public confusion - and often doubt - concerning the ethical propriety of cloning, whether for reproductive or therapeutic purposes, suggests that the scientific community has been unable to clearly explain such difficult issues to the public or, conversely, that the public is not listening when scientists do.

The scientific community and media each have distinctive roles to play within this increasingly complicated relationship between science and society. That's why a fruitful relationship between the two - one that proves of value to the societies in which they both function - depends on each understanding and respecting the other's roles. Therefore, the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP) supports efforts to strengthen and expand:

1. training programmes for building the capacity of science academies to interact with the media, paying particular attention to the needs and circumstances faced by academies in the developing world, and to the increasing conflicts over scientific issues in industrialized countries;
2. programmes for media representatives to visit scientific laboratories in order to learn more

about the work of scientists, paying particular attention to the needs and circumstances faced by print and broadcast media representatives in the developing world;

- workshops organized by academies with public information offices (PIO) designed for academies that do not have such offices to provide practical information on how PIOs function;
- workshops designed to improve the ability of scientists to engage the public in their work by developing the skills necessary to give public lectures, improve print and electronic material for public consumption, and serve as consultants on science-related television programmes, films and videos.

We, the undersigned science academies throughout the world, members of the IAP, support any effort done jointly by the scientific and the journalistic communities aiming at enhancing the fluidity of the information about discoveries in science, and at favouring public debates of high objectivity on the ethical issues which they may raise.

#### Science and the Media: Signatories

Latin American Academy of Sciences  
Third World Academy of Sciences  
Albanian Academy of Sciences  
National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences, Argentina  
Australian Academy of Science  
Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Bangladesh Academy of Sciences  
The Royal Academies for Science and the Arts of Belgium  
Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Brazilian Academy of Sciences  
Cameroon Academy of Sciences  
The Royal Society of Canada  
Academia Chilena de Ciencias  
Chinese Academy of Sciences  
Academia Sinica, China, Taiwan  
Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences  
Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Cuban Academy of Sciences  
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic  
Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, Egypt  
Estonian Academy of Sciences

The Delegation of the Finnish Academies of Science and Letters  
Académie des Sciences, France  
Georgian Academy of Sciences  
Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities  
Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Academy of Athens, Greece  
Academia de Ciencias Medicas, Fisicas y Naturales de Guatemala  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences  
Indian National Science Academy  
Indonesian Academy of Sciences  
Royal Irish Academy (Acadamh Ríoga na héireann)  
Kenya National Academy of Sciences  
Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Italy  
Science Council of Japan  
Royal Scientific Society of Jordan  
African Academy of Sciences  
Latvian Academy of Sciences  
Lithuanian Academy of Sciences  
Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
Akademi Sains Malaysia  
Academia Mexicana de Ciencias  
Academy of Sciences of Moldova  
Mongolian Academy of Sciences  
The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Academy Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand  
Nigerian Academy of Sciences  
Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters  
Pakistan Academy of Sciences  
Palestine Academy for Science and Technology  
Academia Nacional de Ciencias del Peru  
National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines  
Russian Academy of Sciences  
Académie des Sciences et Techniques du Sénégal  
Singapore National Academy of Sciences  
Slovak Academy of Sciences  
Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
Academy of Science of South Africa  
Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Spain  
National Academy of Sciences, Sri Lanka  
Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences  
Council of the Swiss Scientific Academies  
Academy of Sciences, Republic of Tajikistan  
The Caribbean Academy of Sciences  
Turkish Academy of Sciences  
The Uganda National Academy of Sciences  
The Royal Society, United Kingdom  
US National Academy of Sciences  
Academia de Ciencias Físicas, Matemáticas y Naturales de Venezuela

**IAP Science and IAP Health Secretariat:** ICTP Campus, c/o TWAS, Strada Costiera 11, 34151 Trieste, Italy. Email: [iap@twas.org](mailto:iap@twas.org)

**IAP Policy Secretariat:** c/o The U.S. NASEM, 500 Fifth St. NW, Washington, DC 20001, United States. Email: [secretariat@iappartnership.org](mailto:secretariat@iappartnership.org)

**Twitter:** @IAPPartnership

**Website:** [www.interacademies.org](http://www.interacademies.org)