

EDITORIAL

This issue comes at a particularly challenging time for Science Diplomacy. After the end of the Cold War, it was hoped that science diplomacy would progress to new heights and international cooperation would enable humanity to tackle global challenges, especially through application and management of Science Technology and Innovation. However, the geopolitical situation has deteriorated sharply since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, along with heightened US-China tensions. Most countries, especially in the global South, have avoided taking sides, hoping for solutions to end the conflict. Meanwhile, there is an urgent need to ensure that damage is minimised to the structure of international cooperation built up so painstakingly over decades. This threatens to disrupt cooperation to tackle many global challenges such as climate change, nuclear arms control, the oceans, space, food security, cyberspace, the Arctic, and human health, etc.

There is a consequent negative impact on science diplomacy, especially large-scale international projects, the so-called mega projects, such as CERN, International Space Station, ITER, LIGO, etc., all of which have generated benefits for all countries. This calls for exchanges, discussions, and maintaining mobility of researchers across borders during this difficult period. The global scientific community must restrain the tendency to link geopolitics with scientific cooperation, while agreeing on guidelines and an ethical framework for behavior of scientists.

This issue presents an article on the silent but massive burden on global health due to pollution of the environment. The effects of pollutants like lead on infant and child development are particularly insidious as they impact health over decades of life. The setting up of an IPCC like body to study and bring out the scientific basis for action on this front will be keenly awaited. There is also another article that examines the history of India-Russia cooperation in health, especially the contribution to vaccine development, which has resulted in India becoming a world major in this field. Another article presents the results of the UN Environment Assembly which met physically in Nairobi. It marked 50 years of UNEP with a high level special session, and adopted some important resolutions. One, on fighting plastic pollution was piloted by India, while another was on setting up a science policy based expert panel for sound management of chemicals and waste.

Our report section covers the recent public lectures on Science, Technology Innovation policy (STIP). A report is presented on InsSciDE's Conference on 'Science Diplomacy, Diversity and the Global South'. Our book review section focuses on the important role of Science Diplomacy in preserving Antarctica science research from the rivalries of the Cold War period. The issue also includes a review of India's recently released Arctic Policy.

We continue to look forward to your comments and reactions and also encourage stakeholders to contribute to the Journal. We are glad to announce a special issue titled 'New Dimensions of Science Diplomacy for the Twenty-First Century' in collaboration between RIS and the Centre for Global Science and Epistemic Justice (GSEJ) at the University of Kent, UK.