Panamanian students and researchers to engage with IUPAC's global initiatives, particularly in the areas of sustainability and educational outreach. This meeting was an important step in expanding IUPAC's presence in the region and ensuring that Panama continues to play a vital role in Latin American and global chemistry.

Taking advantage of my visit to the University of Panama, I gave a talk to their chemistry students entitled "Reimagining Our Relationship with the Planet at a Molecular Scale." In this talk, I challenged students to reimagine chemistry at the molecular level to shape global sustainability efforts and urged them to take an active role in rethinking chemical processes to better meet environmental needs. This dialogue with the new generation of Panamanian chemists was particularly rewarding, as their passion and innovative ideas demonstrated the future potential of the region's scientific community.

I am delighted to say that the 36th CLAQ in Panama was a resounding success, both in terms of scientific exchange and in strengthening regional ties. The Congress truly embodied its theme of "Building Chemical Bridges" and facilitated meaningful connections across Latin America. From the lively discussions during the congress to the strategic conversations with academic and industry leaders, it is clear that Latin American chemists are committed to driving the future of the field with an eye towards sustainability, innovation and international collaboration. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this historic event and look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues across the region as we build a stronger, more connected scientific community.

As we look forward to CLAQ 2026 in Lima, Peru, the groundwork laid at the Panama Congress will serve as a foundation for future meetings. The conversations started in Panama will undoubtedly continue in Lima as we strive to further integrate the scientific capabilities of the region. The next Congress promises to build on this year's momentum, with even more ambitious goals to foster chemical innovation and address the global challenges that unite us all.

The 36th Congreso Latinoamericano de Química was a testament to the power of regional cooperation and the critical role of chemistry in shaping a sustainable future. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Copaqui and the entire Organizing Committee for their extraordinary work in bringing this event to life, and for allowing me to share with chemists from the region how IUPAC is contributing to the advancement of the chemical sciences worldwide, and to invite them to be part of this effort. The discussions, connections and ideas shared in Panama will undoubtedly have a profound impact in the region, helping to further strengthen the links between the various Latin American chemical societies and between them and the rest of the world.

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African Training School on Green Chemistry and Environmental Sustainability

by Florent Allais

Green chemistry is pivotal in tackling the world's pressing environmental challenges, offering sustainable strategies to reduce pollution and conserve resources, ultimately contributing to a healthier planet. However, for the field to reach its full potential, inclusivity and diversity are essential. The active involvement of African scientists, including women, in green chemistry is key to driving innovation, advancing equity, and ensuring that sustainable solutions are relevant and beneficial to communities worldwide. Their participation enriches the field, fostering a more comprehensive approach to addressing global environmental needs.

Innovation flourishes in diverse settings, where varied perspectives drive groundbreaking advancements. Scientists from Africa in the field shaped by their unique experiences and cultural backgrounds, bring fresh insights that can significantly impact green chemistry. Their understanding of the environmental challenges faced by underrepresented and marginalized communities enables them to develop targeted, practical solutions. For instance, African scientists may focus on sustainable innovations tailored to the continent's specific environmental and economic needs, such as water purification technologies to combat scarcity in arid regions. Likewise, female scientists may prioritize research on the health effects of chemical exposure, particularly addressing the heightened vulnerability of women and children to pollutants.

Diverse teams are more likely to challenge established thinking, explore unconventional approaches, and ask novel questions. This creative tension fosters the development of innovative green chemistry solutions

that are not only more effective but also more equitable. By actively involving scientists from Africa in the field of green chemistry, the scientific community can tap into a broader spectrum of ideas and approaches, leading to more robust and sustainable outcomes.

The underrepresentation of these groups in green chemistry highlights systemic inequities across STEM fields. Addressing these disparities is not just a matter of social justice but is also crucial for tackling global environmental challenges. Issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion disproportionately impact developing regions, including many African countries. By involving African scientists in green chemistry research, one can ensure that solutions are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of these regions, bridging the gap between global and local strategies. This approach is essential for sustainable development, as it empowers local communities to address their environmental challenges independently, without relying solely on external expertise.

This shift toward inclusivity is not only about fairness but also about improving the quality and relevance of scientific research. A more diverse scientific community is better positioned to tackle the interconnected challenges of the 21st century, from climate change to environmental justice. By ensuring that scientists from Africa have a seat at the table, green chemistry can become an even more powerful tool for positive global change.

To advocate for and support this vision, a coalition of experts is organizing the IUPAC-backed African Training School on Green Chemistry and Environmental Sustainability (GreenChemAfrica), took place from 21-27 April 2024, at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P) in Morocco. This landmark event—the first of its kind in Africa gathered 27 lecturers and 54 participants from 15 African countries, with a gender ratio of 54 % female and 44 % male, marking the beginning of a continent-wide movement in green chemistry.

Designed to foster an interactive yet informal learning environment, the program will facilitate exchanges between African graduate students and early-career scientists and leading global experts in green chemistry. The event provided a comprehensive overview of how interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, supported by international collaboration, can address contemporary challenges in green chemistry and sustainable processes. Topics covered included green (in)organic synthesis, green solvents, eco-extraction, sustainable (bio)chemical processes, biotechnologies, synthetic biology, biorefinery, and the application of life cycle assessment.

The next edition of this school will be held in Benguerir, Morocco, from 20-25 April 2025.

https://susmat.um6p.ma/greenchemafrica-2024/

https://susmat.um6p.ma/greenchemafrica-2025/

New Perspectives on the Fight against Chemical Weapons

by Greta Heydenrych

The worldwide fight against chemical weapons is governed by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, usually referred to as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The CWC is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which has its seat in The Hague, Netherlands.