Science Communications for attainment of Sustainable Development Goals

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Kenya is home to many national and international research organizations and universities and hosts many scientific conferences yet there is little science coverage. Research findings gather dust in the shelves with little adoption and application. There is palpable mistrust between the scientist and the journalist. The scientist remains secretive fearing misquoting while the journalist detests directions on how to carry out his work and gives little time to scientific jargon. The journalism schools don't offer science journalism and only a few science journalists and editors are available. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 9) recognizes the central role of Science, Technology and Innovations in knowledge based economies and its important to ensure attainment of the goal. Spotonews is a new science news initiative that aims to bridge the gap between the scientist and the journalist. It creates a forum to bring together the scientist and the journalist on monthly basis, organize visits to media houses for the scientist to appreciate the working of the journalist, visits to research organizations to see the working of the institution and carry first hand interviews. Spotonews also aims to collate the news and relay to the media houses. This will cover print, electronic as well as emerging media. The Spotonews Science (Scientist-Journalist) monthly forum will ensure smooth working relationship with mutual respect. Visits to media houses and research organizations will ensure sustainable news sourcing while spotonews will ensure promotion of science news by identifying new technologies and innovations, writing, editing and production of radio, TV and emerging media productions. Professional science reporting will be encouraged and promoted. Cooperation between the scientist and the journalist is important if we are to ensure sustainable science news. Scientists must appreciate that scientific jargon is for peers and scientific journals and has no place in the public space and let the journalist do their work of simplifying the science information. The mistrust between the two need not continue. It disadvantages the scientist as lack of communication of the research findings results end up in shelves without the intended adoption and application leaving the scientific works unattractive for funding. The scientist loses public goodwill and remains misunderstood. It is encouraging to see Saturday Nation Seeds of Gold and Saturday Standard smart harvest, Citizens Shamba Shape Up and Inooro TV Daktari episode where they have a medical doctor talk about various diseases and ailments in a manner understandable to the public.