



Permanent Mission of Finland
to the United Nations



Side event at the UN STI Forum 2021
Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN - UN Global Pulse
Harnessing Foresight for Building Back Better

Wednesday 5 May 2021, 8-9AM EDT (New York time)

Introduction

Foresight and futures thinking have long been integral parts of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies. They are also core to the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, as a means to define pathways and promote collective action towards a desired future. Over the past year, their importance has grown even more, as the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the need to improve our ability to anticipate the future and prepare better for such crises.

The need to couple foresight capabilities and futures thinking more systematically in policy planning, implementation and monitoring has become evident. As the world prepares to build back better, we want to reinvigorate the discussion on how we can better harness futures and foresight as part of the STI agenda, for sustainable development, peace and humanitarian action.

About the event

This side event is hosted by the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN and UN Global Pulse. The dialogue will highlight and discuss how the role of futures thinking, innovative foresight practices and new tools for strategic anticipation plays into building back better and improving policy design to further implement the Agenda 2030. The event builds on Finland's experience in systematically promoting a culture of foresight and institutionalizing foresight capabilities in its political and administrative structures. The following questions will be explored:

- i. How can foresight and futures thinking be systematically institutionalized in policy design, planning and implementation?
- ii. How can foresight be harnessed to enhance the UN's work in anticipatory and long-term crisis response and prevention?
- iii. How are technology and innovation transforming the practice of foresight and improving our ability for strategic anticipation?
- iv. How can global networks and partnerships be leveraged to build foresight capacity, including sharing expertise and access to digital tools?
- v. Why is it crucial to invest in diversity and inclusion, and include under-represented groups in foresight processes?

Programme and speakers

Opening remarks

- a) H.E. Jukka Salovaara, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN
- b) Robert Kirkpatrick, Director, UN Global Pulse

Strategic Foresight in Finnish Government

- a) Jaana Tapanainen-Thiess, Chief Specialist, Prime Minister's Office of Finland

What's Next in Foresight?

- b) *Popularizing foresight – Case Futures Frequency*, Jenna Lähdemäki-Pekkinen, Foresight Specialist at The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- c) *Foresight to Bring to Life Opportunity Costs and Risks of Inaction*, Friederike Schüür, AI and Digital Governance Fellow, UN Global Pulse
- d) *Demola - One for Humanity*, Ville Kairamo, CEO, Demola Global
- e) *Futures Literacy to Democratize Futures as Public Goods*, Kwamou Eva Feukeu, Anticipation Specialist at UNESCO
- f) *Getting Granular When Looking Ahead*, Dr. Homi Kharas, Senior Economic Advisor and Co-Founder, World Data Lab

Discussion and Q&A

Closing