



8th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

3-4 May 2023

Opening Ceremony: Metaverse for SDGs lab and the innovation exhibit – young problem-solvers and inspiring innovations

Trusteeship Council Chamber

3 May from 1:15 to 2:30pm



UNDESA and ITU jointly host an opening ceremony to the STI Forum exhibit presenting “Metaverse for SDG lab” and “Innovation Exhibit”. The session will take place in Trusteeship Council Chamber at 1:15pm, 3 May, to showcase several innovative initiatives to address the SDGs and encourage attendees to visit the metaverse lab.

INNOVATORS ADVANCING THE SDGs ACROSS THE WORLD

In a showcase of new innovations to advance sustainability, three innovators will discuss their initiatives to promote sustainability at the local, national, and global levels. One entrepreneur will discuss her use of the environmentally friendly Juncao technology to fight malnutrition and provide opportunities for young people in local communities in Papua New Guinea. Developed by the National Engineering Research Centre of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University of China, the Juncao technology allows smallholder farmers to grow mushrooms from dried, chopped grass without cutting down trees. The showcase will also include lightning talks from two finalists of the AI for the Planet Call for Solutions to Identify and Support Promising Innovations in Climate AI. Aquaconnect will discuss its AI-based mobile app to boost sustainable and productive fishing to help local fish and shrimp farmers in India improve their livelihoods and efficiency. Addressing biodiversity, Conservation X Labs will present the company’s solutions for sourcing, developing, and scaling critical solutions to address the underlying drivers of species extinction.

METaverse FOR SDG LAB

The Metaverse for SDGs lab consists of a Virtual Reality (VR) experience that was created by teams of young people (aged 14 and above) from over 70 countries around the world who are participating in a global competition on Metaverse for SDGs. The competition was launched in June 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda at ITU's Generation Connect Global Youth Summit at the World Telecommunication Development Conference and runs for a year. It is called the "Metaverse for SDGs Global Prize & VR Competition". In the Metaverse for the SDGs lab, the semi-finalist VR experiences that were submitted for each SDG by the top-performing teams in the global competition will be demonstrated for STI attendees who will experience the SDG fully immersed using VR headsets.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How has technology and/or innovation helped to advance sustainability in your local community? How has it helped underrepresented populations including youth, women and girls, or low-income people?
 2. What types of innovations are most needed from the STI community today to accelerate sustainable development for transformative change? Innovators may elaborate on:
 - a. Innovations needed in a particular sector or area of development
 - b. opportunities/barriers for transformative change
 - c. examples of successful/unsuccessful innovations
 3. What is the role of technology transfer in your initiative? What are some of the key opportunities and challenges for technology transfer in terms of both North-South cooperation, as well as South-South cooperation?
 4. A lot of new innovations and initiatives today originate from the Global South. What are some of the comparative advantages of the Global South in terms of developing and implementing innovative solutions for sustainable development?
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PROGRAMME

Remarks by:

- **H.E. Mr. Thomas Woodroffe**, United Kingdom Ambassador to the UN Economic and Social Council, Co-Chair of the 2023 STI Forum
- **Mr. Johannes Cullman**, Chief Scientific adviser to the President of the 77th United Nations General Assembly
- **Ms. Aissata Camara**, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Staff, NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs
- **Ms. Lotta Tähtinen**, interim Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- **Mr. Rui Wan**, Liaison Officer, International Telecommunication Union
- **Master of Ceremonies: Lana Zaman**, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Interactive Dialogue

Innovator Lightning Talks:

- **Moderator: Ms. Quarraisha Abdool Karim**, Associate Scientific Director, CAPRISA; UN 10-Member-Group of High-level Representatives of Civil Society, Private Sector and Scientific Community to support the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism (10 Member Group)
- **Ms. Freda Korarome**, Coordinator of Ecoforestry, Division of Natural Resources, Eastern Highlands, Provincial Administration, Papua New Guinea
- **Sudhakar Velayutham**, Entrepreneur in Residence, Aquaconnect
- **Henrik Cox**, Head of Product, Conservation X Labs

Metaverse for SDGs lab presentation

- **Marcus Shingles**, Co-Founder, Exponential Destiny

Q&A led by Moderator

Closing & invitation to visit the lab for a hands-on experience in Conference Room 9

Metaverse for SDG Lab: Hours & Activities

UNHQ,Conference Room 9

The Metaverse for SDGs Lab consists of a Virtual Reality (VR) experience designed to support empathy, awareness, and education about the SDGs by immersing viewers in specific SDG-related scenarios. It was created by young people (aged 14+) from over 70 countries who participated in a global Metaverse for the SDGs Competition at ITU's Generation Connect Global Youth Summit in Kigali in June 2022.

Lab hours and activities are listed below. All STI Forum participants are encouraged to visit.

LAB HOURS

May 3	2:30-3:00pm	Open lab hours – Conference Room 9, UNHQ
	3:00-5:00pm	Education Session with NYC Students, Conference Room 9 (closed session)
	5:00-6:00pm	Open lab hours - Conference Room 9, UNHQ
May 4	1:15-2:30pm	Open lab hours - Conference Room D, UNHQ

Sign-up for one of the slots available [here](#)