STI FORUM

The 10th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

Compilation of the Side Event Reports

United Nations

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About this Compilation Report

This report presents a compilation of summaries submitted by organizers of side events held in connection with the 2025 Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum). Following the conclusion of the Forum, all approved side event organizers were requested to submit a brief summary of their event, using the template and guidance provided by UN DESA.

These summaries are provided to highlight the diversity of discussions and contributions to the Forum's overall themes, and to enhance visibility of multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration on STI for the SDGs.

About the Call for Innovation

In addition to the side events organized during the Forum, the outcomes of the 2025 STI Forum Call for Innovations are also featured in this report as a complementary and integral component of the Forum's engagement with featured young actors in the science, technology, and innovation ecosystem. The Call for Innovations, co-organized by UN DESA and Engineering for Change, serves as a global platform to spotlight practical, scalable technology solutions that address sustainable development challenges in low-resource settings. It reflects the Forum's commitment to inclusive, action-oriented collaboration that bridges the gap between innovation and implementation.

The selected innovators participated actively throughout the Forum—delivering lightning talks during thematic sessions, showcasing their solutions in designated exhibition spaces, and contributing to high-level roundtables with experts and policymakers. Their participation provided real-world, grassroots perspectives on how STI can accelerate progress on the SDGs, particularly in areas such as health, gender equality, ocean sustainability, and inclusive economic growth. Including their contributions in this summary ensures that the report captures the breadth of innovation-driven engagement promoted by the Forum and helps amplify promising solutions that can inform future policy dialogue and partnership building.

Disclaimer

All information on side events was provided by the organizers. The United Nations Secretariat is not responsible for the content provided by the side eventorganizers or their partners in this programme or in the respective events. The Secretariat reserves the right to remove or amend any content that is not aligned with the UN Charter or the principles and purposes of the STI Forum. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the official STI Forum website: https://sdgs.un.org/tfm/STIForum2025.

Introduction 1

The 10th Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 7 to 8 May 2025. It was convened by the President of ECOSOC, His Excellency Mr. Bob Rae, and the meetings of the Forum were co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and H.E. Ms. Elina Kalkku, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations.

The overall theme of the 2025 STI Forum is: "**Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based, science and technology solutions and innovations for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind**". Special focus will be given to the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2025, namely:

- SDG3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainbale economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

In connection with the 2025 STI Forum, **54** side events were organized by Technology Facilitation Mechanism partners, including **21** in-person events at United Nations Headquarters, **5** off-site in-person events and **28** virtual events. They have provided a significant opportunity for governments and other stakeholders to participate in the forum.

The side events covered a wide array of interdisciplinary innovations and collaborative strategies aimed at accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Central themes included leveraging artificial intelligence, digital governance and open science to foster inclusive, ethical and sustainable development. Many events were focused on **artificial intelligence applications for social good**, including in health, education, climate action, agriculture, air quality monitoring, disaster readiness and workplace safety. At some events, the importance of **responsible and ethical artificial intelligence**, particularly for gender equality and inclusion, was highlighted, and locally grounded innovation ecosystems were emphasized. Digital transformation featured prominently, with events exploring **digital empowerment, behavioural insights, virtual worlds and the future of work**. Other sessions delved into strengthening **bioeconomy systems, green entrepreneurship and open-access science** to foster equitable global knowledge exchange. A number of events served to prioritize **capacity-building, resource mobilization, and cross-sector partnerships**, especially between the public sector, academia, start-ups and international organizations, to scale innovations globally. Several events were **youth-led or focused on young people**, spotlighting grass-roots innovation, inclusive entrepreneurship and educational reform, particularly for underrepresented groups. In addition, the events highlighted **the integration of foresight, spatial finance and digital platforms** such as 2030 Connect and STIP Compass to enhance strategic science, technology and innovation planning and cooperation.

Organizers included Member States, United Nations system entities, intergovernmental organizations, academia, organized science and engineering communities and a range of civil society and private sector stakeholders, including:

- **Permanent missions and delegation to the United Nations**: Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Republic of Korea, Namibia, Norway, Portugal, Rwanda, Switzerland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and the European Union;
- **United Nations entities and international organizations**: United Nations Development Programme, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (with the Internet Governance Forum), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Innovation Network, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Futures Lab Network, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, Global Pulse, United Nations Geospatial Network, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Telecommunication Union, Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, Department of Global Communications/Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Digital Cooperation Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations International Computing Centre and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;

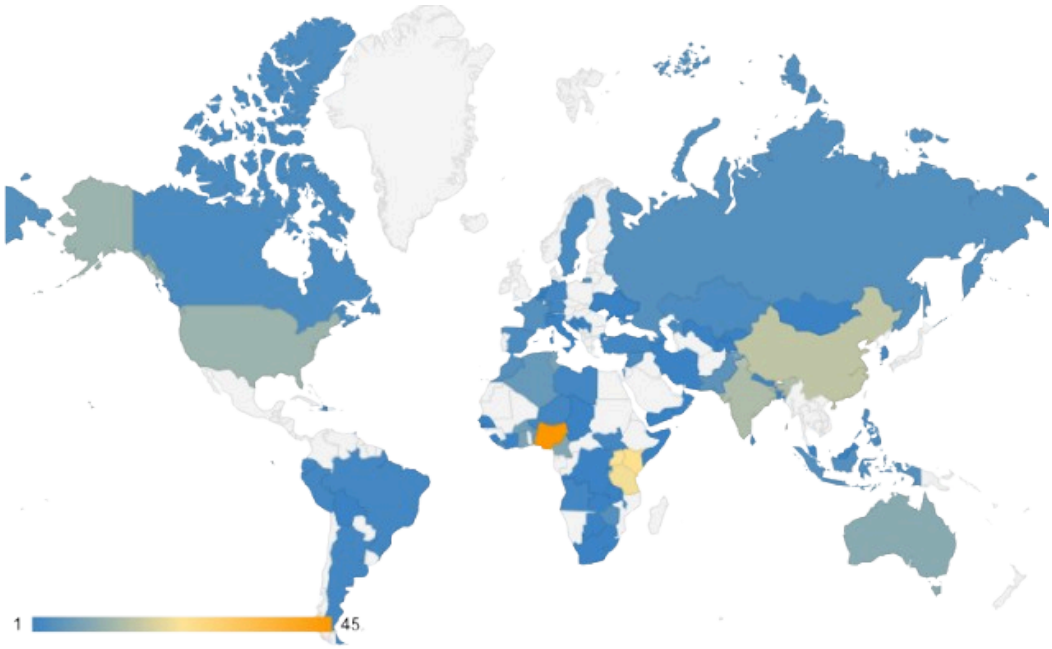
- **Science and engineering organizations and universities**: World Federation of Engineering Organizations, International Science Council, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Global Science, Technology and Innovation Conference, Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, New York Institute of Technology, Penn State University, Macquarie University, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, De Montfort University, Berlin School of Business and Innovation, University of Glasgow, ETH Zurich, Tohoku University, University of São Paulo, Global Centre for Risk and Innovation, Royal Academy of Science International Trust, Council of Global Change, International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges, International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence, China Association for Science and Technology, Chinese Preventive Medicine Association, Urban Planning Society of China, Center for AI and Digital Policy, Sydney Institute of Marine Science, Carnegie Mellon University, National Technical University of Athens;
- **Other non-governmental organizations**: Global Partnership Forum, children and youth major group, SERAC-Bangladesh, Young Women for Planetary Health, Hecho por Nosotros, Animaná, Women's Health and Education Center, Apolitical, Hellon, IamtheCODE, Chengdu Zero Carbon Collaborative Innovation Advancement Association, Science for Africa Foundation, Engineering for Change;
- **Private sector**: cBrain, Microsoft AI for Good Lab, XAG, Pairwise, Extreme Tech Challenge, Seeding the Future Foundation, Elsevier, World Digital Technology Academy, IFortis Worldwide, Ricdanic, GZERO Media, Siemens Energy AG, ECCO International, Inc.

KEY INSIGHTS
UN STI Forum Call for Innovations 2025

The UN STI Forum Call for Innovations is a global platform that showcases successful technology implementations in challenging environments, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among diverse stakeholders to promote innovative solutions and build capacity, particularly for low-resource settings. This year's forum received 338 applicants, representing a wide array of countries, totaling 70 unique nations, demonstrating a broad global interest in the initiative.

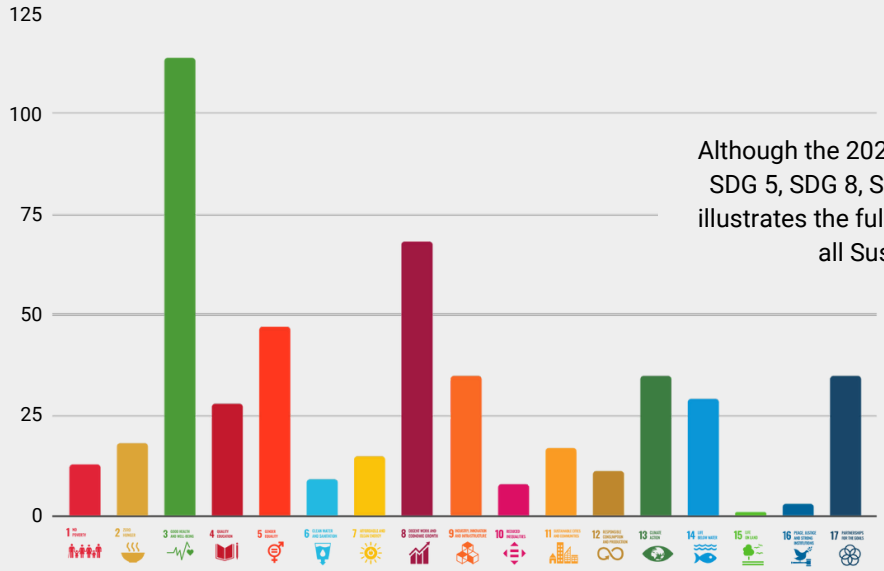
KEY APPLICANTS INSIGHTS:

- Theleadingfive contributing countries—Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, India, and China—together represent around 38.78% of the total innovations submitted, reflecting a notable concentration of applications from these nations.
- African nations showcase a strong presence, submitting about 66.35% of all innovations, which underscores the continent's substantial engagement.
- Youth-led initiatives make up a significant portion of the total applicants, representing nearly 44% (148 out of 338). Concurrently, women-led initiatives also play an important role, contributing over 26% (89 out of 338) of the total applications.



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF UN STI FORUM 2025 APPLICANTS

INNOVATORS AT THE 2025 UN STI FORUM



Although the 2025 UN STI Forum theme focused on SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 14, and SDG 17, the following graph illustrates the full breakdown of applicant alignment across all Sustainable Development Goals.

INNOVATORS FROM 2025:

- **Peace Therapist:** AI-powered mental health platform for refugees and marginalized communities, providing culturally sensitive support.
- **RAC Training Initiative:** Formalizing South African refrigeration technicians, including women, for job security and environmental safety.
- **Global Cerah:** IoT-supported platform integrating organic waste management with alternative protein production for Southeast Asian farmers.
- **Enset Starter Culture:** Ethiopian innovation dramatically reducing Enset post-harvest loss through improved fermentation technology.
- **Laboratoria:** A social enterprise empowering Latin American women through technology and coding bootcamps to close the tech gender gap and foster economic mobility.
- **ECOBANA:** Manufactures biodegradable sanitary pads from banana fibers, addressing period poverty in East Africa by providing pads to over 2 million girls and women in Kenya, significantly reducing school absenteeism, and creating employment.
- **Alkemio:** Specializes in efficient and pure rare earth element extraction using organic acid leaching and selective adsorption technology, enabling on-site refining for streamlined logistics and closed-loop domestic supply chains.
- **Sentinel Forensics Sexual Assault Kit (SFSA Kit):** A cost-effective, culturally tailored forensic solution distributed to 40 centers in Nigeria, achieving a 95% success rate in preserving evidence to combat sexual violence and support survivors.
- **HyaPak:** Transforms invasive water hyacinth into biodegradable alternatives for single-use plastics, simultaneously tackling pollution, controlling weed proliferation, and creating green jobs.
- **Elzian:** Precision aquaponics system with IoT monitoring and AI for Sri Lankan smallholder farmers and fishing communities, maximizing resource efficiency, boosting aquaculture productivity, and improving livelihoods for over 60,000 farmers.

2025 ROUNDTABLE
Capacity Building Discussion

Engineering for Change, the Major Group for Children and Youth, and UNDESA, with the UN 10 Member Group, hosted a roundtable at the UN STI Forum 2025 with the innovators. The discussion focused on policy and governance conditions for inclusive collaboration, responsible experimentation, and scaling social innovations, aiming to strengthen regional ecosystems and support hardware-led entrepreneurs.

CORE THEMES IDENTIFIED

- **Challenges with Government Engagement:** Innovators face significant difficulties accessing public resources due to governmental instability (leading to cancelled grants), a perceived lack of concrete support ("empty talk"), and issues with transparency or usability of public data. Political interference and obstruction from the public sector were noted as barriers.
- **Alternative Funding Models:** Suggestions included leveraging UN-managed grants, pooling funds from large corporate foundations, and potentially bypassing traditional institutions for faster funding processes in less developed countries, alongside concerns about corporate tax evasion.
- **Data Accessibility and Usability:** While data might exist (e.g., from satellite agencies), it is often in non-digital formats or unusable, requiring responsible digitalization and efforts to overcome political reluctance towards transparency.
- **Government as a Facilitator:** Government intervention is crucial for innovators to engage effectively with large private sector entities (e.g., mining companies), especially regarding issues like environmental impact assessments where journalistic efforts might otherwise be the only recourse.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2026 CAPACITY BUILDING:

There were two key areas identified for capacity building for innovators:

Communicating and Leveraging Impact Data for Innovation Scaling: Innovators, particularly those in pure science fields, often lack essential skills in marketing, sales, business development, and team balancing, which are critical for the successful commercialization and scaling of their solutions.

Intellectual Property and Market Expansion: Innovators face significant hurdles in understanding and navigating intellectual property rights, as well as in strategically planning and executing the expansion of their solutions into new regional or international markets.

Prepared by: ASME | ISHOW engineering FOR CHANGE YOUTH SPI PLATFORM Science Policy Interface

Theme 1

Making artificial intelligence (AI) accessible, inclusive and beneficial for all

The side events under this theme explored pathways and solutions to making artificial intelligence (AI) acceassible, inclusive and beneficial for all.

Some explored actionable pathways for AI to reduce inequalities, promote innovation, and empower communities worldwide, in line with sustainable development and the well-being and rights of individuals. They delved into the technical, ethical, and societal dimensions of democratizing AI applications and capabilities, highlighting approaches that ensure open and equitable access, affordability, transparency, accountability, and utility for diverse contexts and populations.

Some highlighted solutions and breakthroughs in AI that are currently improving work conditions, creating jobs and supporting economic growth as well as advancing health and well-being. Examples were showcased in access to healthcare services and social protection, and in entrepreneurial ecosystems including in developing countries.

From Divide to Synergy: Global Cooperation Frameworks for AI Capacity-Building

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 11:45 -13:00, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: Permanent Mission of China to the UN; Permanent Mission of Zambia to the UN; China Association for Science and Technology

In July 2024, the General Assembly adopted the UNGA Resolution A/RES/78/311 titled "Enhancing International Cooperation on Capacity-Building of Artificial Intelligence", tabled by China together with the core group. After that, China launched the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All, and initiated, together with Zambia, the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity-Building.

This side event aims to further advance the implementation of UNGA Resolution on AI capacity-building, the Global Digital Compact and UN 2030 Agenda, promote open, equitable and inclusive access to AI technologies, and strengthen cooperation within the Group of Friends and beyond. It convened over 100 representatives from Member States, UN agencies, academia, business and civil society for a dynamic exchange on these key topics.

Key issues discussed

- International cooperation on AI empowering engineering capacity-building for Africa
- Digital transformation and intelligent development of traditional industry
- How open-source AI is powering a new developer ecosystem
- Practices and initiatives in promoting AI diversity development
- China's practice of promoting the inclusive AI development in Global South
- How to improve international cooperation on AI capacity-building
- UN's role and efforts in promoting AI capacity-building

Key recommendations

- Uphold fairness and inclusiveness, respect and protect the rights of developing countries to develop and utilize AI on an equal footing
- Conduct more practical exchanges and cooperation on AI capacity-building
- Foster open dialogue, share resources, and build collaborative frameworks that ensure AI benefits all of humanity
- Strengthen cooperation among scientific and engineering communities to contribute to bridging the global AI divide
- Utilize AI to bridge ancient wisdom with modern innovation, creating multilateral platforms where civilizations can share their unique perspectives

AI for Good Lab: Interactive Exhibition

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 13:00 -14:30, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: Office of the President of ECOSOC, ITU, WHO, WIPO, UN DESA and supported by UNFPA, ILO

AI for Good is a year-round digital platform where AI innovators and problem-solvers collaborate to develop practical AI solutions in support of the SDGs. Organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with over 40 UN sister agencies and co-convened with Switzerland, AI for Good stands as the UN's leading action-oriented platform on AI for sustainable development. In addition to ongoing engagement, AI for Good will host its annual Global Summit from 8-11 July 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The 2025 AI for Good Lab will showcase AI-driven solutions already in use, providing hands-on opportunities to experience innovations that can accelerate progress toward health-related SDGs. This event offers the UN community in New York an interactive, practical engagement with some of the most impactful health-focused AI tools available today.

Key issues discussed

- 10 AI for health applications showcased at the exhibition, 9 from the UN system and 1 from UNHCR endorsed initiative.
- The urgent need to leverage AI to achieve SDG3.
- Moving beyond theoretical discussions to showcase and interact with existing, tangible AI solutions that are already making an impact in the health sector.
- The challenge of providing timely, accurate, and accessible health information and services, particularly for youth (sexual/reproductive health), rural populations (midwifery support), and displaced persons.
- The transformative potential of AI and digitalization in improving workplace safety and health.
- Fostering Innovation through IP

Key recommendations

- Foster multi-Stakeholder collaboration between UN agencies, governments, academia, and the private sector to co-develop and scale practical AI solutions for global health challenges.
- Promote and Scale Proven AI Health Tools.
- Invest in Hands-On Learning and Capacity Building.
- Support AI for Health in Vulnerable Settings.
- Promote awareness and utilization of intellectual property systems to incentivize and protect AI-driven health innovations, thereby fostering a vibrant ecosystem for development.

What's Next After AI? Preparing for the Next Tech Frontier, with UN Global Pulse and Apolitical

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 15:00 -16:15, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: UN Global Pulse, in association with Apolitical

This side event was organised by UN Global Pulse and partner Apolitical and focused on how the public sector, including UN Agencies and staff, can move beyond reactive approaches to innovation, embracing a proactive mindset that reshapes how institutions collaborate, plan and build for the future. With a large number of interventions from across academia, government and the private sector, the audience were given a wealth of case study insights to learn and adapt to their own organisation's preparedness.

Key issues discussed

- How Apolitical can be a bridge between UN Agencies, governments, and preparedness, offering the audience access to their online Government AI Campus to assess and improve their preparedness via courses, online communities, and other free resources.
- That UNGP is working to help colleagues across the UN prepare and upskill in the area of new technologies, and that a large part of how we do this is through partnering with experts, like those at Apolitical.
- Actors such as UN Agencies can enable public participation in how governments shape policy and practice with regard to AI and other emerging technologies, which is critical to ensuring a broad range of perspectives and geographies are included.
- There is a need for innovative, scalable technologies in addressing some of the biggest challenges in the world today - but that AI is not just a buzz word.

Key recommendations

- Foster more academia-industry-government partnerships to scale sustainable technologies.
- The private sector has a lot more to offer then just funding; their expertise, technologies and experience can help accelerate progress towards SDG goals.
- There is a need for more interdisciplinary partnership models that include private sector, academic, UN and governments.
- There is a need for more shared learning and best practice so there can be a cross pollination among colleagues both inside and outside the UN system.

Harnessing AI and Data for a Sustainable Future

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: UNCTAD and ODET

This side event contributed to the 2025 STI Forum by fostering a multi-stakeholder dialogue on inclusive AI and data governance and international cooperation. It facilitated knowledge exchange and collaboration to ensure AI serves as a digital public good, driving innovation in support of the 2030 Agenda. Aligned with the Pact for the Future, this side event explored strategies to bridge the global STI divide. It raised awareness of the challenges posed by fragmented AI governance and the concentration of AI development, emphasizing the need for an inclusive governance framework, equitable data access, and capacity-building to address the growing disparities in AI.

Key issues discussed

- The need to improve coordination and cooperation across the UN system, such as the CSTD, WSIS, and the GDC, including the International Scientific Panel on AI (ISP-AI) and the Global Dialogue (GD) on AI Governance
- The importance of multilateral, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that AI and data become instruments for inclusion, not exclusion
- The importance of embedding trust, ethics, transparency and inclusive participation in developing AI governance frameworks
- The growing need for investment in data infrastructure and the increasing power consumption associated with data storage and processing
- The need to address concerns about digital divide and regulatory divergence across jurisdictions

Key recommendations

- Enhance inclusive and meaningful partnerships to ensure that AI and data contribute to sustainable development
- Strengthen global frameworks for AI and data governance and reconcile existing governance models to improve coherence and accountability
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to guide the development of digital technologies and AI, drawing on insights from UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report 2025 on inclusive AI for development
- Foster open innovation, such as open data and open models, by emphasizing inclusive data-sharing mechanisms that promote equitable access and shared benefits

Early Warning for All: Harnessing AI-Powered Technologies to Strengthen Social Development and Sectoral Resilience

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: The Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations, WMO, UNDRR, UN Partnerships, ITU, and UNOOSA

With just five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the clock is ticking for communities at risk. As climate extremes intensify and infrastructure strains, early warning systems powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and real-time data are becoming essential tools to save lives and protect development gains.

At the 10th Annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum), the side event "Early Warning for All: Harnessing AI-Powered Technologies to Strengthen Social Development and Sectoral Resilience" brought together a powerful coalition of voices, ranging from United Nations leaders to representatives of governments, academia, and the private sector. Their collective message was clear: early warnings must reach everyone and that they must be built on equity, trust, and partnerships.

Key issues discussed

- AI, equity, and partnerships take center stage in the global push for early warnings for all by 2027
- Centering People and Partnerships in Early Warning Innovation
- Building Systems that Reach Everyone
- Innovation in Action

Key recommendations

- Leave no one behind
- Designing AI-ready systems and reviewing outdated legislation to make this vision real.
- Introduction of the DISHA platform, which uses AI to assess post-disaster damage via satellite imagery, enabling rapid, targeted humanitarian responses.
- High-resolution digital twins of disaster-prone regions, allowing planners to simulate flooding and sea-level rise down to the building level.

Artificial Intelligence & Virtual Worlds: Innovating the Future of Work and Economic Growth to advance the SDGs

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 15:00 -16:15, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: ITU, UNICC, the Permanent Missions of Finland, the United Arab Emirates, and Tanzania to the United Nations

This side event explored how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-powered virtual worlds can be leveraged to drive innovation, improve productivity, and foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI is a UN-led multistakeholder platform launched by ITU, UNICC, and Digital Dubai. It aims to foster open, interoperable, safe, and inclusive virtual environments that can be confidently used by people, governments, and businesses alike. The event invited broad participation from stakeholders across government, industry, academia, and international organizations to co-develop standards, policy tools, and capacity-building resources in support of inclusive digital transformation. In follow-up to the guidance by Member States, the discussion also recognized the importance of integrating the implementation of the GDC commitments into the WSIS architecture, including through the WSIS+20 Review to ensure a cohesive and efficient approach to global digital cooperation.

Key issues discussed

- AI and Virtual Worlds are reshaping the future of work, education, and innovation, requiring forward-looking policies to harness their transformative potential for human development and economic resilience
- Global standards are essential to ensure interoperability, safety, trust, and ethical governance of AI and virtual environments
- Virtual worlds and the citiverse can become powerful enablers of city-level innovation
- Policymakers must engage with the economic, ethical, and human capital implications driven by leading platforms, developers, and AI-driven systems.
- The Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI offers a unique international platform for collaboration, coordination, and inclusive governance.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen international cooperation by engaging in platforms such as the Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI to co-develop shared policy frameworks, ethical principles, and best practices that guide inclusive digital transformation.
- Empower cities and local governments to harness the potential of AI and virtual worlds through targeted capacity building, policy guidance, and city-to-city peer learning
- Foster innovation and inclusion by engaging youth, students, and startups
- Advance global digital governance by contributing to the development and adoption of international standards
- Leverage high-level international events, and participate in global multistakeholder platforms to build political momentum.

Leveraging AI to Accelerate Sustainable Development and SDGs

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO)
The full program including speakers and bios is available on the WFEO website.

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) is engaged in raising awareness and capacity building to assist with the digital transformation to leverage AI to accelerate sustainable development and achievement of the SDGs. WFEO and its members have developed a roadmap to transform the engineering education system to prepare the workforce of the future today to have meaningful careers and enhance the quality of life for all. The session heard from expert panelists on what is needed, what is being done and how the UN and all of its stakeholders can embrace and leverage AI going forward.

Key issues discussed

- The WFEO Engineering Capacity Building for Africa Programme (WFEO ECBAP) including the important role that AI could play
- The importance of good data in AI applications and intellectual property issues related to AI
- Opportunities for and the need for engineers to engage in the the World Social Summit.
- A cornerstone for all AI should be ensuring access, equity, and inclusion not as an after thought but as the cornerstone in our use of AI to achieve the SDGs.
- The need for all to work together to build trust in science
- The need for inclusion of women and girls in engineering and in development of AI and AI tools.

Key recommendations

- The UN and its member States need to raise awareness, enforce trust and confidence in science and STI tools, and make the tools and technology affordable to all so as to reap the benefits.
- The UN working with the STI community must accelerate efforts to include women and girls are fully represented in all aspects of design and implementation of advanced technological solutions including AI.
- Engineers and scientists must take responsibility for ownership of AI solutions and ensure they are designed and implemented to benefit all stakeholders
- It is important to build trust that all advanced and emerging technologies including AI are used in ways that are ethical and respectful of human rights.
- Not all solutions are technical and scientists and engineers must fully engage in understanding and fully accounting for social constraints to SDG solutions involving advanced technologies

Scaling Innovations for People and the Planet: Navigating Uncertainties and Building Partnerships to Achieve the SDGs

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 10:00-11:15am, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person and live-streamed UN WebTV Video
Organized by: Government of Finland and UN Global Pulse

This event officially launched the 2025 edition of the UN Global Pulse Innovation Accelerator. It addressed the urgent need to scale innovations that can accelerate SDG progress in the face of geopolitical instability, diminishing ODA flows, and widening global inequalities. It also served as a platform to promote the UN 2.0 transformation agenda—highlighting the role of innovation, data, digital tools, foresight, and behavioral science in making the UN more agile, effective, and inclusive.

Key issues discussed

- We are experiencing exceptional times, and this requires bold action and partnerships. UN needs to transform in order to be fit for purpose also in future.
- There is need to act decisively in the final stretch toward 2030, UN 2.0, innovation and partnerships as key enablers.
- The need for new delivery models and more innovative partnerships.
- The importance of embedding digital, data, and innovation into core UN operations.
- Collaboration with the private sector to unlock scalable innovations, emphasis on inclusive innovation ecosystems that prioritize local leadership, digital equity, and co-creation with communities.
- Governments play a pivotal role in enabling systemic innovation, highlighting initiatives that break silos and foster global-local collaboration.

Key recommendations

Key elements of UN transformation is based on the following:

- embracing system level mindset and breaking the siloes within the UN family.
- building the UN 2.0. – data, digital, innovation, foresight, behaviour science - capabilities and skills, and investing in multidisciplinary teams
- It must be a collective effort through partnerships, particularly with private sector.

Successful innovation scaling requires the following:

- to work within ecosystems of innovators and to collaborate with social entrepreneurs who know what the needs on the ground are.
- deep understanding of the context and realities of the communities in order to ensure that the innovative solution addressed the needs and problems of the communities.

Delivering Africa's Digital Future: From Strategy to Scalable Solutions

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 15:00 -16:15, UN Headquarters, New York
Format: In-person
Organized by: UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, Danish MFA, and cBrain

At the 10th UN STI Forum, global leaders convened to explore how African governments can transition from digital strategy to implementation. Hosted by the UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and cBrain, the session showcased an innovative model for digital government grounded in AI-enabled, configurable commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) platforms and reusable processes. A highlight of the discussion was the rapid transformation of the Kenyan ICT Ministry, which went paperless in just 10 weeks using proven Danish digital governance practices. This achievement serves as a replicable model across the continent, accelerating government transparency and citizen-centered service delivery aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key issues discussed

- Urgency of moving from digital strategy formulation to implementation in African public sectors.
- The use of AI-enabled COTS platforms as an efficient and scalable solution for digital government.
- Real-world results of Kenya's paperless ministry implementation, achieved in under 10 weeks.
- The role of reusable digital process libraries in accelerating transformation across ministries.
- Importance of regional collaboration and South-South knowledge transfer in scaling solutions.
- Denmark's success in digital public administration as a transferable governance model.
- Bridging the digital divide and ensuring inclusivity in the design of citizen-centric services.
- Engagement of multilateral stakeholders (UNDP, UN DESA, ITU, and others) in enabling and supporting national digital transformation pathways.

Key recommendations

- Scale proven models: Replicate the African Paperless Ministry model across other countries using adaptable digital tools and best practices.
- Leverage AI and COTS platforms: Utilize AI-enabled, configurable platforms to reduce costs, accelerate implementation, and ensure interoperability.
- Promote cross-country collaboration: Establish regional frameworks for peer learning, process reuse, and platform sharing.
- Invest in capacity building: Strengthen institutional and human capacity to manage, govern, and sustain digital transformation.
- Anchor efforts in SDGs: Ensure all digital public service initiatives are aligned with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Embed multistakeholder engagement: Continue fostering strong partnerships between governments, international organizations, and the private sector to co-create scalable solutions.

Frontier Technology for Every Child: How UNICEF and the Lao PDR Government use new technologies and low-cost sensors to estimate air quality for every village in the country

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 8:00 -10:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office – Frontier Data Lab, UNICEF Lao PDR Country Office, UNICEF Lao People's Democratic Republic Lao PDR Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports AirGradient Air Quality Monitors

Air pollution significantly impacts both child and adult health, placing a heavy burden on national healthcare systems and reducing economic productivity. When children fall ill due to polluted air, their education suffers, and parents often miss work to care for them. These disruptions have long-term consequences for national development. Urgent action is needed to protect children's health and learning, as the cost of inaction is substantial.

The side event showed how UNICEF is using AI and machine learning to support the Lao PDR government in making real-time decisions based on real-time data to protect children during air pollution events. The session featured diverse perspectives from UNICEF, data scientists, air quality experts, and government officials, offering a unique and insightful discussion.

Key issues discussed

- Air Quality as a global health emergency
- Need for better data
- Challenges in air quality monitoring
- Machine Learning and AI models
- Collaboration and partnerships

Key recommendations

- Improve air quality monitoring for vulnerable and underrepresented communities leveraging machine learning and AI solutions.
- Educate and empower students.
- Adhere to open-source principles.
- Collaborate across organisations and organisational boundaries.
- Address local challenges and ensure the solution responds to local needs.
- Strengthen cross-sectoral response mechanisms.

For more information, please visit the event webpage: Protecting Children from Air Pollution: Open-Source Air Quality Machine Learning in SE Asia | UNICEF East Asia and Pacific.

Harnessing AI, GIS, and Earth Observation for Early Warning Systems

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 10:00 -12:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: The Global Centre for Risk and Innovation (GCRI)

The event highlighted the Nexus Observatory, GCRI's AI-powered, open-source early warning system that integrates geospatial intelligence, machine learning, and Earth observation data to support real-time disaster anticipation and resource allocation. The town hall brought together engineering teams, research leaders, and a high-level expert panel to discuss practical implementation strategies and systems-level innovation. Special emphasis was placed on the SDGs under review in 2025—SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 17 (Partnerships)— demonstrating how anticipatory intelligence infrastructure can bridge the science-policy divide at national and global levels.

Key issues discussed

- GCRI's development of the Nexus Observatory.
- Use of agents and transformer-based models for hyperlocal prediction and parametric response triggers linked to pre-agreed disaster actions.
- The importance of predictive analytics in supporting health infrastructure, food systems, and critical services
- Barriers to data access and interoperability
- Challenges in financing open-source anticipatory systems
- Local knowledge integration as a critical driver of system trust, impact relevance, and sustainable operation of decentralized observatories.
- The need to bridge the gap between academic research, engineering innovation, and on-the-ground operators for effective anticipatory action systems.
- Importance of multilateral data exchange and coordination across sectors for risk foresight and planetary resilience.

Key recommendations

- Develop global-to-local observatory networks anchored in open-source, community-driven data infrastructures for real-time risk anticipation.
- Invest in adaptive AI/ML frameworks that prioritize impact outcomes over pure accuracy metrics.
- Promote standardized, interoperable Earth observation and asset datasets to support spatial finance and risk intelligence ecosystems.
- Encourage governments and MDBs to adopt anticipatory action financing models based on parametric thresholds and simulation-based triggers.
- Build participatory mechanisms to integrate local knowledge and stakeholders into early warning system design
- Expand policy-aligned partnerships that connect funding, implementation, and maintenance of AI-based resilience infrastructure at scale.

Global Markets, Local Power: How AI is Elevating Indigenous and Artisan Economies

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Hecho por Nosotros & Animaná

This event explored how AI-driven platforms can unlock sustainable economic growth by connecting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to global markets in inclusive and efficient ways. The event highlighted the potential of AI to empower artisanal communities, not by replacing traditional knowledge, but by enhancing it.

Hosted virtually, this side event by Hecho por Nosotros and Animaná combined expert insights and dynamic discussions to illustrate pathways for synergizing artisanal intelligence with artificial intelligence. The session showcased how locally-rooted knowledge, education, and technology can bridge local and global markets. Framed within the Forum's theme of advancing science-based, inclusive innovations, the event addressed the potential of co-designed AI tools to foster inclusion, empower women, and contribute to the aforementioned SDGs through participatory and regenerative approaches.

Key issues discussed

- How AI tools, co-designed with artisans, can foster inclusion and empower women.
- The potential of AI to preserve the culture, language, and values of Indigenous communities.
- The role of artisanal production in household income, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.
- Addressing challenges in the artisanal sector through AI, such as improving market access, optimizing production, and enhancing sustainability.
- The importance of integrating Indigenous wisdom and authenticity in the design stages of AI.
- The importance of placing Indigenous and grassroots communities at the center of AI solutions.

Key recommendations

- Promote the co-creation of AI tools with Indigenous and artisan communities.
- Support initiatives that provide digital knowledge, training, and resources to marginalized communities.
- Embed ethics and values, such as the Ubuntu philosophy, in AI systems.
- Utilize AI to revitalize Indigenous languages and preserve cultural heritage.
- Foster collaboration between stakeholders to ensure AI serves as a tool for sustainable development.
- Advocate for policies and initiatives that ensure Indigenous and grassroots communities benefit from AI solutions.

Developing Transparent and Accountable Ethical AI Technologies to Build Trust in Higher Education

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 9:00 -10:30 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: University of Glasgow

This event underscored the growing influence of artificial intelligence in reshaping education, emphasizing the urgent need to address ethical, transparent, and accountable AI development. As AI technologies become integrated into teaching, assessment, and administrative practices, fostering trust among students, educators, and institutions becomes vital. The event brought together a diverse panel of academics, technologists, and policy advocates to discuss how ethical AI can transform higher education responsibly. Reflecting the STI Forum's multistakeholder ethos, the webinar aimed to catalyze collaborative strategies for ensuring AI supports equitable access to education, sustains learning quality, and respects the values of fairness, inclusion, and transparency in digital transformation.

Key issues discussed

- AI Overreliance in Learning
- Assessment and Academic Integrity
- Ethical Design and Transparency
- Human-AI Interaction
- Practical Implementation and Co-Design

Key recommendations

- **Promote AI Literacy:** Educators should embed critical reflection and responsible AI use into curricula to help students evaluate, question, and verify AI outputs.
- **Design Transparent Assessment Frameworks:** Institutions must develop verification models and ethical guidelines to support AI-integrated assessment while maintaining academic integrity.
- **Foster Participatory Co-Design:** Encourage students to co-create AI learning tools and classroom norms, aligning systems with their values and expectations.
- **Leverage Ethical Tech Infrastructure:** Utilize platforms with built-in compliance and privacy safeguards to ensure responsible AI deployment in education.
- **Cultivate Trust-Centered Culture:** Beyond technical systems, institutions should model transparent, inclusive AI practices, recognizing that trust is earned through consistent ethical action.

Data+AI for Sustainable Industries Growth

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 8:30 -10:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: World Digital Technology Academy (WDTA) , Cloud Security Alliance Greater China Region(CSA GCR)

As a key side event of the 10th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovationfor the Sustainable Development Goals in 2025, the "Data + AI for Sustainable IndustriesGrowth" side event focused on how data and AI technologies can accelerate thegreentransformation and sustainable growth of global industries. Co-hosted by the WorldDigital Technology Academy (WDTA) and the Cloud Security Alliance Greater China Region (CSAGCR), the event aligned with the UN SDGs to foster deeper integration of technological innovationandindustrial applications. The event emphasized multi-stakeholder collaboration to address critical challenges in data governance, equitable technology access, and ethical safety while supportingcapacity-building in Global South countries for digital transformation.

Key issues discussed

- AI-Driven Data Utilization
- AI Applications in Agriculture
- AI Security Governance Challenges
- Cross-Border Data Spaces
- Youth Digital Leadership
- Ethical Frameworks for Tech-for-Good

Key recommendations

- Promote Inclusive Policies
- Strengthen Data Collaboration
- AI Security Governance Challenges
- Invest in Youth Leadership
- Foster Public-Private Partnerships

Theme 2

Advancing science, technology and innovation for gender equality

As called for in the Pact of the Future, the side events under this theme identified ways to close the gender digital divide and to advance leadership in STI for women and girls. It focused on removing barriers to the full, equal and meaningful access to and participation and leadership in education, employment and research in STEM fields and also considered how to ensure that advances in technology do not amplify gender inequalities or introduce new risks and challenges for women.

Exploring how technology can support better collection of conflict related sexual violence data

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 10:00 -11:15 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UN Human Rights, Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN in Geneva

This side event focused on the role of frontier technologies in advancing gender equality (SDG 5) and upholding human rights in conflict settings. The event highlighted how digital tools, when ethically and inclusively deployed, can support the documentation, monitoring, and prevention of CRSV—ensuring survivors are not left behind in global peace, justice, and development efforts. Organized by UN Human Rights/ OHCHR, this session convened experts from the UN system, civil society, and national institutions to explore ethical approaches to building digital data pipelines for CRSV, the use of AI and automation to detect trends and early warning signals, and the centrality of survivor-centred, trauma-informed design in all technological interventions.

Key issues discussed

- CRSV remains critically under-reported due to stigma, fear, legal barriers, and lack of consistent definitions across institutions.
- Emerging technologies can transform CRSV monitoring, particularly in inaccessible or highrisk areas.
- OHCHR, with support from the Complex Risk Analytics Fund, is piloting CRSV data pipelines to enhance monitoring and accountability.
- Tools must be designed with strict data protection, informed consent, and survivorcentred approaches
- The Ukraine case study illustrated the complex, multi-step process of verifying and triangulating CRSV data, and the value of local expertise and survivor narratives.
- National institutions emphasized embedding local legal and psychosocial perspectives into global approaches.
- Civil societies are leveraging structured databases and open-source analytics to identify patterns and early warning signals of CRSV.
- Consistent global definitions and interoperable data systems remain a challenge in effective CRSV data integration.

Key recommendations

- Advance ethical and inclusive technology solutions to collect and integrate CRSV data, grounded in human rights, trauma-informed practices, and gender-sensitive design.
- Embed SDG 5 at the core of digital innovation strategies in conflict settings, recognizing CRSV as both a human rights and gender justice issue.
- Develop common CRSV definitions and data standards across international, regional, and national levels to enable coordinated and effective responses.
- Ensure informed consent and data protection in all technological tools used to document CRSV, especially in fragile contexts.
- Build multi-stakeholder partnerships to co-design solutions.
- Invest in interoperable, privacy-preserving infrastructure that enables secure, responsible data sharing across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

Gender Equity and Global Partnership: A Global South Perspective

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 8:00 -10:00 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: CAST-UN Consultative Committee on Open Science and Global Partnership (CCOS), CAST-UN Consultative Committee on Women Scientists and Gender Equality & Solidarity, Zhejiang University, China Women's Association for Science and Technology

On May 8, aligned with UNESCO IDSSD Programme, and the China-Brazil-South Africa-AU Open Science Initiative's inclusive goals, this side event convened UNESCO, TWAS, universities, publishers, NGOs, and academics to explore Global South perspectives on enhancing women's leadership in global partnerships and advancing open science reforms in research evaluation systems. This side event was co-chaired by Prof. Wei YANG (M) and Prof. Vivian Wing-Wah YAM (F), featuring 7 speakers (including 5 women, 71%), demonstrated balanced male-female leadership.

Key issues discussed

- Strategies to overcome barriers for women in international leadership roles, including education, policy support for women's employment
- Examines how open data, open access, and transparent peer review challenge traditional metrics, exploring the opportunities for equitable, globally monitored collaborative evaluation frameworks
- In publication business, attention will be leveraged on digital innovations (e.g., interactive platforms) to safeguard gender equality
- Initiatives by UNESCO and TWAS, such as awards, seed grants, alongside the G20's recommendations, aim to mainstream gender balance in global science policies
- Emphasizing community-led collaborations (e.g., Africa-focused health studies) and open infrastructure (e.g., PubScholar, LA Referencia) to empower marginalized voices in science.

Key recommendations

- Strengthening systemic support for women in science.
- Embedding Gender Equity in STEM Education and highlight the importance of role models.
- Advancing open science and equitable evaluation.
- Boosting Global South leadership and inclusive research.
- Aligning governance for inclusive innovation.

Event recording link:
https://www.qukanvideo.com/cloud/h5/1746589725834290?sessionid=-1355658671

See Us, Hear Us, Allow Us: About Women in Universities

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 01:15 -03:15 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UNAI - SDG 1 Hub (SDG Core - ESALQ/USP)

Participants engaged in reflections and proposals related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 8, with a focus on professional education and training. The discussion, especially through the valuable contributions of the guest speakers, created an important space for listening, dialogue, and connection around these critical issues at ESALQ/USP and among the broader community. In these challenging times, the university must continue to strengthen its commitment to gender equity and to the preparation of students for decent, meaningful careers — ensuring these agendas not only persist, but thrive, so that we may be seen, heard, and allowed to exist.

Key issues discussed

- Historical milestones in women's rights: remembering and reinforcing to prevent setbacks
- The impact of gender on academic and professional pathways, and across all sectors
- The university as a space for visibility, listening, dialogue, and positive transformation
- Women in the agricultural sector and the care economy
- Despite progress, gender inequality remains persistent across all sectors
- Ongoing need for dialogue, education, and institutional literacy around SDGs 5 and 8

Key recommendations

- Strengthen SDG Hubs and similar structures as strategic centers for institutional dialogue and action
- Review and monitor gender compliance policies, with particular attention to the care economy and intersectional perspectives
- Include the care economy in academic discussions, acknowledging its disproportionate impact on women and developing strategies to promote balance and awareness on the issue
- Foster policies, practices, and research that promote women’s leadership and challenge gender stereotypes.
- Expand access to land, education, and productive resources for women and marginalized populations
- Implement permanent institutional training and literacy programs on diversity and equity, including educational cycles on gender equity, intersectionality, human rights, and inclusive practices

Women-Led Ethical AI: Mexican Innovations for Gender Equality and Inclusive Economic Growth

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 05:00 -06:00 CST
Format: Hybrid: Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Estado de México
Organized by: Daniela Camberos - LauLabs; Tecnológico de Monterrey – Campus Estado de México; Eon Institute, EGADE Business School

This official side event showcased Latin American leadership in inclusive technological innovation. With a focus on SDGs 5, 8, and 17, it explored how women-led AI initiatives in Mexico are creating scalable, ethical solutions to gender inequality and economic exclusion. Held at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Estado de México, the event combined regional case studies, live discussions, and expert insights to illustrate how ethical AI can serve as a driver for sustainable development. Framed within the Forum's core theme; advancing science-based, inclusive innovations, the event addressed the urgent need for ethical governance in emerging technologies, with an emphasis on intersectional inclusion.

Key issues discussed

- Mexico's lack of a national AI strategy that incorporates ethical and gender-inclusive standards.
- Findings from Eon Institute's research with 10 companies, revealing that 80% had no knowledge of AI ethics.
- Application gaps of the UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendation (2021) in Latin American corporate and public sectors.
- Real-world examples of algorithmic gender bias, particularly in AI recruitment tools that reproduce historical inequalities.
- The role of cultural, socioeconomic, and digital contexts in shaping Latin America's unique ethical AI challenges.
- Digital discrimination as a reflection of structural inequality encoded into data-driven systems.
- Urgent need for frameworks that include women and marginalized communities in AI development and governance.
- Importance of intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaboration to shape inclusive tech ecosystems.

Key recommendations

- Develop and implement a national AI strategy in Mexico grounded in ethical, human rights–based, and gender-responsive principles.
- Institutionalize mandatory ethical assessments for all public and private sector AI systems.
- Integrate AI ethics and bias literacy into national education systems, especially in STEM and business programs.
- Foster multi-stakeholder coalitions (government, academia, private sector, civil society) for inclusive tech innovation.
- Establish resource-sharing platforms and mentorship networks to replicate successful women-led AI models across Latin America.
- Ensure continuous monitoring of AI solutions for social impact, particularly in underserved or digitally excluded communities.

Theme 3

Leveraging science to conserve, restore and sustainably use the ocean and coastal ecosystems

The side events under this theme examined the advanced science and technology solutions for improving the health of crucial ecosystems including the ocean. It considered the application of emerging technologies that show promise for enabling circular economy approaches or addressing the pollution of fresh water and the ocean. It also considered practical approaches to deployment by using open science, open-source technologies and open innovation.

Delivering the Future: Sustainable Maritime – Leveraging Technology and Innovation to Support Clean Oceans

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 11:45 -13:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)

Oceans cover over 70% of the Earth's surface, providing critical resources, biodiversity, and economic opportunities. The maritime industry is the cornerstone of global trade; it also is a big contributor to ocean pollution that impacts maritime ecosystems and coastal communities.

The maritime industry plays a critical role in global trade and economic development, yet it faces significant environmental challenges, including carbon emissions, ocean pollution that impacts maritime ecosystems and coastal communities, and resource depletion. Electrification of ports and vessels offers a transformative opportunity to enhance efficiency and drive sustainable economic growth. By adopting shore power, electric and hybrid vessels, and renewable energy infrastructure, the industry can accelerate its transition toward a cleaner ocean and a more sustainable future.

Electrification is no longer a distant goal but a real pathway to a cleaner maritime industry. With technical standards driving advancements in battery storage, renewable energy and smart port technologies, the transition toward energy efficient maritime operations and a cleaner ocean are gaining momentum.

Key issues discussed

- Electrification Is Essential for Maritime Sustainability
- Standardization Enables Scalable Implementation
- Ports Must Become Smart Energy Hubs
- Integration with Energy Markets Is Crucial
- Infrastructure and Investment Challenges Must Be Addressed
- Workforce and Policy Readiness Are Critical
- Ports Can Help Stabilize the Grid

Key recommendations

- Electrification of ships and ports is a critical path forward for maritime sustainability and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- There is a need to combine technological innovation, standards, policy, markets, and workforce development — to achieve sustainable and economically viable maritime operations to drive adoption and deliver 2030 Agenda benefits.

Event – V20

Seascape restoration and resilience

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 18:00 -19:15 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; Syndey Institute of Marine Science

This virtual event focused on the transformative impact of multi-habitat restoration in urban coastal environments. Bringing together leading experts from research organisations, government and NGOs in Australia and abroad, the event explored innovative approaches to restoring marine biodiversity, improving ecosystem connectivity, and enhancing carbon sequestration in rapidly expanding coastal cities. This session highlighted cutting-edge strategies, including ecological engineering solutions that convert built marine structures into thriving ecosystems, as well as large-scale seagrass and kelp restoration initiatives. It addressed building the social license and governance frameworks needed to drive nature repair at scale, and discussed the collaboration that is needed between researchers, policymakers, and communities, to promote restoration practices that are both science-driven and supported.

Key issues discussed

- So far, we've protected about 8% of the ocean — only half as much as land.
- Restoring whole seascapes (not just single habitats) can improve resilience and speed up progress.
- It's hard to scale up restoration in busy urban coasts.
- In cities, we need a mix of solutions. This includes nature-based solutions, making man-made structures greener, and traditional ecological restoration.
- Gaining public and community support (social license) is essential.
- We need to show why investing in restoration is worthwhile.
- We need to show why investing in restoration is worthwhile.

Key recommendations

- Restoring marine ecosystems isn't just technical — it must also be democratic , including the establishment of robust social-license and clearly identified co-benefits through structured deliberation
- In urban coastal areas, nature-based solutions and greener infrastructure work well alongside traditional restoration.
- To protect and repair marine ecosystems, we must do both prevention and restoration.
- Governments at all levels need to work together, with clear roles.
- To attract private investment, marine restoration must be seen as a valuable product.

Theme 4

Scaling up STI financing and capacity building and strengthening research infrastructures for sustainable development

In follow up to the Pact of the Future and in preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the side events under this theme focused on ways to scale up financing from all sources for scientific research and research infrastructures that support sustainable development. It considered how to increase opportunities for research and capacity buiding cooperation, especially in developing countries, as well as how to attract private sector investment in STI and how to deepen public–private partnerships, enhancing international collaboration, and reinforcing national and regional research infrastructures, ensuring a robust and inclusive STI ecosystem that accelerates progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Digital El Salvador: Driving Innovation and Competitiveness

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST, UNHQ, NY
Format: In-person
Organized by: Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The event highlighted El Salvador's comprehensive approach to advancing digital transformation as a catalyst for sustainable development. It provided a platform to showcase national progress under the Digital Agenda 2020–2030, emphasizing digital inclusion, infrastructure development, and legal frameworks aimed at fostering technological innovation. The event also underscored the alignment of El Salvador's efforts with the Global Digital Compact (GDC), which promotes international cooperation for a safe, inclusive, and development-oriented digital future. The discussion effectively connected El Salvador's national experience with broader multilateral frameworks, emphasizing how the country's regulatory and policy frameworks align with key principles outlined in the GDC, as well as with ongoing digital cooperation initiatives within the UN system and other international platforms.

Key issues discussed

- Implementation of El Salvador's Digital Agenda 2020–2030, including regulatory and policy frameworks.
- National achievements in digital public infrastructure, data protection, and cybersecurity.
- Multilateral cooperation as a driver of inclusive digital transformation in developing countries.
- UNDP's role in supporting digital capacity-building and governance frameworks. • Opportunities for regional collaboration to address digital divides and foster innovation.
- Strategic investments in AI and emerging technologies to enhance economic competitiveness.
- The importance of digital public goods and infrastructure as enablers of sustainable development.

Key recommendations

- Enhance international cooperation to support national digital transformation strategies in developing countries.
- Strengthen digital governance frameworks to promote data protection, cybersecurity, and AI ethics.
- Mobilize resources and technical assistance for digital infrastructure projects in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to address persistent digital divides and promote digital inclusion.
- Expand strategic training programs in AI and emerging technologies to foster regional capacity-building.
- Establish regional knowledge-sharing platforms with CAF, UNDP, and other partners to facilitate replication of successful digital policies and frameworks.

The Science Decade: A Catalyst for Revitalized Global Collaboration

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST, UNHQ, NY
Format: In-person
Organized by: UNESCO and ITU

On 25 August 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 2024–2033 as the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD), inviting Member States and all stakeholders to actively support its implementation. UNESCO was designated as the lead UN agency for the implementation of the Decade. The IDSSD aims at reinforcing science as a foundational driver for tackling the world's most urgent challenges—from climate change to inequality.

Key issues discussed

- The urgent need for global scientific cooperation to address shared challenges, while overcoming barriers
- The importance of bridging the science-policy-society divide to ensure evidencebased, inclusive decision-making in national and global development strategies.
- The role of sustainable public-private partnerships and innovative financing in scaling STI for sustainable development.
- Persistent inequities in scientific participation, particularly affecting women, the Global South, and SIDS
- The promotion of open science and democratized knowledge through FAIR principles, digital platforms, and public engagement.
- The widespread threat of misinformation and the need for coordinated responses from science, media, and education sectors.
- The critical importance of investing in basic science and research infrastructure, to foster innovation and retain local talent.
- The value of transdisciplinary research and knowledge co-production as a means to generate context-specific, actionable solutions aligned with local needs.

Key recommendations

- Member States should embed IDSSD priorities into national policies, form national committees, and align funding mechanisms accordingly.
- Scientific and academic communities are urged to adopt inclusive, transdisciplinary research approaches that address real-world problems.
- Private sector and funders should develop innovative funding models that support collaborative and socially impactful science.
- Civil society and educators must expand science literacy, promote public engagement, and counter misinformation with fact-based education.
- All stakeholders are encouraged to foster a science culture rooted in transparency, equity, and long-term sustainability.

A new phase of international STI cooperation in times of high uncertainty and complexity

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST, UNHQ, NY
Format: In-person
Organized by: G-STIC, Permanent Mission of Belgium, Permanent Mission of Brazil, STEPI (South Korea), Fiocruz (Brazil)

As the world grapples with ongoing global challenges, deep-rooted inequalities, systemic vulnerabilities, and unsustainable practices continue to hinder progress on the 2030 Agenda. The world faces a triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Destabilized ecosystems heighten the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, threaten food security, and increase vulnerability to natural disasters. Meanwhile, ongoing geopolitical tensions further disrupt global stability, undermining international law, human rights, and economic resilience. Despite these challenges, the current moment presents a crucial opportunity for systemic reforms toward a more just, sustainable, and resilient future. Now more than ever, STI are vital tools to accelerate progress toward the SDGs and drive the transition to a more sustainable world.

In this context, international STI cooperation is essential to navigate uncertainty and complexity. This G-STIC side event at the UN STI Forum will explore how collaborative STI efforts can foster innovative solutions to global challenges. Bringing together policymakers, researchers, and innovators, the session will examine new models of cooperation that prioritize resilience, equity, and impact. Discussions will focus on leveraging STI for climate action, enhancing digital and technological inclusivity, and strengthening global innovation ecosystems. By facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders, this event aims to shape a new paradigm of international STI collaboration—one that is adaptive, inclusive, and aligned with global sustainability goals.

Key issues discussed

- What new challenges or issues in international STI cooperation have you encountered in your field or work, particularly in these recent times of heightened uncertainty and complexity?
- What role do you believe research institutions can play in addressing these challenges?

Key recommendations

- Reinforce inclusive and adaptive international STI collaboration
- Bridge-building is crucial
- Shift to inclusive participation
- Align STI Policies with global and local needs
- Promote STI for the public good
- Balance openness with security
- Invest in human capacity and education
- Empower local actors

Powering Progress: Unlocking UN Impact through Private Sector Partnerships

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST, UNHQ, NY
Format: In-person
Organized by: UN Global Pulse, Hellon

This side event was organised by UN Global Pulse and strategic partners—including Finnish consultancy Hellon - and focused on how both UNGP and the wider UN system is driving innovation through partnerships with the private sector and beyond.

This session explored how the private sector's expertise, technologies, and resources are essential to unlocking scalable solutions that accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through examples of work to date with the Government of Slovenia and Finland, UNGP is forging partnerships that are creating powerful synergies to address global challenges with agility and impact.

In alignment with the 2025 STI Forum's central theme—"Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based science and technology solutions and innovations for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind"—this session brought together government leaders, sustainability experts, and private sector representatives to explore integrative approaches to partnering with the UN. The event had links to SDG goals 3, 8 and 17 in particular.

Key issues discussed

- How UNGP can be a bridge between UN Agencies and projects, and the private sector / academia / government.
- There is a need for innovative, scalable technologies in addressing some of the biggest challenges in the world today.

Key recommendations

- Foster more academia-industry-government partnerships to scale sustainable technologies.
- The private sector has a lot more to offer then just funding; their expertise, technologies and experience can help accelerate progress towards SDG goals.
- There is a need for more interdisciplinary partnership models that include private sector, academic, UN and governments.

Envisioning Future HealthScapes: Rethinking Methodologies of Design Practices Towards Regenerative Environments

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 16:45 -18:00 EST, UNHQ, NY
Format: In-person
Organized by: School of Architecture and Design at New York Institute of Technology and Consulate General of Denmark in New York

This collaborative, dynamic, and multidisciplinary symposium focused on rethinking health as a paradigm for renewed practices, methodologies, and policies both in processes and outputs within multi-scalar domains. By questioning disciplinary practices, unlearning outdated methods, and reversing outmoded mindsets, the discussions fostered interactions between academic knowledge, professional expertise, and operational practices, proposing new methodologies of proactive cooperation on applied research involving our fragile cultural and natural built environments to produce renewed thinking and operational processes that anticipate the changes of the future.

Key issues discussed

- A Holistic Approach to Health in Design Education
- Health from an Ecosystem and People-Centered Perspective
- Collaborative Strategies for Future Healthscapes.
- Collaborative and integrated Future-Focused Partnerships with Nature for Change
- Innovative Pedagogies for Sustainable Urban Futures: Mapping, Gaming, Typological Design, Cartographic Narrative Mapping, and Geo-Spatial Data Visualization
- The ‘Game Plan’: City-Making through Board-Gaming
- Advancing Sustainable and Regenerative Circular Construction Practices
- Earth and Geopolymer-Based Building Materials

Key recommendations

- Integrate multidisciplinary education
- Support innovative urban education through creative methodologies
- Promote inclusive design
- Leverage data-driven decision-making
- Encourage regenerative circular economy models
- Encourage regenerative circular design

Partnerships for Global Degree – Towards Affordable Higher Education and Flexible Student Mobility

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 09:00 -10:30 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Berlin School of Business and Innovation, Germany in association with Confederation of Indian Private Universities, India and Blitz India Media

In today's dynamic global landscape, access to high-quality, affordable education is both a challenge and a necessity. As education becomes increasingly international, the need for flexible pathways that allow students to study across borders without financial barriers is more critical than ever. While the globalization of higher education has opened new doors for students, many still face obstacles—particularly variations in academic credit structures and programme designs across institutions. These inconsistencies often hinder student mobility and limit access to truly global learning experiences.

The panelists of the session represented the different stakeholders including Mr. Ramu Damodaran (First Chief of United Nations Academic Impact), Prof. Sunitha Narendran (Associate Pro Vice Chancellor of Internationalization and Global Engagement, University of Roehampton), Prof. Adewale Olusegun Obadina (Director of Quality Assurance, Association of African Universities), Mrs. Lily Bosen (Head of Partnerships and UN Liaison Unit, UNESCO) and Prof. Kyriakos Kouveliotis (Provost, BSBI, Berlin and Chief Academic Officer, GGG, Germany). The session was moderated by Prof. Shiv K. Tripathi.

Key issues discussed

- Need for standardization of credits and academic program structures across countries.
- Challenges due to variations in academic credit measurements.
- Role of academic credit-standardization on the cost of higher education for students.
- Experience and observations regarding standardization of academic credits.
- Role of university associations and IOs
- Future of credit standardization across different academic credit systems in view of emerging technologies.
- Solutions from SDG 17 for achieving SDG 4 through specific collaborative interventions in academic credit standardization.

Key recommendations

- Establishing regional and cross-country level partnerships in recognizing academic credits
- Starting of International Academic Credits (IAC), which aligns to all other academic credit systems.
- Initially piloting dual credit systems in selected projects by incorporating both the IAC and local credit systems of participating institutions.
- Development of open-source technology platform for conversion of academic credits across systems.
- Initiating multi-stakeholder collective action projects to start standardization of credits.
- Promotion of South-South Cooperation to complement North-South Cooperation efforts in academic exchanges and credit transfer through the United Nations South-South University Cooperation Networks.

Beyond 2030: 10th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 11:00 -12:30 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: IFORTIS WORLDWIDE

As part of the official program of the 2025 STI Forum, the side event titled “Beyond 2030: 10th Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals” was hosted by IFORTIS WORLDWIDE. With more than 3,000 participants joining both virtually and on-site in Bangalore, India, the session focused on the transformational power of regenerative economy models in accelerating progress toward the SDGs beyond 2030. Guided by the leadership of CEO Mr. Rohit Naidu, the event emphasized how integrating emerging technologies with inclusive innovation and regional knowledge systems can create sustainable and resilient economies. The discussion highlighted India’s unique positioning to lead global regenerative efforts, especially through scalable, community-based initiatives and youth empowerment.

One of the major announcements made during the session was the launch of "Mission 20,000 Propreneurs"—a national initiative aimed at creating and supporting 20,000 purpose-driven entrepreneurs (“propreneurs”) across India by 2030. This initiative directly responds to the call for inclusive, scalable action emerging from the STI Forum dialogue.

Key issues discussed

- The shift from extractive growth to regenerative economic models focused on environmental restoration and social equity.
- The power of indigenous innovation and circular economy practices in local Indian communities.
- Technological enablers for regeneration.
- Addressing rural-urban disparities in access to innovation and digital tools.
- Empowering women and youth as key actors in local regeneration efforts.
- Role of public-private-civic partnerships
- Importance of measuring economic progress beyond GDP—toward well-being, climate resilience, and inclusivity.
- The announcement and framework of Mission 20,000 Propreneurs as a flagship outcome of the forum.

Key recommendations

- Institutionalize regenerative economic strategies in national development plans, backed by supportive policies and data systems.
- Operationalize “Mission 20,000 Propreneurs” as a model for youth entrepreneurship
- Invest in rural innovation ecosystems through inclusive tech infrastructure, education, and capacity-building.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration to fund, scale, and replicate successful regenerative models nationally and globally.
- Foster integration of traditional knowledge systems with modern STI approaches.
- Advocate for new global sustainability metrics, focused on socio-environmental outcomes.

Event – V06

The Future of Open Access: How Science Diplomacy Can Champion Equitable Knowledge Systems Through Global Research Publishing Reform

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 10:00 -11:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Science for Africa (SFA) Foundation, UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP)

A virtual panel session at the UN Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Forum 2025 brought together experts to discuss the theme, "The Future of Open Access: How Science Diplomacy Can Champion Equitable Knowledge Systems Through Global Research Publishing Reform." Moderated by Dr. Tom Drake from INASP, the panel featured insights from Nathanael Bevan (UK FCDO), Dr. Nokuthula Mchunu (AOSP), Dr. Alphonsus Neba (APHRC), Dr. Evelyn Gitau (SFA Foundation), and Dr. Ezra Clark (UNESCO). The discussion centred on leveraging science diplomacy to address systemic inequities in global research publishing. Aligned with the objectives of the 10th STI Forum 2025, which focused on "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based science and technology solutions for the 2030 agenda and its SDGS for leaving no one behind." The panel emphasized how open knowledge can serve as a powerful catalyst for inclusive STI ecosystems, advocating for policies that ensure equitable access to scientific knowledge, amplifying the contributions of Africa in global research discourse.

Key issues discussed

- Open Access as a driver for sustainable development
- Power imbalance in global publishing
- African-led initiatives and success stories
- High-level diplomacy and international cooperation as key to reforming research publishing
- Reimagining the publishing ecosystem (Future outlook)

Key recommendations

- Integrate Open Science into global agendas
- Champion a global initiative on equitable publishing
- Support African and global South infrastructure

Event – V05

Science as a Shared Journey: Engaging Communities, Building Trust, and Advancing Open Science for the SDGs

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 08:30 -09:45 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Department of Global Communications

The right to participate in and benefit from science remains fundamental to human progress and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Open Science is collaborative and inclusive, allows new social actors to engage in scientific processes, contributes to the democratization of knowledge, upholds scientific integrity and addresses systemic inequalities and enclosures of knowledge. Open Science, with its focus on participatory methods and citizen science initiatives, is integral to supporting SDG localization. Science cannot function as a public good if the public cannot engage with it.

To open, Mr. Maher Nasser, Assistant Secretary-General and Commissioner-General of the United Nations at Expo in Osaka, Kansai, Japan, offered remarks connecting the important of participatory science to the achievement of Agenda 2030, the Pact for the Future, and the realization human right to benefit from and participate in science as enshrined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Mr. Nasser recognized the transformative potential of participatory science in action across multiple SDGs and the critical importance of SDG localization in the *Pact for the Future* put forward by the General Assembly.

Speakers from CSIR-National Environment Engineering Research Institute, University of Arizona, University Library of Southern Denmark and the United Nations Statistics Division strengthened participatory science advances “sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based, science and technology solutions and innovation”.

Key issues discussed

- Research and data co-created and co-governed by scientists and the public
- Participatory research and SDG localization
- Public trust in science and scientists
- Sustainable infrastructure and capacity building

Key recommendations

- Engage diverse publics in knowledge creation and validation processes
- Build trust and avoid a tokenistic approach to inculcate a joint sense of responsibility and belongingness
- Incentivize scientific practices co-designed, co-implemented, co-managed, and co-governed with local communities to yield more effective solutions and co-benefits
- Prioritize multilingualism when communicating science and scientific results
- Leverage libraries and universities to build capacity for participatory science

From Pilot to Scale: Unlocking Evidence-based Innovation with UNICEF's 5D Innovation Framework

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 09:00 -10:15 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UNICEF

At the 2025 STI Forum, UNICEF officially launched its 5-Dimensinoal (5D) Innovation Framework – a structured tool designed to support the identification, validation, and scaling of innovations. Built around five critical dimensions required for successful scaling – innovation, business model, impact, scalability, and risk – the framework provides a holistic assessment of a solution's readiness to scale. Panelists from UNICEF Egypt, Serbia, and the Office of Innovation shared practical experiences using the framework to bring greater rigor, objectivity, and strategic clarity to innovation efforts. The side event aligned closely with the STI Forum's 2025 theme of "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based science and technology solutions for the 2030 Agenda." By offering a common language and standardized criteria, the 5D Innovation Framework helps decision-makers prioritize high-potential solutions, build scaling strategies, and foster meaningful partnerships.

Key issues discussed

- Stagnation after pilot stage
- Need for evidence-based scaling decisions
- Importance of a multi-dimensional approach to scaling
- Using the framework for strategic prioritization
- Enabling cross-sector partnerships
- Clarifying scale-up pathways

Key recommendations

- Adopt structured frameworks like 5D for scaling decisions
- Invest in capacity and partnerships for scaling
- Develop and apply stage-appropriate evidence strategies
- Foster collaborative, user-centered iteration

Reforming the Culture of Inclusion in Science for Sustainable Development: Bringing Everyone Forward

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 10:00 -13:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT)

The Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) organized the first of its kind side event of the 10th Multi-stakeholder Forum on STI for the Sustainable Development Goals. The High-Level Panel titled "Reforming the Culture of Inclusion in Science for Sustainable Development", underscored the pivotal role of inclusivity in fostering scientific and technological innovation and highlighted the imperative to integrate professionals with disabilities into STEM disciplines as key drivers of socio-economic progress. This Side Event High-Level Panel aligns with RASIT's Global Initiatives, namely "Mute International"* and "Science in Braille"*, focused on the role of professionals with disabilities as key contributors to sustainable development goals, with a special emphasis on SDG 8 and its nexus. Furthermore, the Panel brought together disabled professionals and experts to discuss with policymakers and the international community

Key issues discussed

- Systemic barriers hindering STEM education and employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Representation gaps in science and technology sectors for professionals with disabilities.
- Strategies to enhance accessibility and inclusivity within STEM environments.
- The interrelationship between SDG 8 and broader inclusion objectives
- The role of international policy and collaboration in empowering professionals with disabilities.
- Personal narratives from scientists, engineers, and policymakers with disabilities.
- Tools and frameworks designed to foster inclusive innovation ecosystems.
- Leadership deficits and representation gaps for individuals with disabilities in decisionmaking, diplomacy and the International Community arenas

Key recommendations

- RASIT Science in Braille Global Initiative* to be the International Hub and Platform uniting the voices of Professionals and Experts with disabilities.
- The Launch of RASIT Science in Braille World Center of Excellence*, to collaborate with the UN DESA and ECOSOC, UNESCO, and Member States.
- The RASIT Science in Braille World Center of Excellence* will convene work on, inter alia:

1. Develop comprehensive datasets
2. Implement inclusive educational and workplace policies
3. Foster international partnerships
4. Launch awareness campaigns
5. Actively involve professionals with disabilities
6. Invest in assistive technologies
7. Bring forward professionals and experts with disabilities in the Diplomacy and International Community Arena.

Expert Consultations on Leveraging synergies between the UN's Online Platform (2030Connect) and EC–OECD's STIP Compass

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 09:30 -11:00 EST
Format: S-2729, 27th floor of the Secretariat building, UN HQ, New York
Organized by: OECD and UN DESA

This event showcased progress on the STIP Compass and highlighted outcomes from the collaboration with the IATT through the International Organizations' Portal Pilot Project. It provided an opportunity to strengthen connections between the UN Online Platform for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and the STIP Compass platform, jointly maintained by the OECD and the European Commission. Both platforms play a vital role in facilitating global knowledge sharing on STI initiatives and policies in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key issues discussed

- **Inclusion of organizations**: A question was raised on whether organisations such as the International Science Council would be included. It was clarified that this pilot phase will focus on intergovernmental organisations, with possible extension in later phases.
- **Reporting impact**: Discussion covered whether initiatives' impact should be reported. The current STIP Compass survey includes a field on evaluations, allowing reports to be attached, but does not address detailed impact assessment.
- **AI ownership**: The Portal's dataset ownership was discussed in the context of AI models. It was clarified that STIP Compass and the IOs Portal are public platforms. AI developments in the project use commercial APIs that do not allow reuse of the data. These issues remain under active consideration.
- **Classification by target countries**: The possibility of classifying initiatives by the countries they target was raised. In this regard, the data model will indeed incorporate target countries per initiative.

Key recommendations

- The OECD will circulate the data model, along with a short survey to seek feedback from the participating IOs.
- As a follow-up, the OECD will organize one-to-one meetings with IOs upon request to further discuss and shape the data model.
- The participating IOs will agree on the final data model by July

- **Usefulness for policy analysts**: The usefulness of these types of projects for policy analysts was emphasized, especially when designing and implementing STI initiatives, as they can compare and benchmark with other organizations.
- **IOs' Portal as a collaborative effort**: At the end of the meeting, it was reiterated that the development of the data model is a collaborative effort among the participating IOs. The OECD will share the data model and ask for feedback and suggestions to build a final version.

Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation for sustainable development in Africa. Experiences of co-creation, international collaboration and strategic STI roadmapping

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 13:15 -14:45 EST
Format: EU Delegation to the UN, 666 Third Avenue, 31st floor, New York
Organized by: EC JRC, UN DESA, and the Permanent Missions of the European Union, The Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, and Seychelles

The side event highlighted efforts by the European Union and five African countries - The Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, and Seychelles - to develop national STI for SDGs roadmaps as strategic tools for advancing sustainable development. Implemented through a participatory and evidence-based approach, these roadmaps aim to mobilize science, technology, and innovation in addressing contextspecific development challenges. The proposed side event was designed to align closely with the theme of the 2025 STI Forum and contribute significantly to multi-stakeholder exchange on STI, in line with the Pact for the Future. Highlighting concrete success stories, the event aimed to demonstrate how partnerships for the STI4SDGs roadmaps can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs under review by the HLPF in 2025, notably how STI strategies can support food security, public health, climate resilience, and energy transitions.

Key issues discussed

- Participants shared lessons on the multidisciplinary and localized approach of the roadmaps
- **The Gambia** emphasized the need to strengthen systems thinking, policy coherence, and inclusive stakeholder engagement to tackle challenges.
- **Namibia** highlighted how the STI roadmapping process to improve the climate resilience of rural communities
- **Mauritius** identified NCDs as a key challenge and spotlighted investments needs in digital health, behavioural innovation, and financing for NCD research.
- **Rwanda**'s STI roadmap targeted agricultural transformation, inspiring new financing programs for researchers.
- **The EU** underlined the role of STI in its Global Gateway initiative
- **Latvia** highlighted the need for development finance to align with local and private sector efforts, backed by education, skills, and community engagement.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen systems thinking and policy coherence across sectors
- Increase investments in STI infrastructure, digital tools, and capacity development, especially in underserved communities
- Support inclusive and participatory roadmap development processes involving diverse local stakeholders.
- Integrate Indigenous knowledge and local innovations into national policy frameworks and STI solutions.
- Ensure alignment of international financing with national priorities and community level implementation capacities.
- The event concluded with a strong call for political commitment, private sector engagement, and capacity-building to ensure that STI4SDGs roadmaps serve as catalysts for systemic transformation aligned with the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

Other Themes

This section features side events that address a wide range of SDG-related topics, reflecting the diverse applications of science, technology, and innovation in sustainable development. Covering areas such as health, agrifood systems, digital governance, climate change, and urban development, these events offer valuable insights and contribute to a holistic understanding of the 2030 Agenda. Some highlighted the role of strategic foresight in promoting sustainability.

UN Global Horizon Scanning: Insights from using digital tools to analyze signals, trends, and drivers of change across the UN system

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 09:00 -10:15 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Horizon scanning brings together the perspectives and collective intelligence of different stakeholders to map possible changes, presenting a wealth of information on signals, trends, and drivers of change that can be harnessed to inform decision-making, planning, and programming. To this end, the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and UN DESA are developing a digital AI tool to efficiently harness and analyze insights of horizon scanning initiatives so that they may better feed into decision-making and help further position strategic foresight as a core enabler of anticipatory action across the UN. The tool aims to help users draw on existing intelligence to deepen analysis, bridge synergies, facilitate cross-fertilization, motivate collaboration, and ultimately translate insights into action. The side event was moderated by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and featured preliminary insights and a live demo by UN DESA's Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of the first prototype which draws on five horizon scanning reports published between 2022-2024 by UN DESA, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, and WHO. Following the demo, representatives from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), UN DESA, FAO, UNDP, and UNEP engaged in a panel discussion on horizon scanning to further unpack the tool's initial insights and explore potential synergies. The side event closed with an interactive exercise with the audience to inform iteration and scaling of the tool.

Key issues discussed

- Systemic implications for inclusion, participation, and responsive multilateralism
- Leveraging the responsible use of AI
- Emerging insights from the prototype
- Experiences, process, application, and impact of driving horizon scanning and foresight initiatives
- Interactive discussions: Participants surfaced different use cases for the tool, including foresight for behavioural change, use of appropriate technology, and managing biases

Key recommendations

- Incorporate consolidated feedback in project trajectory and iteration
- Reflect proposed applications of the tool in refining personas and user journeys
- Test the tool to deep dive on issues of interest, including
- Map out engagement strategy and phases for outreach
- Continuously develop the user guide
- Build processes and systems for sustainability

Launch of Joint Report by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and International Science Council on "Futures Thinking and Strategic Foresight in Action: Insights from the Global South"

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 10:00 -11:15 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and the International Science Council (ISC)

As global risks grow more complex and change accelerates, innovative and forward-looking approaches are increasingly important for e;ective policymaking and decision-making. In this context, the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and the International Science Council (ISC) co-hosted a virtual side event to launch their joint report on "Futures Thinking and Strategic Foresight in Action: Insights from the Global South". Recognizing that there is no-one-size-fits all approach, the report features 14 case studies, eight practical typologies of impact, and six key recommendations for inclusive foresight.

Through an interactive exchange with case-study representatives, experts, and participants the event showcased how inclusive, participatory and science-informed foresight can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and community-led transformative action.

Key issues discussed

- Behavioural and emotional dimensions
- Inclusive and accessible design
- Adapting to complexity and change
- Building futures literacy
- Recommendations in practice

Key recommendations

Complementing the six key recommendations for inclusive foresight included in the report, the discussion highlighted the following actions:

- Diversify foresight approaches and applications
- Strengthen science-policy-society collaboration
- Integrate behavioural science and cognitive insights
- Ensure inclusive participation through better data and design
- Invest in inclusive capacity building

The report is available at: https://un-futureslab.org/project/futures-thinking-and-strategicforesight-in-action-insights-from-the-global-south

Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) as accelerators for inclusive and sustainable agrifood system transformation and achieving the SDGs leaving no one behind

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 10:00 -11:15 EST
Format: In-person in UN HQ NY
Organized by: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with Malawi and Rwanda

FAO, its Members and partners aim to promote agrifood systems that are more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. FAO and its partners play a critical role in harnessing scientific evidence, improving uptake and scaling-up of technologies and innovations as effective ways to transform agrifood systems. However, the technologies and innovations remain unevenly adopted across regions, often limited by capacities, infrastructure, policies and financial resources. The FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, envisions methods for identifying barriers and address them and rolling out tested solutions and accelerators to improve adoption. This is being achieved by promoting new institutional models, digitalization, biotechnologies, behavioural science, foresights and agricultural innovation systems, extension services, community-based learning, and partnerships with private sector. Entrepreneurship, startups and incubators play a critical role in accelerating adoption for inclusive and sustainable transformation.

Key issues discussed

- The side event explored the latest advancements and opportunities associated with science, technologies and innovations. The discussions focused on sharing the next generation of technologies and innovations including gene editing, synthetic biology, Artificial Intelligence and potential new developments as catalysts for acceleration of adoption of technologies and innovations for inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems transformation.
- The side event highlighted FAO's new Agrifood System Technologies and Innovations Outlook (ATIO) that curates existing information on the current, measurable state of STI and upcoming changes, as well as their transformative potential, to inform evidence-based policy decisions and investments.

Key recommendations

- Showcase the experiences and lessons learned and identify the most important entry points to harness scientific evidence and application of technologies and innovations to transform agrifood systems.
- Identify barriers to scale up and promote uptake technologies and innovations.
- Leverage new generation of technologies and innovations to contribute to the agrifood system transformation.
- Carry out systematic assessment of opportunities and risks associated with new developments to ensure that the technologies and innovations are available, accessible and affordable by all leaving no on behind.

Harnessing Bioeconomy Science, Technology, and Innovation for Agrifood Systems Transformation

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 08:00 -09:30 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: FAO, in collaboration with UN Global Pulse

Co-organized by FAO and UN Global Pulse, the event emphasized the urgent need for scaling up bioeconomy and STI-based solutions to accelerate agri-food systems transformation. It addressed persistent global challenges including hunger, biodiversity loss, and the climate crisis, and showcased bioeconomy as a unifying concept contributing to multiple SDGs—particularly SDGs 2, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 17.

The session facilitated cross-regional dialogue among global institutions, national governments, regional actors, academia, and civil society. It reinforced the value of inclusive, science-driven innovation ecosystems and partnerships in catalyzing agri-food system transformation through sustainable bioeconomy.

Key issues discussed

- The role of bioeconomy in going beyond food security and nutrition goals to create sustainable livelihoods, strengthen climate resilience, and promote equitable development.
- South Africa's leadership in the G20 bioeconomy initiative and the importance of global collective action and private sector engagement.
- The European Union's bioeconomy and agri-food vision to 2040, including the use of policy tools like the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and Horizon Europe to drive rural prosperity and innovation.
- ASEAN regional examples from Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, showcasing lessons learned and good practices in establishing biorefineries, waste valorization, digital bioresource mapping, and community development.
- Côte d'Ivoire's BioDAF project exemplifying a scalable urban circular bioeconomy model by transforming organic waste into high-value agricultural inputs using black soldier fly (BSF)

Key recommendations

- Promote multistakeholder partnerships and global cooperation to advance a sustainable bioeconomy.
- Scale innovations by creating and supporting the enabling environment, including regulatory frameworks, policy support, and targeted investments.
- Mainstream inclusive models that empower women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities in bioeconomy value chains.
- Leverage digital tools and STI to enhance productivity, circularity, and knowledge sharing across borders.
- The UN Global Pulse Accelerator's role in enabling scaling of bioeconomy innovations through ecosystem-based support, local partnerships, and crosssector collaboration worldwide.

IGF 2025 on 'Building Digital Governance Together': The road to WSIS+20 and beyond

Date, Time, Location: 6th May 2025 | 08:00 -09:30 EDT
Format: In-person in UN HQ NY
Organized by: Government of Norway, UN DESA

The side event titled "IGF 2025 on 'Building Digital Governance Together': The road to WSIS+20 and beyond" was held on 6 May 2025 during the 10th annual Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum at UN Headquarters in New York. Co-hosted by the Government of Norway, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and the IGF Secretariat, the session provided a strategic preview of the upcoming Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2025 in Lillestrøm, Norway, and its pivotal role in shaping the twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20). With participation from senior UN officials, diplomats, and digital governance leaders, the event offered insights into the thematic priorities of IGF 2025 and its contribution to broader global digital cooperation.

The event directly aligned with the 2024 STI Forum's theme of "Science, technology and innovation for reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises." In an era marked by rapid technological transformation and widening digital divides, the session highlighted how inclusive digital governance—anchored in multistakeholder cooperation—can serve as a powerful enabler for sustainable development. The discussion underscored the importance of human-centric digital transformation, digital trust, and responsible innovation as key drivers for aligning digital policy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the context of the evolving global governance ecosystem represented by the WSIS+20 review, the Global Digital Compact, and the IGF.

Key issues discussed

- Strategic Vision for IGF 2025
- Linkage to WSIS+20
- Multistakeholder Model
- Human-Centric Governance
- Institutional Strengthening of the IGF
- Digital Policy Coherence
- Local to Global Linkages
- Trust and Inclusion Amid Technological Change

Key recommendations

- Closing Digital Divides
- Renew and Institutionalize the IGF Mandate
- Strengthen Multistakeholder Participation
- Enhance the Utility of IGF Outputs
- Align Global Digital Policy Frameworks
- Promote Human-Centric, Rights-Based Governance

Water Conservation and Innovation Practices

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 08:00 -10:00 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: : SDG Implementation Committee, SRIHER (DU) In association with IQAC, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research Partners: IGBC, IWMA, Rotaract Club of SRIHER

This virtual side event was part of the 10th UN Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum 2025), addressing the central theme of advancing science-based, inclusive innovations for sustainability. As a UN Academic Impact Partner, SRIHER spotlighted evidence-based water conservation strategies tailored to institutional ecosystems, aligning with SDGs 3, 6, 9, 13, and 17.

The event showcased institutional best practices in sustainable water management, including AI-enabled monitoring systems, rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, and ground recharge models. A systems approach was presented that integrates traditional wisdom and modern technology to create a zero-discharge campus. Presentations emphasized interdisciplinary collaboration, predictive analytics, and student-driven campaigns for water literacy.

Key issues discussed

- Integrated Campus Water Management: RO treatment systems, artificial pond storage, treated water recycling
- Rainwater Harvesting & Recharge: Covering over 18,000 m³ annually.
- Use of AI & IoT: Real-time water demand forecasting and predictive maintenance.
- Efficient Appliances: Cost-benefit analysis of water-saving technologies.
- Need for innovative, scalable technologies in water reuse and purification.
- Green Impact: Campus green cover, biodiversity, carbon sequestration.
- Youth Engagement: Water audits, pledge campaigns, green drives.
- Institutional strategies in integrating SDGs through education and outreach.

Key recommendations

- Foster academia-industry-government partnerships. • Institutionalize real-time water monitoring systems.
- Include water conservation modules in curricula.
- Scale local innovations to urban and rural bodies.
- Promote collaborations with IGBC and IWMA.

Digitally Empowered Healthy City Development: Innovative Strategies and Practices

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 08:00 -09:15 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: : Urban Planning Society of China (UPSC) Co-organized by: CAST UN Consultative Committee on Sustainable City, Community and Heritage

This side event focused on the innovative application of digital technologies to advance healthy city development, highlighting how these tools can support planning decisions, promote healthy lifestyles, and contribute to achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

Key issues discussed

- The WHO's Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) translates the health and environmental benefits of active travel into economic terms, enabling evidence-based integration of walking and cycling into urban transport planning.
- Singapore's innovative digital health promotion strategy leverages wearable devices and mobile apps to deliver behavioral nudges, incentivize physical activity, and support individualized health engagement at scale.
- Mobile monitoring and spatiotemporal analysis enhance the accuracy of environmental exposure assessments, providing an evidence base for SDG-oriented urban health interventions.
- Integrating human mobility data into City Information Models (CIM) has the potential to support optimized resource allocation and inform targeted travel behavior interventions.
- Aligning healthy city planning with livable city frameworks highlights shared priorities such as walkability, green infrastructure, and transit access, fostering synergies in urban sustainability and public health.

Key recommendations

- Promote data sharing and standardization, enabling evidence-based policymaking through harmonized standards.
- Ensure ethical and secure data use, ensure responsible acquisition and application of urban health data for the public good.
- Integrate decision-support tools into planning, prioritize infrastructure projects with both economic and health benefits.
- Develop standardized health city indicators aligning with the SDGs and adaptable to the evolving context of big data and artificial intelligence.
- Support the UN in leading the development of a Roadmap to Healthy Cities in the Digital Era, consolidating best practices and strategic guidance.

Emerging Health Technologies and Health Development

Date, Time, Location: 7th May 2025 | 01:15 -02:45 EDT

Format: Virtual

Organized by: Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC); World Health Organization (WHO); and Carnegie Mellon University (USA)

In view of the scale of today's global challenges, and the great potential of Science, Technology and Innovation to deliver responses and global cooperation in STI is indispensable to achieve health- and education-for-all. Global partnerships around STI are necessary to mobilize financial and knowledge resources from governments, businesses, academia and civil societies and unfold the potential of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both public and private sectors play an essential role in financing research and development. Therefore they are essential to create a balanced strategy that leverages the strengths and weaknesses of both. Current trends indicate that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs, but science-based tools can help drive change. Advanced digital technologies are set to change the way we work and live. While scientific evidence is key in addressing complex global challenges, science is not a cure-all. When we work together – across national borders, across groups, disciples and stakeholder groups – we as humanity can harness science and technology to the benefits for all of us. We need to look and appreciate the benefits of long-term commitment to fundamental research, but we also need to look ahead and anticipate challenges and possibilities.

Key issues discussed

- Raise Awareness: Promote policies to raise awareness about humanizing AI that mimics emotions, especially in interactions involving children, and assess related ethical implications.
- Research AI Impact on Youth: Support research on the long-term psychological and cognitive effects of AI on children and young people.
- Study AI in Healthcare: Encourage research on how AI affects health system performance and outcomes.
- Engage Youth: Create mechanisms for children and young people to participate in discussions and decisions about AI's impact on their lives.
- Develop Ethical Tools: Create tools and indicators to assess the ethical effectiveness of AI policies, with a focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Key recommendations

- Developing countries should formulate strategic plan for STI with clear, specific and measurable goals
- Governments should create the conditions for accessible, affordable and high-quality digital infrastructure that supports STI development.
- Developed and developing countries should collaborate to incentivize technology and knowledge transfer among universities, research institutions, and the private sector. International partnerships should aim to closing gaps in knowledge capabilities that hamper effective technology transfer.
- Enhance international solidarity and cooperation, revitalize global trust and partnerships in STI research and development.

One Health for All: Synergistic Solutions Advancing SDG3 throughSustainable Science & Inclusive Innovation

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 08:00 -09:15 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Chinese Preventive Medicine Association, CAST UN Consultative Committee on Life Science and Human Health, One Health Working Group of the World Federation of Public Health Associations, School of Global Health, Chinese Center for Tropical Diseases Research, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, National Institute of Parasitic Diseases, Chinese Center for Disease Control andPrevention

The event highlighted the One Health approach as a pivotal framework for addressing complex global health challenges, including climate change, infectiousdiseases, antimicrobial resistance, and health inequalities. By fostering cross- sectoral collaboration and leveraging technological advancements, the conferenceaimed to accelerate progress toward the SDGs and promote a healthier, moreequitable future. The discussions underscored the need for integrated, evidence- based solutions to tackle the root causes of health disparities and environmental degradation, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of global healthandsustainability.

Key issues discussed

- Systemic integration of human, animal, and environmental health
- Gaps in SDG implementation
- Data fragmentation and capacity disparities
- Localized application of GOHI
- Policy misalignment and fragmented responses
- Underfunding and lack of political prioritization

Key recommendations

- Strengthen institutional coordination
- Bridge data gaps with equitable tech solutions
- Integrate GOHI into One Health governance
- Pilot localized interventions
- Mobilize funding and political commitment
- Build capacity through global partnerships

The Nexus between Planetary Health, Climate and Environmental Crises, and Youth Mental Health

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 08:30 -10:00 EST
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Women Leaders for Planetary Health, SERAC Bangladesh, Planetary Health Alliance

This virtual side event explored the psychological toll of environmental crises, including anxiety, trauma, depression, and displacement, and explored their long-term effects on young people's well-being. Participants showcased community-driven, gender-responsive solutions that strengthened mental health support and resilience. Its key objectives aligned with SDG 3, aiming to ensure health, specifically mental health, for all, SDG 5, aiming to empower and aid young women impacted psychologically by planetary crises, and SDG 17, revitalizing partnership for sustainable development and the health of both humanity and Earth.

Key issues discussed

- Anxiety, trauma, depression, and displacement caused by climate change and the climate crisis
- Climate-related mental health as a biopsychosociocultural issue
- Children's and youth's unique vulnerabilities to climate effects, including vulnerability to heat, air pollution, and trauma following climate change-related natural disasters;
- Two-way street between physical and mental health in the context of climate disruption- every physical impact, whether it's from our environment or nature, has an effect on our mental health, which then has an effect on everything around us physically;
- Challenges faced by women that exacerbate mental health impacts of climate crises, especially in developing countries, including fewer safety nets and societal pressures and obligations;
- Long-term and transgenerational effects of climate change on children and youth's neurological and mental health;

Key recommendations

- Acting on existing knowledge and shifting from research to policy;
- Validating and hearing the voices of youth affected psychologically by climate and planetary crises;
- Promoting collective rather than individual action;
- Providing community-based mental health support and safe spaces; - Making mental health a key part of climate policies
- Targeting vulnerable populations in global action, focusing specifically on youth and young women, especially in developing countries.
- Youth feeling ignored, hopeless, and dismissed in the face of mental health effects of climate change; and - A call for policy and collective action.

Cross-regional Collaborative Innovation for Urban Sustainable Development

Date, Time, Location: 8th May 2025 | 08:00 -10:00 EDT
Format: Virtual
Organized by: Chengdu Zero Carbon Collaborative Innovation Advancement Association (CCAA)

In alignment with the 2025 STI Forum's central theme—"Advancing sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based science and technology solutions and innovations for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind"—this event brought together representatives from government, academia, enterprises and international institutions to explore cross-regional cooperation paths and the application of technological innovation in urban sustainable development. The event emphasized the interconnectedness of SDGs 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry&Well-Being) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), through building an inclusive, resilient and net-zero carbon urban network collaboratively.

Key issues discussed

- Methodologies and science support to achieving Smart city objectives. · Top-level Design and global cases of Green and Thriving Neighborhoods.
- Agro-pastoral application scenario:Near-zero carbon fresh forage factory.
- AI Empowers Sustainable Development of Green Lithium Industry.
- Governance framework and strategic positioning of Enterprise ESG and sustainable development
- Exploring the low-carbon transformation path of resource-based city innovatively
- Using ecology and developing green industries to enrich the local people.
- Practices and insights of "Bamboo-for-Plastic" Initiative.
- Excellent Practice Sharing of Several China's Innovative Demonstration Zones for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Key recommendations

- Enhance the innovation ability of zero-carbon technology and in the meantime actively integrate AI, IoT, etc.
- Encourage urban transformation and create near-zero carbon demonstration industrial parks, factories and communities, etc.
- Establish and improve the recycling system of urban waste material quickly. · Strengthen cross-city communication and encourage cross-regional policy coordination
- Promote multi-stakeholder collaboration among government, enterprises, NGOs and international organizations in the framework of SDGs.
- Improve the supervision mechanism of zero-carbon city construction in all aspects.