

SESSION PROPOSAL

for

THE 9TH WORLD SUSTAINABILITY FORUM - WSF2021

13-15 September 2021, Online

by

Artificial Intelligence for Development Agency (AI4DA)

Abstract

The social and economic lockdowns accompanying the COVID19 pandemic have brought about the sustainability agenda decidedly conflicting effects. On the one hand, global reduction in traffic and industrial emissions have for instance slowed down air pollution, surface water contamination, energy demands, consumer-heavy lifestyles and given wildlife a reprieve. Yet, on the other hand, the pandemic severely exacerbated a diverse set of phenomena adversely affecting global efforts for greater sustainability- from peaking levels of plastic pollution related to the use of disposable personal protective equipment PPE and single-use items waste management and tilting the job market to aggravating development dynamics reflected in the placement of the economic entities and individuals along the global value chains and deepening educational gaps and technological divides.

The unfurling processes mentioned above only serve to reiterate and reinforce the urgency to address the progressively more dire issues of sustainable development in our diverse stakeholder capacities as public institutions, private entities, community networks or single human individuals. What's more, with humanity entering the Decade of Change, and, essentially, the current generation being the last generation that can actually make a difference for the better and manage the comprehensive and informed implementation of sustainable practices in all spheres of life, it is more than imperative we make use of youth energy for change and technological advances that have proved to have a steeper innovation curve than ever.

The session on "Technological Innovation for Sustainable Development" engages with the impact of innovative technologies, namely AI, IoT, IoB and Blockchain on Sustainable Development. The three pillars of exploration "Environment – Society - Economy" allow for multi- and cross-disciplinary research papers in relation to environmental protection and climate change, renewable energy and waste management, healthcare optimisation, financial/banking services accessibility, education for the future of work, increased legitimacy of political decision-making, ecosystem-conscious agriculture, protection of heritage sites and indigenous cultural traditions, transparency in the development sector, the promulgation of human rights along the global supply chains, socially responsible business productivity and profitability maximization, etc. The session would reflect four of the "Innovative technologies-SDGs" dynamics. First, innovative technologies as enablers in achieving the SDGs and their potential positive impact. Second, innovative technologies as inhibitors of the realisation of certain sustainable development targets and the potential ways in which the negative impact can be understood and curtailed. Third, innovative technologies as an industry in and of itself need to be measured against the SDGs. Four, the need for industry-tailored and regionally-specific regulations for innovative technologies that would serve to further boost the 2030 Agenda in the "new normal" of the post Covid19 world.

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