UN Innovation Update 2023

THE UN INNOVATION UPDATE INCLUDES HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE INNOVATION ACTIVITIES OF UN ENTITIES. ALL UN ENTITIES ARE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE

The Secretary–General published his latest Policy Brief on Our Common Agenda: UN 2.0

UN 2.0 is a vision of a UN system that champions a forward-thinking organisational culture for stronger results, better support to Member States, and faster progress towards the SDGs with expertise in data, digital, innovation, behavioural science and foresight. The brief is accompanied by a website showcasing over 500 UN 2.0 initiatives across 130 countries.

Innovation for the SDGs

Health

▶ In Honduras, UNFPA introduced BabyChecker, an AI-enhanced ultrasound tool, to support maternal care in remote regions. The tool will be trialled in major hospitals and rural clinics to enhance healthcare accessibility and provide early interventions for at-risk pregnancies.

▶ WHO has joined forces with healthcare professionals active on social media to build an online network named Fides, which aims to counteract the spread of health-related misinformation on social media and support the public to make more informed, evidence-based decisions about their health. The Fides community has over 100 members, and a collective reach of 50+ million people across social media platforms.

▶ UNFPA integrated the new AI-powered smart-bot "NeMa" into the Safe Delivery App. Designed with and for midwives, "NeMa" strengthens their knowledge with more tailored user experience.

Photo – GIGA

▶ The health start-up Ultrasound AI, which utilises AI to reduce the incidence of pre-term pregnancies, won the ITU AI for Good Innovation Factory.

▶ WHO has launched a channel on WhatsApp, which shares tips to maintain and improve your health, and stay up to date with the latest health news. Subscribe to the channel here on WhatsApp.

Education

▶ UNESCO published new Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research. The guidance calls on governments to implement appropriate regulations and teacher training, to ensure a human-centred approach to using Generative AI in education. It calls for an age limit of 13 for the use of AI tools in the classroom and calls for teacher training on this subject.

▶ Through machine learning and satellite imagery, Giga has expanded its mapping capabilities, with more than 29,000 schools mapped in countries like Sudan, Mongolia and Colombia. To date, Giga's efforts have put more than two million schools in 138 countries on the map. Giga has also expanded its open-source school mapping platform to include data from eight new countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Giga's work enabled the creation of its first national school ID system.

▶ Giga is a joint initiative by UNICEF and ITU to connect every school in the world to the Internet. Giga helped unlock more than USD 1.7 billion to fund school connectivity in eight countries. Coming from sources such as grants, loans and proceeds from government auctions, these funds are critical to connect schools in the remote areas. Giga was recognised as an honoree in FastCompany's 2023 Innovation by Design Awards (Impact category) and as

Photo – UNCTAD

a game-changing digital solution for SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure.

Food, Water and Agriculture

UNCTAD's CropWatch innovation cooperation programme uses earth observation satellite systems and other climate-related data on drought, pests, and diseases to monitor crop conditions and improve farm management. The programme recently organised capacity strengthening activities for participants from 11 developing countries in Africa and the Middle East.

Photo – UNCTAD

Climate & Environment

▶ UNU's APV-MaGa project employs agrophotovoltaics as a sustainable energy system that provides food, water and electricity to local communities in The Gambia and Mali. UNU also supports innovators through green projects – Greenovations, FIUWA 4.0 and ImpulSouth.

▶ ECLAC launched the Satellite Monitoring System for Greenhouse Gases, which shows trends in the flows and concentrations of CO2 and other greenhouse gases of anthropogenic origin in Latin America and the Caribbean at the regional, sub-regional, national and urban levels. This real-time information platform facilitates coherence and ambition between policies and results, contributes to the fight against climate change and air pollution, and enables comparative analyses of the impacts of climate policies and actions to mitigate gas and particle pollution at different territorial levels. Funded by EUROCLIMA, the Satellite Monitoring System is the result of a partnership between ECLAC and the Center for Mathematical Modeling of the University of Chile (CMM), one of the correspondents of the Low Earth Orbit (LEOs) Observation program of the Copernicus System of the European Union.

▶ A winner of the IMF's Climate Innovation Challenge, the Machine Learning Toolbox for Climate Policy Analysis identifies and analyses dramatic emission pattern shifts, offering sector-specific mitigation insights and a one-stop shop for past climate policies. The tool was showcased alongside PortWatch at the 2023 World Bank Group/IMF Annual Meetings.
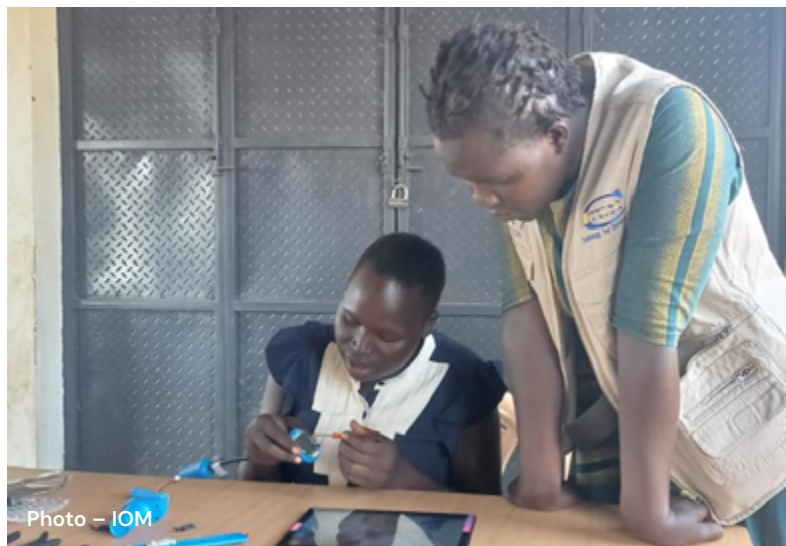
▶ OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data developed a Climate Guidance Series to help humanitarian colleagues access, analyse and interpret different types of climate data for their forecasting and planning. The first two guides focus on observational rainfall data and precipitation forecasts.

Employment, Entrepreneurship & Economic Activity

▶ The IMF, in partnership with the government, UNDP and EY, is implementing a blockchain system in Guinea-Bissau to enhance wage bill transparency. This initiative, an IMF Anti-Corruption Challenge winner, could also be further leveraged for cash and debt transparency management, setting a benchmark for other countries.

▶ ITC's Innovation Lab supported three internal projects for three-months through its first Agile Incubator. Leveraging the lean-startup methodology, the teams focused on:

1. Integrating a new component into a WhatsApp bot to enable smallholder farmers in The Gambia to access recommendations on potential sources of financing.

2. Developing a medium fidelity prototype for a platform to visualise coffee sustainability initiatives linked to the Coffee Network, a public-private alliance of coffee sector actors from across the globe.

Photo – IOM

3. Exploring a new data infrastructure for one of the trade intelligence tools used by thousands of ITC beneficiaries.

▶ With support from Innovation Norway, IOM addressed the challenge of disposing of solar products in displacement settings by piloting a circular economy solution. This initiative stands out due to its collaborative approach, engaging private sector partners, local governance structures and communities to ensure environmental, social and financial sustainability. By repairing and repurposing disused solar lanterns and lithium-ion batteries, it also creates green job opportunities for refugees and the community.

▶ UNEP and the UN Climate Technology Centre & Network published a new knowledge brief on

Photo – UN Women

نحلم بلبنان

DREAMING OF LEBANON

Photo – UN DPPA

Harnessing Technology in the Circular Economy. The brief explores a broad range of innovative solutions, which are both low-tech – such as composting and using local building materials – and high-tech, such as anaerobic digestion, material science, and digital material marketplaces.

► Advancing digital financial inclusion and expanding digital financial solutions is a priority for the Government of Viet Nam. UPU partnered with Viet Nam Post to transform and digitise the Government's Social Security Services through a mobile application gateway. The UPU project enabled the technical design and interface between the post and the Government; strengthened local financial literacy and capacity building initiatives (incl. motorcycle road shows, training, and nationwide customer engagements).

► UN Women launched the non-fungible token project NFT for Women in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska, which aims to empower women in art and digital technologies.

► ITC's Innovation Lab is fostering linkages across ITC beneficiaries, using a digital platform where technical talent trained by ITC and partners can obtain their first job opportunity and access mentoring.

Vulnerable Populations

► In collaboration with UNICC, UNRWA launched eUNRWA, a new "one-stop-shop" mobile application providing digital services to Palestine refugees in a more efficient and convenient manner. Available services include the possibility to view and update registration information, submit and track the status of applications, and download registration cards. Available in the app store, eUNRWA is a cornerstone of UNRWA's digital transformation.

► In Ukraine, UNFPA has initiated a blockchain-backed cash aid initiative for survivors of gender-based violence. This program mobilises digital currency to ensure rapid, secure, and transparent financial assistance.

► UN Women published a new practical brief on Innovation and Prevention of Violence against Women. A focus on innovation will give practitioners the tools to stretch beyond the comfort of existing good practices, the space to experiment with novel ideas and - through continuously investing in evidence generation - develop evidence-based strategies at a broader scale.

▶ UNITAC's Just Transitions in Vulnerable Places project supports digital urban data generation and analysis. In Namibia, the project supports data platforms for planning and building climate resilient urban infrastructure in informal settlements. In Ukraine, it helps with data collection, visualisation and platforms for urban recovery plans.

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

▶ UNICRI and INTERPOL launched a Toolkit for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement, which serves as a blueprint for law enforcement agencies to leverage AI in a responsible manner.

▶ UNICRI launched a new initiative to explore the use of augmented and virtual reality to advance prison rehabilitation.

▶ In July 2023, the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon and UN DPPA launched the VR documentary Dreaming of Lebanon. Through 360-degree technology, viewers immerse themselves in the lives of three young Lebanese people, engaging in interactive interviews. The experience marries behavioural methodologies to enhance engagement, offering a deep dive into their hopes for the future.

▶ The Peace and Security Data Hub has onboarded seven new datasets on gender, performance, incidents in Cyprus. As the Hubs are graduating to enterprise-ready systems, the team is working with the Open Knowledge Foundation to upgrade the capabilities to a sustainable self-service data exchange.

▶ At the Digital Transformation of Peacekeeping Symposium, colleagues from OICT, DPO and DOS discussed technology solutions for telemedicine, smart camps and the protection of peacekeepers together with national experts and academics.

Photo – UN Peacekeeping

▶ Those most affected by the violence in North East Nigeria (incl. out-of-school children) lack access to reliable information that counters terrorist groups' propaganda. UNODC empowers selected STRIVE Juvenile Youth Peace Champions with training on the use of social media, art, and animation for peacebuilding, enabling them to spread messages of hope and resilience.

Emergency Response

▶ WFP uses AI innovation to speed up emergency response: SKAI, an open-sourced AI tool co-developed with Google Research, allows responders to assess damage 13 times faster

Photo – WFP

after disasters such as the 2023 earthquake in Türkiye and Syria.

▶ PortWatch, an IMF Climate Innovation Challenge winner, is a user-friendly portal for monitoring and simulating trade disruptions from climate extremes and other disasters. Subscribe HERE to receive disaster-related alerts and an invitation to the launch on November 15.

▶ OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data has developed a roadmap for the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) platform that creates new opportunities for faster access to reliable data and insight about humanitarian crises. The road-map prioritises five critical opportunity areas sequenced over two years: data as a service, geodata services, onboarding, notifications and workflow management.

▶ The IMF has developed the DIGNAD toolkit to help economists and policymakers evaluate the macroeconomic impact of natural disasters and make informed policy decisions.

▶ The World Bank is leveraging satellites and drones and creating Public Goods to support data collection. In Nigeria, the Bank has sup-ported the Government in integrating a rapid drought response mechanism into the national adaptive safety net. A satellite index monitors local drought conditions – when the index falls below a threshold at the end of the agricultural season, emergency cash transfers are disbursed to affected rural households via the safety net. In Nepal, the Bank expanded the use of drones and satellite imagery to help the country stay ahead of climate threats and disasters.

Enabling Innovation

Deep Dive on AI and Generative AI

In addition to the thematic-focused AI solutions featured above, here are other cross-cutting initiatives related to AI and Generative AI from across the UN.

▶ A new UNU institute being established in Bologna, Italy, aims to foster collaboration, inno-vation and knowledge creation in the field of Big Data and AI. Supported by the Italian gov-ernment and the Emilia-Romagna Region, the institute will engage global South researchers and policymakers to mobilise the potential of big data and AI for the SDGs.

Photo – UNIN

▶ UNIN, the UN Data Strategy Community and UN – DPPA, launched a new Practice Group on Generative AI to enable joint learning and exchange on this new technology, which learns how to create new content from past data. Join the group here!

▶ UN – OICT released a Primer on Generative AI to strengthen understanding of the AI landscape

and complement the guidance issued by OICT in July 2023.

▶ The ITCILO launched a new AI gameboard to improve AI Literacy for learning and training professionals across the system. An ideal conversational tool to move beyond polarising discussions and taking the conversation to a deeper level.

▶ The growth of AI has shown the technology's potential to create new ways of working, but also to exacerbate existing inequalities and stereotypes. At UN Women's recent HeForShe Summit, leaders from the public and private sectors discussed the potential risks of AI and the need to develop the technology safely. They also discussed factors that are shaping dominant narratives around masculinity and offered concrete positive alternatives for men to show allyship and leadership in the pursuit for gender equality under the call to be respectfully disruptive.

▶ The High-Level Committees on Management and Programme held a special joint session on The Use and Governance of Artificial Intelligence and Related Frontier Technologies discussing among others, opportunities, challenges and capacities for safely and responsibly adopting AI in the UN, Ethical and Legal Frameworks, workforce and partnership implications of AI.

Photo – UNITAC

The Digital and Technology Network, co-chaired by UN - OICT and the IMF, also discussed Generative AI, Cybersecurity and Digital Transformation at its recent meeting.

▶ UN-Habitat's Global Assessment of Responsible AI in Cities, which collected 118 responses and 70 use cases, outlines opportunities and constraints for local governments to develop, implement, use and govern responsible AI technologies in cities.

Photo – ITCIL

▶ UNICRI's AI for Safer Children initiative launched a capacity-building programme, rolling out a training curriculum for investigators on the integration of AI tools into their workflow, with initial pilot training in UAE, Singapore, UK, Ukraine and Norway.

▶ UNITAC's Building and Establishment Automated Mapper (BEAM) is a tool for city planners using machine learning to accelerate the detection and spatial recognition of informal settlements and building structures on aerial imagery. BEAM automates and accelerates mapping processes. Using the tool, a city can map all informal settlements in eThekwini within 72 hours (1 image in 70–90 seconds) as opposed to a month. This tool is now applied in 8 cities in Central America.

▶ UNU Macau launched a webinar series on Generative AI to cultivate understanding and foster informed and responsible engagement
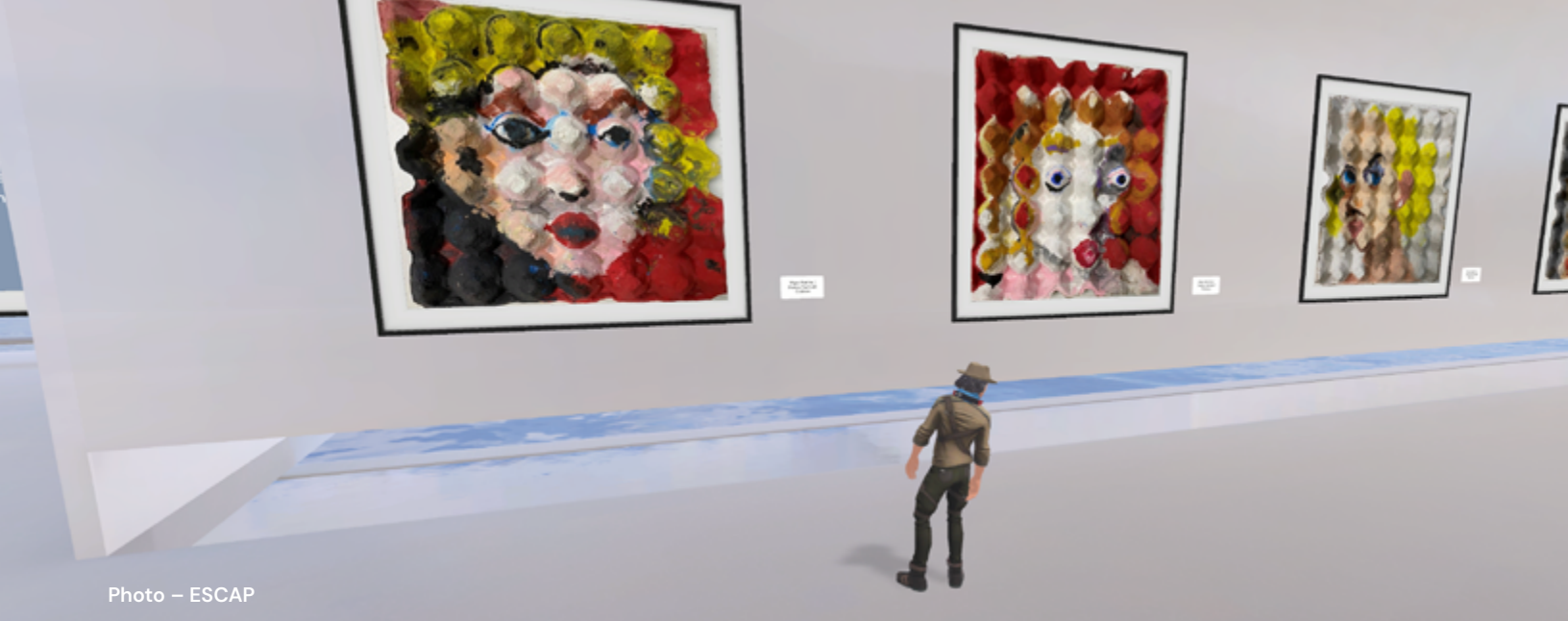
UN INNOVATION NETWORK

Photo – ESCAP

with this technology. Discussions present diverse perspectives on how G-AI will impact health, education, environment, humanitarian work and more. To date, conversations have focused on The Unsustainability of ChatGPT and why generative methods are not responsible AI yet.

▶ ITC's Innovation Lab initiated a series of sessions named "Let's talk about AI", to increase familiarity around AI amongst ITC colleagues.

▶ Are you curious about how AI can help you design more effective learning experiences? UNITAR shares some of its experiences and useful examples of using AI to enhance learning design in this article AI and Learning Design: A Powerful Combination for Advancing the SDGS.

New "Spaces" for Innovation

▶ In case you missed it, UNIN recently launched a new Innovation Culture Group under its umbrella! Everybody strives to create a culture of innovation. But what does it actually look like and how could you help to create it in your team or organisation? And how can we create spaces to practice such a culture together? Sign up here to explore with UN innovators across the system

and join the conversation in Teams (UN colleagues only).

▶ Following a decade of innovation at Pulse Lab Jakarta, the team launched and transitioned to UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific to create wider impact across the region. The team also published its knowledge hub and repository which houses ten years of the team's innovation projects.

▶ UNDP's Accelerator Labs are sharing their new direction: the Labs are evolving the Network into an open, globally distributed R&D capability for the SDGs. Through the SDG Innovation Commons, leads from exploration, ethnography and experimentation will be shared globally.

▶ Are you looking to organise your next strategic retreat, design thinking lab or foresight workshop? The ITCILO opened up its Innovation Lab and invites different organisations to test it out as a new way to learn, share ideas and collaborate in the UN System. Contact ITCILO for more information.

▶ Over the past three years, IFAD and UNSSC have jointly embraced the UN Innovation Toolkit in mainstreaming innovation through the Mentoring Partnerships Initiative. In their latest publication, they explore how IFAD harnessed

UN INNOVATION NETWORK

ACCELERATING THE SDGS THROUGH
Digital Public Infrastructure

A COMPENDIUM OF THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Photo – UNDP

the toolkit to co-create the IFAD Innovation Labs.

▶ ESCAP developed the DPI Compendium and the Sustainability & Innovation Exhibition Centre as a hub for UN Entities and partners to showcase innovative initiatives, host project launches, live demonstrations and thematic events on sustainability and innovation in Asia and the Pacific. The space was co-created with young artists and reflects how they envisage a space that inspires cooperation and action on climate change and innovation. In collaboration with "Scrap Lab", a local university research lab, the walls were designed using recycled industrial waste and the floor using experimental tiles made of eggshells, used commercially for the first time, to show how the earth is fragile as we are literally stepping on eggshells! The space features an augmented reality mural that paints a picture of a sustainable future and a virtual gallery displaying the work of participating artists. Partners wishing to use the space can contact ESCAP.

▶ ITU selected 17 global centres for its Network of Acceleration Centers, part of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development. These centres will employ an ecosystem-driven approach to promote digital

transformation, innovation, entrepreneurship, and digitalising economies. Their goal is to help countries establish vital local support systems to address the digital innovation gap.

▶ Established by UN-Habitat and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in July 2023, the Global Alliance of Mayors on Digital Cooperation advances digital cooperation and capacity building between mayors worldwide to promote a people-centred smart city approach.

New Solutions & Approaches

▶ In collaboration with the Government of India, UNDP launched the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Playbook and DPI Compendium to support countries on their digital transformation journey. The Playbook provides practical resources on how countries can build inclusive and rights-based digital public infrastructure; the Compendium compiles a snapshot of existing approaches to digital public infrastructure.

▶ UNIDO simplified and automated the creation of travel requests for all personnel using Robotic Process Automation. The new solution streamlines the processing of travel advances and

Photo – World Bank

settlements, resulting in substantial time savings and improved user experience.

▶ UN – DPPA and the Qatar Computing Research Institute unveil enhanced features for Diplomatic Pulse. This search engine, tracking statements from all 193 UN Member States since 2020, has garnered 2,000+ global users. New functionalities offer deeper insights into emerging diplomatic trends.

▶ In UNOG, transcripts of meeting recordings are now automatically generated under the Fully Automated Speech–to–Text project (FAST), in partnership with WIPO. The transcripts are automatically displayed on the redesigned Digital Recordings Portal for all official public meetings, in English, French and Spanish (Arabic, Chinese and Russian coming up)

▶ UN – DGACM continued to expand its Visualisations and Machine Readability page with new XML documents collections and interactive dashboards that display metadata from General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council resolutions.

▶ The World Bank's Geo–Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS), highlighted among the best innovations in 2020, has become a Public Good in International Development, supporting digital data collection in over 100 countries and being adopted across the humanitarian–development nexus.

▶ Complementing the UN Global Crisis Response Group latest report on A World of Debt: A Growing Burden to Global Prosperity, UNCTAD launched an interactive A World of Debt Dashboard, which allows readers to explore debt trends and patterns, obtain country-specific insight on the public debt landscape and grasp the complex relationship between debt and development.
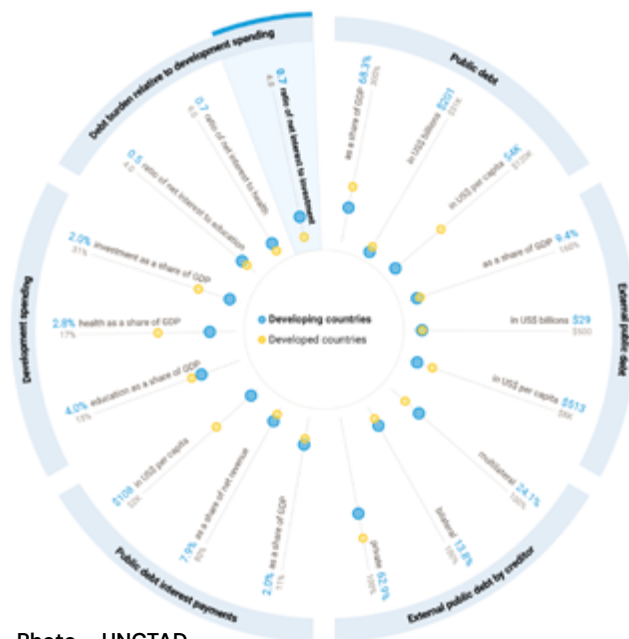
Photo – UNCTAD

▶ IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) has started to apply methods that draw from social neuroscience investigations to increase the impact of its work. By applying insights from brain science, IOE is striving to communicate findings in a more effective manner, including by placing greater emphasis on dialogue among evaluators and evaluands throughout the lifecycle of the evaluative process. This approach is increasing receptiveness to evaluation findings and uptake of recommendations, thus sparking positive change.

▶ The WFP Innovation Accelerator and Global Blockchain Business Council launched the "Food for Crisis" web3 initiative to help raise funds and support communities affected by food crises using blockchain technology.

▶ The innovative Digital Knowledge Centre created by UN – DESA provides participating countries on–demand access to national policies, thematic topic resources, and a collective knowledge base for community discussion and Q&A. This platform draws from the biannual Development Cooperation Forum Survey, which monitors, reviews and documents the

Photo – Global Pulse

SCALING THE SUMMIT
A primer on how to scale innovations for impact for the UN System

development cooperation effectiveness, and thereby supports Member States' work and informs their policies.

▶ In June 2023, 194 countries adopted a resolution for UN-Habitat to start a consultative process to develop International Guidelines on People-Centred Smart Cities to guide sustainable, inclusive and human rights-based national and local smart city regulations.

Publications

▶ In support of the UN 2.0 vision, UN Global Pulse published Scaling the Summit: A Primer on how to Scale Innovations for Impact for the UN System. The publication explores five important questions that can help determine if an innovation has the necessary support to scale.

▶ The WFP Innovation Accelerator reached 37 million people in 88 countries and territories in 2022 through innovations tackling Zero Hunger and other SDGs. Discover more facts about WFP's innovation unit as it celebrates its 8th anniversary.

▶ The UN's Complex Risk Analytics Fund Craf'd published its first annual report showcasing how it supports innovators to turn data into impactful actions. Funding has, among others, been provided to UNHCR, UNDP and UN - DPPA.

▶ UNDP's Accelerator Labs launched their joint research called Making the Invisible Visible: Informal Innovation in South Africa, which uncovers the untapped potential of many informal innovators invisible to most organisations but whose knowledge could unlock progress toward the SDGs.

▶ The #WomenInTech social media campaign celebrates female role models by highlighting the impact of women working in technology at UN OICT and across the United Nations.

▶ The latest bulletin of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction shines a spotlight on innovation, highlighting examples from across the UN system of UN 2.0. in action and resources for individuals and teams to initiate their innovation journey. Among others, UNSSC contributed a range of free-of-cost resources for individuals to initiate their innovation journey to the bulletin.

▶ UN Global Pulse launched a new blog that features stories from its innovation offices and partners. Through the blog, you can explore

Photo – UNIDO Innovation Lab

valuable insights, such as how the team is helping Uganda to develop a national data strategy or how participatory foresight is empowering Indigenous communities and youth to contribute to Colombia's future planning efforts.

▶ The Digital Human Rights Governance project published a technical report highlighting the technical support provided to the cities of Brussels, Dublin, Tirana and Sofia, with building programmes in transparency, accountability and emerging technologies, for local governments, community and youth; a Digital Inclusion Policy and a digital human rights assessment tool.

▶ DESA collaborated with academia on a study using complex systems science and AI to reveal hidden similarities among Member States. They analysed e-government development factors, based on 305 World Development Indicators and 214 SDG indicators.

▶ The SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda shaped by ITU and UNDP, in collaboration with the International Development Bank and the Boston Consulting Group, highlights the wide-ranging importance of digital technologies and data. With a range of real-world examples, it shows how game-changing digital solutions can accelerate progress in climate action, education, hunger, poverty and the role of data and digital technologies in achieving at least 70% of the 169 SDG targets.
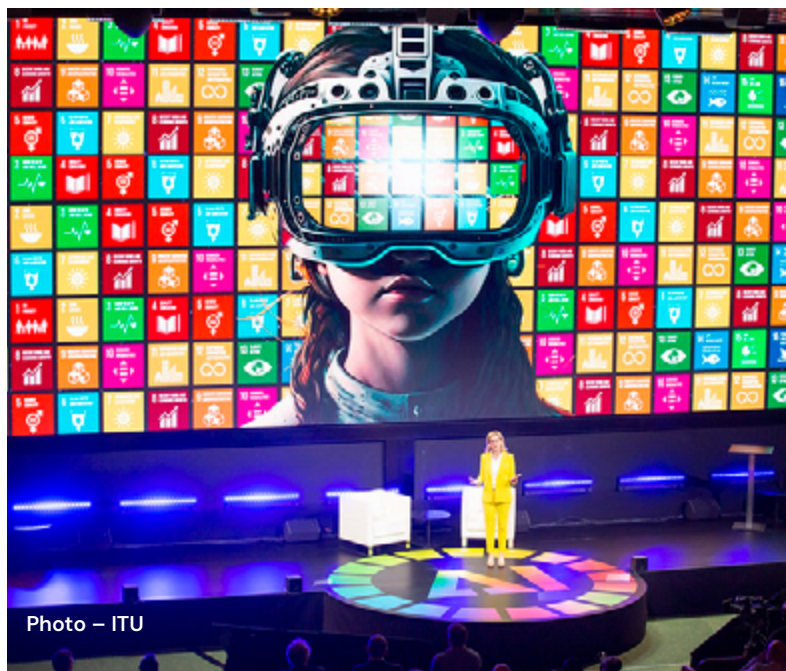
Learning & Training

▶ UNSSC launched the 2023 UNFPA Innovation Springboard Programme with 40 Innovation Champions from across the globe in September 2023. The Innovation Springboard Programme aims to equip UN Personnel with skills to establish replicable, sustainable innovation practices that become simply "the way we do things". Discover your own inner innovator and register for the 2023 Interagency Innovation Springboard Programme – open to UN personnel from across the System.

▶ Integrating systems thinking into learning design offers an innovative approach to tackling complex problems. UNITAR's work around systems thinking was featured in a White Paper published by Trinity College Dublin and the World Economic Forum on Innovative Learning Solutions to Navigate Complexity: Adapting Systems Thinking to Future Classrooms. By nurturing a future generation of tolerant, understanding and discerning thinkers, systems thinking can drive positive change and address the challenges of a complex world.

▶ UNWTO's Tourism Online Academy features over 25 courses including on AI, innovation and sustainable development for tourism. Courses are available in English, Spanish and Arabic and more than 22,700 students have taken them so far.

Photo – ITU

▶ The UNIDO Innovation Lab, in collaboration with RITA (Vienna University of Economics and Business), hosted the first UNIDO Innovation Incubator cohort. The IGNITE Incubator Programme supported teams in applying Design Thinking methods to develop hunches into validated solutions. The programme brought together diverse teams from across UNIDO to foster innovation and collaboration in developing

tangible solutions for critical challenges and opportunities in digitalisation, energy efficiency, green hydrogen and innovative financing.

▶ The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) launched a Senior Management Seminar Series on the strategic use of data. The "Data-versity" series provides a space for senior colleagues to discuss their strategic use of data and evidence in support of peace and security. For the working level, DPO commenced a Tech-Talk series that brings together external speakers and UN discussants on data, AI and new technologies to strengthen digital competency across all levels of the organisation, while providing tangible tools, guidelines, and training opportunities on a monthly basis.

▶ UN - DGACM launched a self-paced Introduction to Data Literacy course that covers fundamental aspects of data literacy, explores the best ways to input and clean data to make it usable, and provides tips to put data in context through storytelling techniques.The course is also available in French and can be accessed using a @un.org email address.

▶ The ITCILO has introduced a new learning concept: Masterclass, which brings learning to life through high-quality, bite-sized video lessons led by experts. This more flexible and immersive format engages learners beyond traditional self-guided e-learning modules and allows them to access expert knowledge whenever they want, thereby fitting the needs of workers and learners.

▶ UNWTO and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts developed a new 3-year BSc Science in International Sustainable Tourism programme. Leveraging innovative teaching methodologies and taught in Madrid, Lucerne and online, the programme includes modules, amongst others, on innovation for tourism, such as Tourism Tech, Entrepreneurship in Tourism,

Photo – IFAD

New Business Modules, and UN Diplomacy and Tourism.

▶ UN - DESA's pioneering capacity development enhances innovation, mindset change, and strategic foresight in developing countries' public institutions for SDGs. Strategy Guidance Notes operationalise 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development, alongside the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs.

Meetings & Events

▶ IFAD hosted the second edition of its Innovation Day in June 2023 to discuss how to make innovation and impact investments work for rural people and vulnerable groups. A Pitch Event and Marketplace of Ideas featured IFAD-funded innovations delivering impact. See the main takeaways here.

▶ This year's AI for Good Global Summit brought AI innovators and the development community together for talks, demos and the first-ever humanoid robots press conference.

▶ The UNIDO Innovation Lab, in collaboration with the UN Global Pulse and the Permanent Mission of Germany in New York, organised an event during the 8th Forum on Science,.

Technology and Innovation. Co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Austria and Ethiopia, the event brought together panellists from UN Entities, Member States, industry leaders and knowledge institutions to discuss the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in harnessing cutting-edge innovation strategies towards a UN 2.0.

▶ At a side event of the 78th UN General Assembly, UNICEF's Office of Innovation, along

Photo – UNITAC

with co-hosts the Governments of Rwanda and Sweden, Ericsson, and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, launched a call for collective and increased investment in supporting local social innovation ecosystems in emerging markets, with a goal of unlocking capital flows and opportunities toward enabling young tech and social innovators to design and build a free, open, and inclusive digital future.

▶ UNDP and ITU hosted SDG Digital, a high-profile event ahead of the SDG Summit 2023.

▶ Under the umbrella of the World Food Forum, FAO will host the 2nd edition of its Science and Innovation Forum focusing on "Science and Innovation for Climate Action" from 16–20 October 2023 in a hybrid format. Addressing

the interlinked global crises of climate change, food insecurity and biodiversity loss requires engagement in bold action to transform agrifood systems to become more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable. The forum will allow a debate on how science, technology and innovation are essential to transform agrifood systems and boost climate action. Check the program and register to attend.

▶ UNITAC's Digital Participation System (DIPAS) for citizens was piloted in Gaborone, Botswana during workshops with public servants, and allowed residents to provide inputs into a corridor river master plan using both a digital and analogue feedback tool to generate geo-referenced data.

▶ To strengthen capacities on cybersecurity and open source strategy at the UN, Cloudflare, the Linux Foundation, and the WHO OSPO presented at the Mind the Open Source Gap series organised by UN - OICT and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

Photo –UNFPA

Challenges & Calls

Open Challenges & Calls

▶ As part of the Moonshots for Development Initiative, IFAD, WFP Innovation Accelerator, the ADB and other partners launched the first joint innovation challenge of the multilateral development banks on AI for Climate Resilience in Rural Areas. The challenge aims to identify and finance scalable AI solutions to build climate resilience in rural areas, empower vulnerable communities to face increasing challenges to their livelihoods and promote sustainable development and effective climate adaptation. Apply here by 22 October 2023.

▶ In 2023, UNFPA launched two new global innovation challenges. Together with Organon and MIT Solve, UNFPA launched 4HerPower Challenge to support innovative solutions developed by and for youth, enhancing sexual and reproductive health and rights – apply by 27 October 2023. Working together with organisations led by youth with disabilities, UNFPA also supports innovators with disabilities addressing SRHR challenges faced by the community.

▶ In partnership with the European Commission, UN – OICT launched open source software challenges for Gender Equality, Sustainable Smart Cities, and Quality Education to advance and improve successful tools such as Moodle and OpenStreetMaps.

▶ Led by ITU in partnership with 40 UN Entities, the Innovation Factory pitching platform helps start-ups scale SDG-driven solutions. The upcoming challenge focuses on Robotics for Good - apply by 31 October 2023.

▶ The UNICEF Venture Fund is looking to invest in and mentor startups building open source frontier technology solutions that can strengthen systems for health, nutrition, and mental health and psychosocial support, offering up to USD100,000 in equity–free funding. The application period closes 20 October 2023.

Photo – UNICEF

▶ IOM is pleased to announce the launch of the 2023 IOM Innovation Awards. These awards aim to recognise innovative initiatives, processes and approaches developed by IOM offices worldwide, contributing to positive impacts on migrants and communities. The awards ceremony will take place during the IOM Global Chiefs of Missions Meeting in October 2023.

Outcomes from Past Challenges

▶ The UPU hosted the 1st Postal Data Hackathon. For the first time, UPU made available postal and addressing data (excl. personal information) from almost 30 postal operators and relevant UN partners for collaborative analysis and the development of data–driven solutions for key strategic challenges in the industry. The hackathon brought together 60+ participants from 20+ countries and showed that data–driven

Photo – UPU

innovation can accelerate solutions leading to operational efficiency, environmental impact and enhanced security, key to advancing the SDGs.

▶ WFP's inaugural <u>Digital Green Innovation Acceleration Programme (DGIx)</u> will provide funding and acceleration support to ventures with digital solutions for climate action in Africa.

▶ UNWTO's <u>Women in Tech Startup Competition</u> has attracted over 140 applications by women-led startups from 11 countries from the Middle East. Winners will be released on <u>World Tourism Day 2023</u> in Riyad, Saudi Arabia.

▶ 15 winners from 13 countries from UNWTO's <u>Awake Tourism Challenge</u> joined the UNWTO Innovation Network which now features 300 top innovators working for a more sustainable tourism.

▶ Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the UN Public Service Awards programme celebrated a revitalised programme launch in June 2023. For details, visit <u>2024 UNPSA</u>.