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Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the UN
Mission Permanente du Royaume du Maroc auprès de l'ONU

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Concept Note

Meeting of the Group of Friends on Climate Change

"Artificial Intelligence for the Planet: Solutions for Climate and People"

On the margins of the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum

ECOSOC Chamber, New York

May 2nd 2023 – 2:00 PM

Interpreting: French / English will be provided

Format

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Permanent Mission of France, co-chairs of the Group of Friends for Climate Action, have the pleasure to host **a side event to the Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum on the role of Artificial Intelligence to address the Climate Crisis, in collaboration with the AI for the Planet Alliance**.

This event will take place at the ECOSOC Chamber and will bring together the member states of the group, academia and the private sector with the participations of:

- H.E. Ms. Amina Mohamed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (tbc)
- H.E. Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO (tbc)
- H.E. Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
- H.E. Mr. Achim Steiner, the Fifth and former UN Environment Executive, Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations (tbc)
- H.E. M. Selwin Hart, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition. Executive Office of the Secretary-General
- H.E. Mr. Amandeep Gill, Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology
- Ms. Ligia Noronha, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of New York Office, UNEP
- Profesor Mr. Yoshua Bengio, Director Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms / University Montreal (tbc)

Context

Climate change has a critical impact on many communities and organizations across the world, primarily in Global South countries, and its consequences will only intensify. Efforts must be led jointly to mitigate emissions and reach a net zero greenhouse gas emission state by 2030, while developing adaptation and resilience programs to face the existing negative impact of climate change. Many of these efforts will require innovations and technologies that are not readily available today, which emphasizes the need to further develop answers to combat climate change.

In collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the AI for Good Foundation, and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Startup Inside launched the AI for the Planet initiative in February 2021.

The AI for the Planet initiative fosters international collaboration through global conferences and public-private dialogues bringing together researchers, scientists, policy makers, entrepreneurs, start-ups, and private sector players. These collaborations allow to share concrete use cases, identify best practices, celebrate successes, and inspire further action in the field of AI for the climate, advancing artificial intelligence and technologies to positively impact environmental sustainability and fight climate change.

A first digital conference organized in February 2021 with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) gathered 2,250 participants from 110 countries and served as a key starting point to the initiative (see information about the event: AI for the Planet: Highlighting AI innovations to accelerate impact).

More information on the initiative can be found on the AI for the Planet website: https://www.aifortheplanet.org/en/

Rational

According to a recent survey conducted by Boston Consulting Group, 87% of global public- and private-sector leaders who are responsible for climate or AI topics believe that AI is a useful tool in the fight against climate change.
A report published in June 2022 by AI for the Planet and the Boston Consulting Group once more highlighted the power of advanced analytics and artificial intelligence. These technologies have the potential to support climate change mitigating actions, as well as adaptation and resilience projects, but can also generate enablers that make those actions more impactful and better understood.
For example, AI can help analyze complex datasets on emissions and climate impact, support decision making, optimize processes, strengthen collaborative ecosystems, and encourage climate-positive behaviors.

A copy of the full report can be accessed at this link: How AI Can Be a Powerful Tool in the Fight Against Climate Change (July 2022)

In June 2022, AI for the Planet launched a Call for Solutions to gather innovative ideas leveraging advanced analytics and AI to tackle challenges related to climate change. The Call for Solutions received 60+ submissions from startups, organizations and researchers, offering potential solutions related to climate risk, monitoring, baselining, energy optimization, waste emission reduction, biology, and policy.

A particular attention was given to initiatives that demonstrate a clear applicability in the Global South, acknowledging that Global South countries will be the most affected by heightened extreme events and weakened ecosystems.

Objectives of the conference

The event will:

1. Bring together climate AI leaders and innovators from around the world to discuss and advance **AI solutions that can help fight climate change.**
2. Spark discussions and information sharing to **bridge the gap between climate AI communities and beneficiaries of climate AI solutions, especially in the Global South.**
3. Allow practitioners and experts from academia, the public sector, and the private sector to **identify solutions and areas of collaboration and raise awareness on the breadth of climate topics that can be supported by technologies.**
4. Put on stage the most **promising candidates from the 2022 Call for Solutions organized by AI for the Planet and showcase their project during the event.**

Program

2:00 – 4:00 PM: Group of Friends session led by Permanent Representatives of France and Morocco to the United Nations

- **Opening remarks: Co-chairs of the GoF (10 min)**
- **Panel discussion – key speakers (30-45 min)**
- **Presentation of the winners of the call for solutions and awards ceremony (15 min)**
- **Round table of the GoF Member States (45 min)**

4:00 – 4:50 PM: **Panel 1**: AI in Action: Leading examples that use AI to address climate change

5:00 – 5.50 PM: **Panel 2**: Unlocking the AI Potential: Key enablers to achieve the highest impact with AI

5:50 – 6:00 PM: Closing remarks

6:00 – 7:30 PM: Cocktail reception at the United Nations (PR level)

Contacts GoF:

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Panel 1: AI in Action:
Leading examples that use AI to address climate change

Context

AI technologies have the potential to support climate change mitigating actions, as well as adaptation and resilience projects, but can also generate enablers that make those actions more impactful and better understood.
For example, AI can help analyze complex datasets on emissions and climate impact, support decision making, optimize processes, strengthen collaborative ecosystems, and encourage climate-positive behaviors.

Objectives

In this panel, AI and climate leaders from the public sector, the private sector, and academia will discuss their vision on the impact of AI to help address climate change.
The speakers will share specific case examples highlighting how the different actors of the ecosystem are taking action, leveraging AI and advanced analytics to achieve tangible impact on climate change.
Examples will include the use of AI to support mitigation actions, adaptation & resilience initiatives, baselining, smart grid deployment and optimization.

Outcomes

In addition to framing the vision for AI as an enabler to address climate change, the panel will serve as evidence that several AI applications are already in place with real, tangible impact on climate change. Through concreate examples, the discussion will also suggest that the current use of AI for climate action is not deployed to its full potential and would benefit from more accessible, tangibly beneficial, and actionable solutions. These elements will be a key segue into the second panel where speakers will discuss how we can unlock the full potential of AI.

Speakers

Moderator: Charmian Caines, Managing Director and Senior Partner, BCG

Speakers:

- Manuela Veloso, Head of AI Research, JP Morgan Chase, Professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University
- Salem Avan, Director of Policy, Strategy and Governance, OICT
- Tech company representative (tbc)
- Academia representative (tbc)

Interpreting: French / English will be provided

Panel 2: Unlocking the AI Potential:
Key enablers to achieve the highest impact with AI

Context

While AI is a powerful tool to help address climate change, AI is not deployed to its full potential to achieve the highest impact and would benefit from more accessible, tangibly beneficial, and actionable solutions.

Objectives

In this panel, AI and climate leaders from the public sector, the private sector, philanthropies and intergovernmental agencies will discuss the levers to unlock the full potential of AI. The discussion will be centered around four key pillars: global data access, capacity building, financial resources and gaining trust from AI models.
First, the conversation will focus on the enablement of global data access through data commons, open data and data sharing to ensure that data is made available at granular levels for all actors of the ecosystem.
Discussions on capacity building will highlight the importance of training and reskilling to enable decision makers to leverage AI solutions effectively, with a particular attention on Global South enablement.
the group will discuss financial resources to support the scale-up of climate solutions and foster innovation, for examples through catalytic finance and role of Multilateral Development Banks and intergovernmental organizations.
Finally, speakers will share their view on how build trust and confidence between all stakeholders in the modelling approach and underlying data, for example with development of principles and standards or creation of a platform to share best practices.

Outcomes

This panel will be an opportunity to identify key actions that the different actors of the climate and AI ecosystem can take to unlock the full potential of AI across four key themes: the creation of global data commons, the scale-up of financial resource allocation, the Adaptation & Resilience imperative and the Global South enablement.

Speakers

Moderator: Wendy Woods, Managing Director and Senior Partner, BCG

Panelists:

- Truman Semans, CEO, OS-Climate
- Nicolai Wadstrom, CEO, BootstrapLabs
- Philanthropic organization (tbc)
- World Bank representative (tbc)

Interpreting: French / English will be provided