



Second World Summit for Social Development

UN Global Horizon Scanning for Governance and Social Development

5 November 2025, 16:45-18:00 (GMT+3), Virtual

Organized by: UN Futures Lab & UN DESA-DPIDG

Background on the event:

The Solutions Session, “[UN Global Horizon Scanning for Governance and Social Development](#)” aimed to contribute to the Second World Social Summit 2025 by engaging a diverse range of stakeholders to collaborate in: (i) understanding the evolving and complex development landscape through key governance interlinkages from a social lens; (ii) advancing the discourse on emerging solutions and challenges in shaping development futures through signals, trends, and drivers of change; and (iii) promoting lived experiences and diverse voices to Leave No One Behind through a facilitated participatory foresight process. The virtual session was opened by UN DESA’s Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Navid Hanif, noting the critical role of strategic foresight in shaping development futures. The session showcased the [UN Global Horizon Scanning](#) AI tool, which is designed to analyze insights from foresight initiatives across the UN system in support of anticipatory planning and decision-making. A demo of the tool was followed by discussions on emerging insights from the tool, featuring representatives of UN entities including OHCHR, UNDSS, FAO, UNDP, DPO, RCO Mauritius and Seychelles, as well as young champions of traditional knowledge and indigenous innovation. The audience was engaged through a live Menti meter session. The session was attended by 399 participants from 99 countries, including International Organizations / IFIs: 85 (21,3%), Government: 92 (23,1%), Civil Society / NGOs: 79 (19,8%) and Academia / Think Tanks: 85 (21,3%).

Key issues discussed:

- **Emerging insights from the UN Global Horizon Scanning tool:** Climate, digital, and demographic transitions are key drivers that have implications on poverty eradication, full employment, social integration, as well as the UN's pillars. These suggest the need for a new social contract grounded in shared values, solidarity, and social inclusion, as well as enhanced global multilateral cooperation to safeguard these transitions.
- **Value of foresight for the UN and national governments:** (i) Setting a forward-looking direction to planning, policymaking, and operations to overcome "short-termism"; (ii) promoting policy coherence through diverse stakeholders and types of knowledge to build a shared understanding of complex landscapes and critical transformations.
- **Complementarity of the UN Global Horizon Scanning tool with existing foresight practices and approaches:** (i) Digital and data innovations to efficiently harness collective insight from foresight in designing more inclusive, people-centered and rights-based policies; (ii) early warning ecosystem to anticipate and manage complex risks; (iii) machine learning-based susceptibility model and multidimensional approaches to detect linkages between data and emerging risks across thematic areas.
- **Reinforced cross-pillar perspectives through intersecting trends:** (i) Trust in institutions; (ii) shrinking civic space; (iii) deepening inequality and discrimination; (iv) vulnerability amplification, deprivation; (v) displacement, migration; (vi) digital divides.
- **Reflections on post-2030 agenda:** Systemic shifts demand a reimagining of the development compact – not just among nations but within societies, focusing on inclusive digital transformation, social cohesion, and bold climate-resilient strategies. The convergence of these shifts shows what is possible when disruption is harnessed for development to enable transformative leaps towards digital equity, intergenerational regenerative economies, and restoring trust at the heart of the new agenda.

Key recommendations for action:

- **Bridging breadth with depth across knowledge siloes:** A "depth-first search" can identify "rooted problems or rooted traits" to drive change, while insights from subject matter experts across the system can help analyze weak signals beyond one's mandate.
- **Ensuring contextual clarity:** Problems and drivers differ vastly across the world, making context essential to anticipate unintended consequences and build local resilience.
- **System-of-systems approach:** Analysis must try to understand the interaction between different, independent departments, when determining points for intervention.
- **Blending knowledge:** Integrating traditional knowledge-based wisdom with scientific methodology and intergenerational analysis to interpret implications is essential.
- **Human oversight:** Intergenerational analysis is critical in shaping the logic of AI tools to generate insights that balance near-term adaptations with longer-term adjustments.