



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE
ACTION DAY 1:
“Reimagining the Future: Cultivating Global Opportunities
for Youth Through Innovation & Impact.”**

Conference Room 3
Friday 20th September,
United Nations Headquarters – New York
10 am – 1 pm

Background

At a time when the global progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is critically lagging, the urgency of addressing the stark technological disparity is more pressing than ever. Technology and innovation, which have become vital catalysts for providing opportunities to young people, are not reaching many in the Global South. This disparity is primarily driven by differences in economic growth, which are rooted in varying patterns of productivity. Countries that prioritize human capital development and foster an environment that encourages their youth to innovate and push the boundaries of science tend to experience greater economic prosperity. Conversely, nations that fail to make such investments often see stagnated growth.

The hope that ideas and technologies would seamlessly cross borders and facilitate rapid catch-up for developing countries has proven far more challenging. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive, cross-cutting approach that promotes equitable access to technological advancements and underscores the crucial role of inclusive policies, capacity building, and, most importantly, international cooperation. It is only through such collaboration that all young people, regardless of their geographic location, can have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from global innovation.

Objectives

In the global race for artificial intelligence and technological supremacy, nations are vigorously vying to secure a leading edge. While this intense competition has sparked unprecedented investments in innovation and technological advancements in some regions, it has inadvertently disrupted the equitable dissemination of technology to developing countries. This disparity presents a significant challenge, particularly for African youth, hindering their ability to fully harness their potential in the digital age.

Recognizing the critical need to address these disparities, the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with UN Agencies and Forbes, is organizing a side event to broaden the discourse beyond the traditional intergovernmental frameworks. This event seeks to explore the transformative promise of technology and innovation in tackling pressing challenges faced by Africa's youth and shaping the future of the continent.

Moreover, the side event will delve into the systemic barriers that prevent young people in developing countries from becoming innovators. It will focus on fostering an environment where African youth can effectively capture the benefits of technological advancements, promote innovation, and contribute meaningfully to global technological progress. This initiative underscores the importance of inclusive growth and the need to ensure that the digital revolution leaves no one behind.

Modalities/Format

Opening remarks and Keynote addresses will be delivered by stakeholders of the Government of Sierra Leone, Youths, UN Agencies, and Forbes, to be followed by panel discussions.

Opening Remarks: *H.E. Dr Michael Imran Kanu*, PR of Sierra Leone to the UN

Keynote Addresses:

- Mr. Seth Cohen, Chief Impact Officer, Forbes
- Dr. Felipe Paullier, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General on Youth Affairs (TC)

Scene setting: Mr. Shaekou Allieu

Panel Discussion 1: *Startup Continent: How Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems will reshape the future of African (and Global) Youth*

Moderator: Provided by Forbes

- Mr. Abdul Jalloh – CEO of Sonoco
- Mr Abubakr Dumbuya – Executive Director Morgan Stanely / CEO & Co-Founder FAMBUL
- Mr. Ousman Sahko Sow – Co-Founder, General Partner – Social Study Venture
- C-Level Executive – Google
- Mr. Sheakou Allieu – Minister Counsellor/Political Adviser – Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN
- Forbes to provide other high-level panelists

Panel Discussion 2: *From Impasse to Progress: Innovative Approaches to Transforming Opportunities for Women and Girls in Emerging Economies*

Moderator: Provided by Forbes

- Ms Salima Bah, Minister of Communication, Technology and Innovation, Government of Sierra Leone
- Ms. Alice Laugher, Chief Executive Officer - CTG
- Ms. Lyzianah Emakoua, Founder & Executive Director, Center for Community Impact and Sustainability | UN ECOSOC Representative, ONG ACIEDD
- Forbes to provide another high-level female panelist

Panel Discussion 3: *Revitalizing Futures: Exploring Innovative Approaches to Boost Youth Mental Health and Well-Being*

Moderator: Provided by Forbes

- Mrs. Melrose Karminthy, Minister of Social Welfare, Government of Sierra Leone
- Dr. Mellisa Brito, M.D. – New York City Health and Hospitals
- Mr. Ousman Touray – Visionary Pathways Rwanda
- Forbes to provide another high-level panelist

Panel Discussion 4: *The Next Generation of Peace: How Youth Entrepreneurship Can Help Resolve Global Conflicts*

Moderator: Provided by Forbes

- Mr. Mohamed Orman Bangura, Minister of Youth Affairs, Sierra Leone
- Mr Isaac Bayoh – Lead Youth, Peace and Security Expert Government of Sierra Leone
- Ms Agnes Bio – Co-Lead Youth, Peace and Security Expert, Government of Sierra Leone
- Mr. Francis Koroma – Founder/President Francis Koroma Foundation,

Closing Remarks

- **Mr. Timothy Musa Kabba**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sierra Leone*