

Scientific and Technological Community Major Group statement
Consultation with the co-facilitators of the Summit of the Future
13 December 2023

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group, co-led by the International Science Council (ISC) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO). We bring together more than 245 national science academies and international unions in the fields of natural, social and human sciences, as well as more than 100 national engineering organizations with over 30 million engineers worldwide.

The Pact for the Future is our best opportunity to shift multilateralism towards prevention, action and accountability. Science and engineering serve as key developmental tools, and a universal language for identifying issues, understanding the root causes and impediments to lasting change, and constructing and implementing sustainable solutions. Addressing major, intertwined challenges within the sustainability agenda requires breaking deep-seated siloes in how multilateral issues are framed, understood, and acted upon, and avoiding simplistic solutions to multi-faceted issues.

The Scientific and Technological Community Major Group therefore suggests that the Pact for the Future explicitly recognize the central importance of social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering, as well as practitioner and other forms of knowledge, as critical, cross-cutting tools to support evidence-based decision-making across UN deliberations, decision-making and action. This should be reflected not only in Chapter Three on Science, Technology, and Innovation and Digital Cooperation; but also in the Chapeau, due to the cross-cutting importance of scientific evidence.

The Summit of the Future and ensuing Pact should lead to an increased commitment within and among Member States for an enhanced science-policy interface in the UN General Assembly and for ensuring the full implementation of existing mechanisms, such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism for the SDGs. Stronger science-policy interfaces will promote equal access to science, engineering and technology by all Member States and support evidence-informed decision-making at all levels.

At the same time, global efforts should be complemented by commitments from every country to develop or enhance their own science, engineering and technology advisory systems tailored to their unique contexts. The success of science and technology advice in the multilateral system hinges on the prosperity and integration of science and technology advice at the national level.

In this regard, the Pact for the Future should acknowledge the pivotal role of science, engineering education and open science in building robust and dynamic science-policy interfaces and necessary capacities at all levels. This can foster global collaboration, accelerate progress towards the SDGs, and support human capacity building and innovation across nations.

The S&T Major Group is committed to working with you to deliver an effective, action-oriented and impactful Pact bringing about positive change for both people and the planet, firmly grounded in the latest and best available scientific knowledge and engineering solutions.