

# Science, government, and business leaders say achieving SDGs requires digital governance

*Distinguished business, government, and science leaders say a climate-safe, sustainable, and equitable world requires a secure, safe, trusted internet for all.*

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA, July 2, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On the eve of UN talks to assess progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an international group of

distinguished business, government, and science leaders say we cannot achieve a climate-safe, sustainable, and equitable world without ensuring a secure, safe, and trusted internet for all.



Tackling the climate crisis and the broader sustainability agenda, and working toward a just equitable digital future, are increasingly intertwined agendas."

*Amy Luers, Executive Director,  
Future Earth*

## THE MONTREAL STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In a joint Montreal Statement on Sustainability in the Digital Age the experts argue that tackling the climate crisis and achieving broader sustainability goals is indivisible from creating a secure, equitable, and trusted digital world; these are all one

The SDGs set out a transformative agenda that aims to simultaneously end poverty, address environmental decline, and reduce inequalities, all by 2030. But it missed setting a goal for governing perhaps the most powerful force defining humanity's future: the digital age.

In a joint [Montreal Statement on Sustainability in the Digital Age](#) the experts argue that tackling the climate crisis and achieving broader sustainability goals is indivisible from creating a secure, equitable, and trusted digital world; these are all one interconnected agenda. And they outline five near-term, cross-cutting actions that can enable rapid

and widespread societal transformations to a low-carbon, secure and equitable future. This lays the foundation for what could define a much needed action agenda for a new SDG on governing the digital world in support of people and planet.

Developed with the support of leading research and philanthropy organizations from four countries - Canada, the UK, France, and the USA - the statement unites voices of digital and sustainability experts working at the intersection of technology, sustainability and policy. It is

released as the UN's high-level political forum prepares to meet virtually July 7-16th to launch a Decade of Action toward the 17 SDGs and assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The statement will be discussed during a side-event at the forum on July 9, exploring collaborative action for digital capacity building to implement the UN's 2030 SDG Agenda.

The statement calls for:

- \* Developing a social contract for the digital age, to ensure individual rights, justice and equity, inclusive access, and environmental sustainability;
- \* Ensuring open and transparent access to data and knowledge critical to achieving sustainability and equity;
- \* Building public and private collaborations to develop and manage AI and other technologies in support of sustainability and equity;
- \* Investing in research and innovation that focuses on transdisciplinary challenges and opportunities underlying the systems that are maintaining our unsustainability; and
- \* Promoting targeted communication, engagement and education to advance the social contract.

The statement was conceived and initially formulated at a September 2019 workshop in Montreal, Canada, one of a series on AI & Society, funded by CIFAR in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), organized by Future Earth, the UK Office for AI, the International Observatory on the Societal Impacts of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies (OBVIA), and CNRS.

The need for global cooperation in the digital realm was similarly underlined recently by the UN Secretary-General. In June, António Guterres released a roadmap for filling the digital governance gap, creating a foundation to effectively leverage digital tools to achieve broad sustainability goals, including climate change mitigation.

In parallel, the Montreal Statement is part of a new international initiative - [Sustainability in the Digital Age](#) - which seeks to support and strengthen the growing diversity of actors engaging with the interconnected digital and sustainability agendas.

# Sustainability in the Digital Age

The Montreal Statement is part of a new international initiative - Sustainability in the Digital Age - which seeks to support and strengthen the growing diversity of actors engaging with the interconnected digital and sustainability agendas



**Future Earth**

Future Earth is an international research organization, collaborating with science and society on solutions to global sustainability challenges.

The statement continues to be endorsed by innovators, researchers, and decision makers working at the interface of digital and environmental sustainability, committed to collaborating to drive change.

Endorse the statement here:

<https://sustainabilitydigitalage.org/montreal-statement/>

Approuver la déclaration ici:

<https://sustainabilitydigitalage.org/la-declaration-de-montreal-sur-la-durabilite-a-lere-numerique/>

The statement was developed with funding from:

- \* CIFAR
- \* Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ)
- \* UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- \* French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)
- \* Climateworks Foundation

Collaborators:

- \* Future Earth
- \* UN Environment Programme
- \* UN Development Programme
- \* UK Office for AI
- \* German Environment Agency (Umwelt Bundesamt)
- \* The Observatory of Social Impacts on AI and Digital Technology
- \* Element AI
- \* Mila
- \* Barcelona Supercomputing Center
- \* CIO Strategy Council

Endorsements:

- \* International Science Council
- \* DNV GL
- \* Concordia University
- \* Stockholm Resilience Centre
- \* Exponential Roadmap Initiative
- \* Axionable

This news release in full, available at <https://futureearth.org>, includes comments on the Montreal

Statement by the following collaborators and endorsers:

- Amy Luers, Executive Director, Future Earth. Director, Sustainability in the Digital Age initiative
- David Jensen, Head of Environmental Peacebuilding, UN Environment Programme
- Robert Opp, Chief Digital Officer, UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Prof. Yoshua Bengio A.M. Turing Award, 2018; Scientific Director, Mila; Full professor, University of Montreal; Co-Founder, Element AI
- Dirk Messner, President, German Environment Agency (UBA)
- Heide Hackmann, CEO, International Science Council (ISC)
- Asun Lera St.Clair, Senior Principal Scientist, Digital Assurance, Group Technology & Research DNV GL and Senior Advisor, Earth Sciences Services, Barcelona Supercomputing Centre - Anne Martel, Chief Administrative Officer and Co-Founder, Element AI
- Rémi Quirion, Chief Scientist of Québec
- Rebecca Finlay, Vice President, Engagement & Public Policy, CIFAR.
- Sana Khareghani, Deputy Director, Head of Office for Artificial Intelligence, UK
- Graham Carr, President, Concordia University

See also <https://sustainabilitydigitalage.org/montreal-statement-community-reflections/>

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The Montreal Statement will be launched on a news teleconference Thursday July 2 at 10 am US ET.

To join: <https://zoom.us/j/4236717703> or dial: +1-647-374-4685, conf. ID 4236717703

Media are invited to register for a virtual side event July 9, 2020, of the UN High-Level Political Forum: "Collaborative Action for Digital Solutions to Reach the 2030-Agenda." The Montreal Statement will be discussed at this side event, co-hosted by the German Environment Agency (UBA), UNEP, UNDP, International Science Council (ISC), and Future Earth.

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Future Earth is an international research organization, collaborating with science and society on solutions to global sustainability challenges. It encompasses nearly 30 research-to-action networks, groups of scientists and practitioners around the world, studying the environmental and human aspects of global change. We help incorporate the latest scientific knowledge into decision-making, with a mission to accelerate transformations to sustainability through research and innovation.

Future Earth is governed by the International Science Council, the Belmont Forum of funding agencies, UNESCO, UNEP, UNU, WMO, and the Science and Technology in Society forum.

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