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The Coimbra Group meets the UN

Working Session

October 2031: Forecasting the Future Together

Friday 22nd October 2021

Preparatory Information

Designed and Facilitated by Elaine France



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THE WHY, HOW & WHAT OF THE SESSION

October 2031: Forecasting the Future Together

This working session takes place on the morning of Friday 22nd October, as part of the wider event.

Why? To catalyse collaboration that unleashes the potential of research to unfold equitable futures.

How? By bringing together senior representatives from the Coimbra Group Universities, UN Agencies and Impact Investment to build relationships.

What? Using futures-thinking to reverse-engineer from October 2031 to the present day, in order to explore how to collaborate, and what to focus on, so that a road-map of practical action can be set.

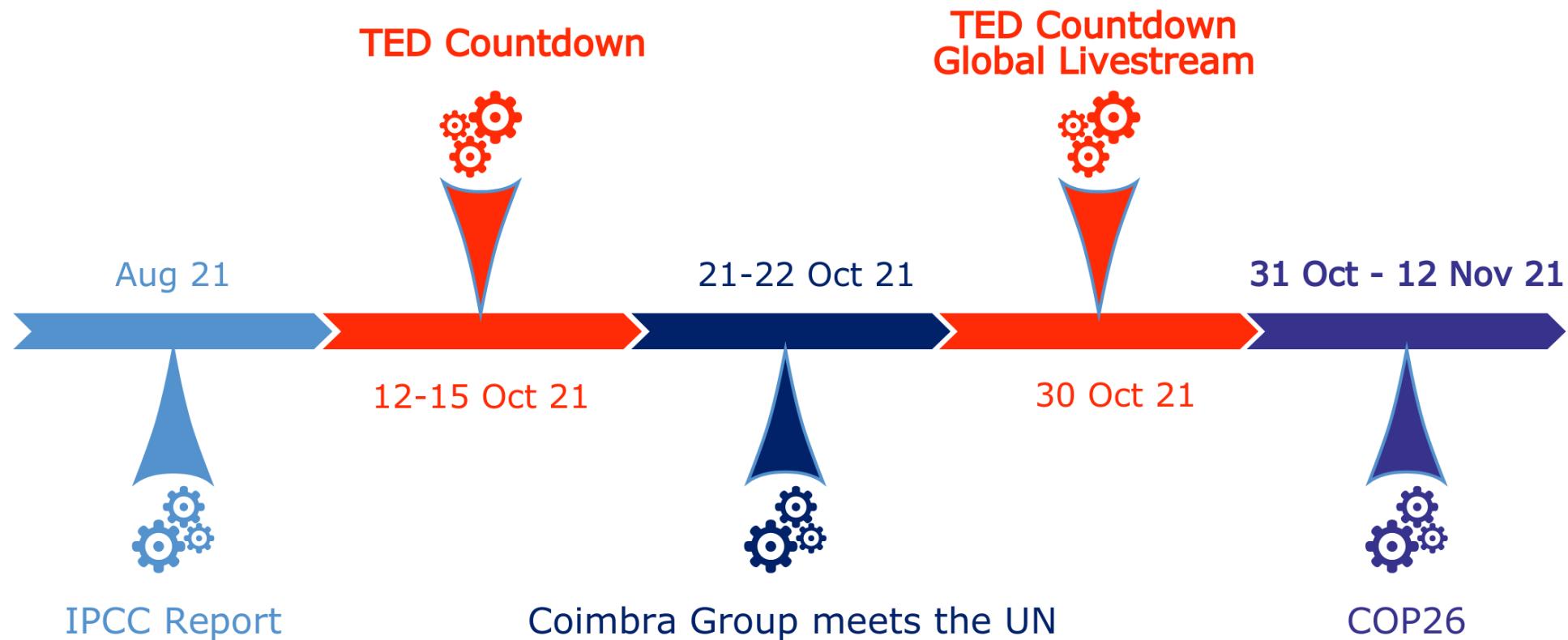


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IT IS A TIMELY SESSION





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WHY COLLABORATE MORE EXTENSIVELY?

Problem

Unequivocable impact of human-created climate change removes possibility of achieving SDGs.

Who has it?

All of us... “We are all immigrants to the future” Marina Gorbis

Solution

A collaboration enabling decision-makers to take action based on the best available evidence.



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SYSTEMATICALLY THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE HELPS US TO

Make better decisions

Core principles for futures thinking include:

- Focus on the signals
- Create a community

We use 10-year horizons as a minimum.

We look at signals, drivers of change (mega-trends) and scenarios (forecasts) to imagine, explore risk and consequences, using the process to help us to identify next actions.



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WHY WE FOCUS ON

Signals

Signals are evidence of the future that we can find in today's world.

They are concrete, compelling observations about how the world is changing that give us a hint at where we might be headed.

Think specific products, policies, events, experiences. The compelling element of signals should not be taken lightly; true signals incite a notable reaction, causing us to pause and think about the possibilities they represent.

<https://www.iftf.org/future-now/article-detail/drivers-and-signals-how-are-they-different/>



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WE ARE IDENTIFYING SIGNALS THAT ARE ALREADY HAPPENING

Signals of collaboration

Each University was asked to share existing 'signals' of collaboration taking place between Coimbra Group Universities and UN Agencies, as a starting point for understanding the existing landscape:

- **Basic Research** produced by your university for/with UN Agencies focused on SDGs.
- **Applied Research** produced by your university for/with UN Agencies focused on SDGs.
- **Indicators** produced by your university for/with UN Agencies to support monitoring and evaluation of SDGs.
- **Interfaces** created for collaborations between your university/UN Agencies for 'best practice exchanges'.
- **Organisations or hubs** specifically created to facilitate the 2030 Agenda.

Information shared is being compiled into a working 'library' of signals.



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WE CAN UNDERSTAND SIGNALS BY LOOKING AT...

Drivers of Change

Drivers of Change are broad long-term trends that are likely to have a significant impact on the future.

They move at different scales and speeds; and always overlap.

This means that they drive change across multiple sectors, industries, spaces, themes and contexts.

Drivers give us the critical context for analysing signals.

They enable us to understand the context through which a signal came to be.

They empower us to explore and understand the implications that a signal might have for the future.

<https://www.iftf.org/future-now/article-detail/drivers-and-signals-how-are-they-different/>

THE DRIVERS GIVING US THE CRITICAL CONTEXT FOR THE SIGNALS THAT WE HAVE TODAY



Climate Change



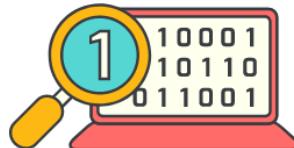
Urbanisation



Population
Growth



Income
Inequalities



Technology



Economic
Power Shifts



Resources



Citizen Action



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THIS IS THE CORE DRIVER SHAPING OUR FUTURE

“Unequivocal”

IPCC Report. B1.

Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

ACTION FOR PARTICIPANTS: Please read the IPCC Report Headlines and/or Summary for Policy Makers

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

AND IMPACTS ON OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THE UN SDGS BY 2030



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS



ACTION FOR PARTICIPANTS:

Read more about the UN SDGs <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Please look at p27 of the UNEP Full Report Making Peace with Nature to review the SDG infographic.

<https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>



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AND LIVE SUSTAINABLY BEYOND 2030 IN A FUTURE WHERE WE ARE INTERDEPENDENT WITH THE PLANET

The Jena Declaration: <https://www.thejenadeclaration.org/>

“...with our body we are ourselves an integral part of nature, and we also incorporate it into our practices in specific ways, depending on what we are doing. This premise inverts the perspective on sustainability from a nature-society opposition to a society-nature interdependent relation.”





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SCENARIOS HELP US TO IMAGINE & EXPLORE
“THIS IS A WORLD IN WHICH...”

Scenarios (Forecasts)

Scenarios or forecasts are internally consistent, plausible stories about a future that could happen. They are imagined futures that can demonstrate how current actions may lead to dramatically different outcomes.

This makes them useful tools to help guide strategy and shape the future.

They are always inspired by “signals”, or changes and innovations starting to take place in the present, that provide clues as to how things could be different in the future.



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LET'S IMAGINE THAT “THIS IS A WORLD IN WHICH...”

We achieve the Earthshot

In the working session, we will be working with the ‘Earthshot’ wrapper of achieving the Very Low Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions scenario indicated in the IPCC Report as our core trajectory for achieving the UN SDGs.

To make the most of our time together in the session, please reflect beforehand on:

- What does working to achieve the Very Low GHG emissions scenario mean TO your organisation?
- What does working to achieve the Very Low GHG emissions scenario mean ABOUT your organisation?
- How will committing to achieve the Very Low GHG emissions scenario shape your organisation’s contribution to achieving the UN SDGs?



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...AND THE SCALE OF CHANGE THAT THIS COLLABORATION CREATES IS TO

Achieve Very Low GHG emissions

We achieve the changes needed to unfold the very low Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions scenario outlined in the IPCC Report (August 2021) and in doing so, achieve the UN SDGs.

IPCC Summary for Policy Makers: B1.3.

In the near term (2021-2040), global warming of 1.5 degrees C, relative to 1850-1900, is more likely than not reached in the very low GHG emissions scenario.

Furthermore, for the very low GHG emissions scenario, it is more likely than not that global surface temperature would decline back to below 1.5°C toward the end of the 21st century, with a temporary overshoot of no more than 0.1°C above 1.5°C global warming.

IPCC Summary for Policy Makers: D1.

From a physical science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO2 emissions, reaching at least net zero CO2 emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions. Strong, rapid and sustained reductions in CH4 emissions would also limit the warming effect resulting from declining aerosol pollution and would improve air quality.



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BY MOBILISING PEOPLE & RESOURCES TO TURN A VISION INTO REALITY

41 Universities

1.5 million+ students (100% ratio of more female than male students) and staff

UN Agencies

Working in 193 Member States

Impact Investors & Eco-System

2000+ Global Network of Impact Investors

Members of the SDG500 with \$500m Fund Size



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE SESSION

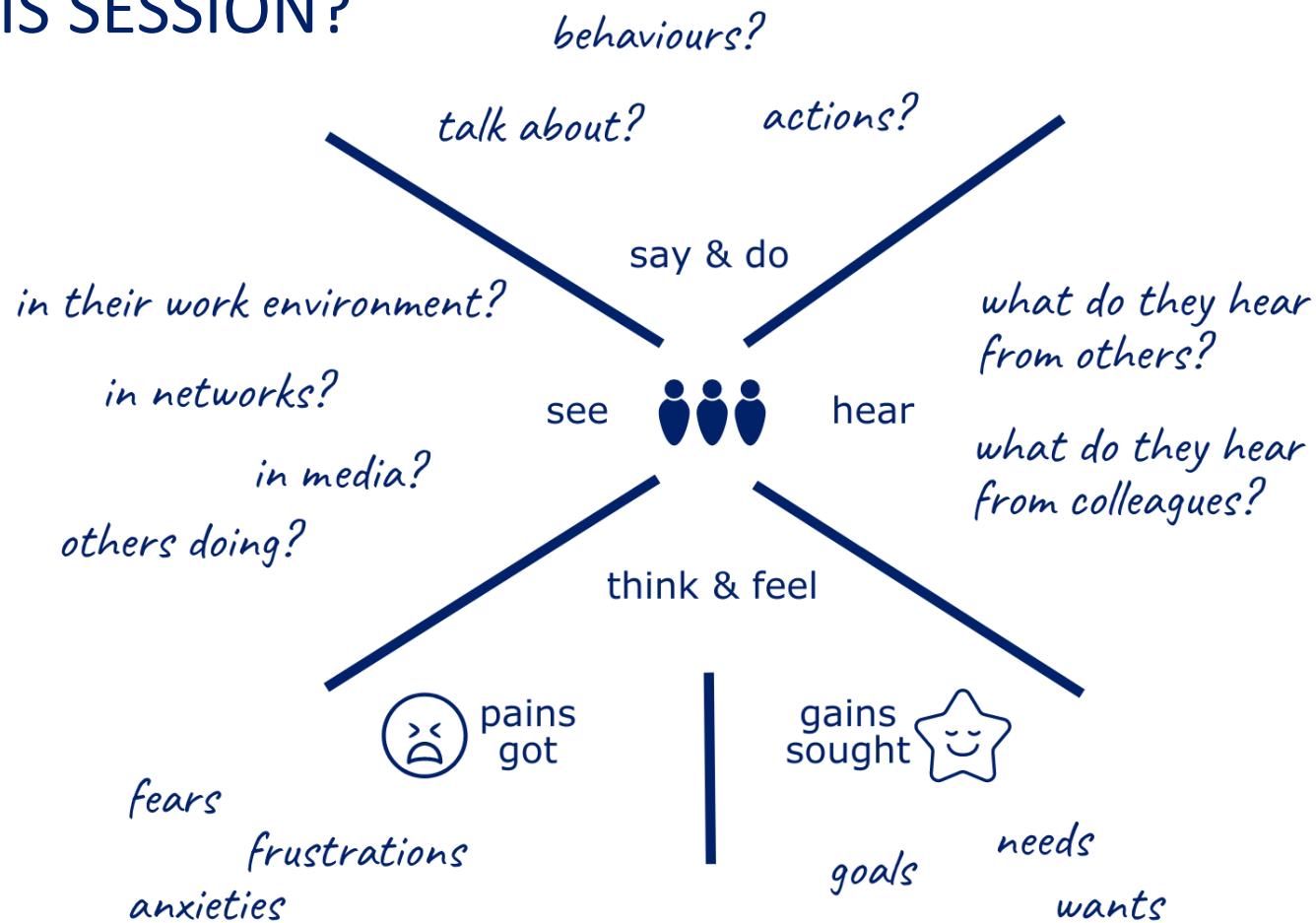
Session Logistics

- Each participant will be pre-allocated into a group.
- Following the introductory part of the session, your group will move to one of the scenarios set out.
- This is a round-robin exercise designed to ‘nudge’ discussion and identify actions.

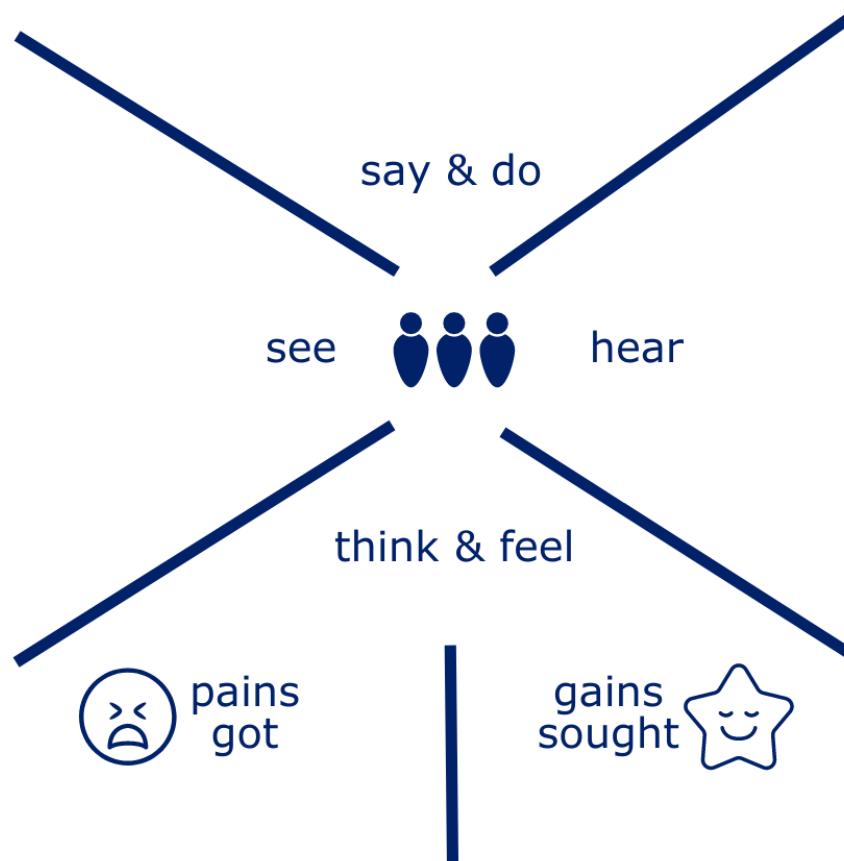
- Each scenario ‘station’ will have the scenario outlined and set questions to reflect on together.
- Your group will explore, discuss and capture insights on the scenario sheets at the station.
- Your group will be moved onto the next scenario after a pre-set time.
- Typically, your group will rotate through 2-3 scenarios to maximise your information sharing.

- Each group will share back key insights during the Plenary, which will be captured to form the road-map of next actions.
- Claudia Steinau, visual recorder, <https://visualsensemaking.eu/> will be visually documenting the session.

WHAT MIGHT BE OTHER PARTICIPANTS' MOTIVATIONS & CONCERNS WHEN ARRIVING AT THIS SESSION?



WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR MOTIVATIONS & CONCERN WHEN ARRIVING AT THIS SESSION?





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PRACTISE ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Remember the Future

(IFTF)

Every time you remember a future that hasn't happened yet, you rate it as more likely to happen.
Picturing something vividly creates something like a memory, which your brain then sees as a possibility.

X = Pick one thing that you love to do.

Y = A living person that you care about.

Z = Pick a favourite location that you have been to at least once in your life.

Now, imagine it is one year from today. You are doing X with Y in Z.
Try and see it as clearly as possible, like a film or a photograph.

The more times you imagine how the future can be different, the better you will be at envisioning it in the working session.



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READ & VIEW RESOURCES

Key Reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

<https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>

<https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/publications/principles-ecosystem-restoration-guide-united-nations-decade-2021-2030>

Mega-Trends:

<https://www.weforum.org/videos/the-5-mega-trends-facing-the-world-you-have-to-know-about-adc650c483>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/05/9-mega-trends-shaping-the-future-of-africa/>

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/shaping-trends-our-time>

<https://www.iftf.org/motd2021-2031/>

SDG 500 Impact Investment Fund:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/sdg500-the-fund-kickstarting-sustainable-development-goals-investment/>

TED

https://www.ted.com/talks/christiana_figueres_the_inside_story_of_the_paris_climate_agreement

https://www.ted.com/talks/johan_rockstrom_10_years_to_transform_the_future_of_humanity_or_destabilize_the_planet

https://www.ted.com/talks/nigel_topping_3_rules_for_a_zero_carbon_world