

Open Letter on Open Science in the Pact for the Future

Background

This letter addresses the differences between the [zero draft](#) and [Rev1](#) of the Pact for the Future, the landmark document to be agreed at the UN's Summit of the Future in September of this year. It highlights backsliding on support for open science and balanced IP.

Please indicate your willingness to sign via this survey.

Letter

Your Excellencies,

We strongly welcome the drive by the UN to reexamine and reinvigorate the multilateral system, helping to ensure that it realises its potential to make our planet safer, fairer and more sustainable. In preparing for this, the focus on tomorrow is particularly relevant, reflected in the names of both the Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future, as well as the Declaration on Future Generations.

Key to this future, and our ability to make sure it is the one we want, is research, science and technology. This is recognised in a dedicated chapter of the draft Pact - a very welcome step in itself, but one that it is important to get right.

Considering Version 1 of the Pact for the Future, we see many positives, in particular around the urgency of investing in science and research systems around the world, ensuring that these can focus on supporting practical progress towards sustainable development. The Version's emphasis on the need for equity is particularly powerful, and we strongly appreciate the addition of recognition of the interests of indigenous peoples and their knowledge.

However, this Version includes some concerning backward steps compared to the zero draft which it will be important to address if the Pact is to fulfil its potential. In particular:

- 1) *We are worried by the removal of references to Open Science. This has been unanimously recognised as an essential driver of sustainable development in the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation, given its potential to accelerate research while advancing inclusion. Highlighting Open Science in the Pact for the Future will elevate work in this space, and so promote more collaborative, transparent and high-performing research that fosters innovation and accelerates progress towards solving global challenges.*
- 2) *We believe that the shift from highlighting the importance of balance in intellectual property to calls for strengthened protection is a backwards step. The new version also appears – just as WIPO has agreed a new Treaty on Genetic Resources – to assume that international law in this space is not dynamic. Intellectual property should not be an end in itself, but be managed in ways that support the goals of the multilateral system as a whole.*
- 3) *We are concerned that the chapter continues to emphasise transfer of technology and ideas to the global south. A more positive, future-facing approach should underline the need to do all possible in order to facilitate collaborations between researchers around the world including south-south collaboration and south-north*

innovation. Frequently, these are areas where significant work is occurring on understudied problems, and in creating innovative approaches to knowledge sharing. This can be achieved through the uptake of open science, as well as an approach to intellectual property that favours the pursuit of sustainable development.

As such, we call on the UN's Member States to:

- *Reinstate a clear call to advance Open Science, in line with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science of 2021, underpinned by infrastructures working in the public interest.*
- *Reinstate the call for a balanced and dynamic approach to intellectual property, ensuring that its governance favours research, innovation and dissemination, and underlines the positives of openness more broadly, notably in data and education.*
- *Underline the importance of protecting and promoting inclusive and open international research collaboration and people to people exchange.*

Kind regards,

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International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Sustainable Development Solutions Network
Wikimedia Foundation