



Ghassan Aouad

Chancellor of Abu Dhabi University, Past President ...

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Extracts from my welcoming speech at our International Conference on Advancing Sustainable Futures

Your Excellencies and Colleagues

The top current global issues facing humanity include climate change, pollution, security and wellbeing, food security and agriculture, post-pandemic syndromes, lack of education, unemployment and hunger. 2 billion people don't have access to clean water, 250 million kids are out of school, 120 million refugees, some nations waste food up to 200 kg per capita per year and some other nations are consuming 600 liters of water per capita per day. This is not sustainable. It is time to exert more efforts and that's why this conference is really timely.

The 17 sustainable development goals are our guiding principles, but there is still a lot of work to be done in order to achieve the targets by 2030. We should take advantage of technological developments especially Artificial Intelligence in order to move faster. The landscape of higher education is poised to go through a transformational change as we are dealing with a different generation of digital natives (Gen Z Students) and because the driving forces including economic, political, social, technological, and others are changing very fast, in addition to the role AI will play. The Gen Z will play a major in driving the sustainability agenda as they do really care about the environment and they are the custodians of our planet.

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