HIGHLIGHTS FROM SESSIONS

SESSION

Dazzling Decades: Technology & the Age of Disruption

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What would the world look like in 2040?

It is no secret that the world is changing, in front of our very eyes. And advancements in technology and the breakthroughs we are starting to feel, will shape the coming decade in an unprecedented way. It is a revolution that is coming on the back of Third Industrial Revolution, primarily information technology and electronics, that we are living now. It has shaped our life in terms of mobility, access and connectivity.

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But this Fourth Revolution is very different because it is not vertical, it is horizontal, and it is cutting through every industry. It will touch our lives in many ways, in the way we are going to shape the world we live in. The world is getting ready for this big change, but the bigger and more important question is: Are we, our countries, our policymakers and our businesses ready for that disruption?

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This Industrial Revolution has elements that are different in the context that information technology players are shaping it. But the most important part is that there are other elements that are physical and biological that will shape the impact, breadth, depth and reach of this industry.
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Technologies will continue to emerge. They will address some of the most pressing challenges today, such as handling diseases, saving the climate, and the dimensions associated with how we could disrupt ourselves to diversify the economy, reshape education and create a world that is more equitable based on business models inspired by technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum computing.

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These are technologies that will make the future fast forward to today. It is happening because this acceleration is adhering to the science of change. We see some changes today in the implementations of AI, aspects of personal assistants, and these incremental pockets of success will evolve as a result of the change emerging. Some will become substantial, but we will start to embrace some of the new and more advanced. It will touch more of the walks of life than before. Only then will we see a level of acceleration that will be extremely disruptive. We will see all these technologies that are not alien to today's terminology – drones, nanotechnology, machine learning, AI and 3D printing.

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It is not about technology. This Revolution is very different, it is horizontal and there are so many dependencies between the technology, its adoption, embracing it, its impact on multiple industries and verticals and some aspects that have to do with education, policymaking, governments, regulation and the absence of the mindset that it is verticalized. We will need to work on these dependencies for technology to evolve constructively and for it to be impactful.

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Technology vendors and players are shaping the technology that will contribute to the augmentation of the impact of this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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The question is if this is today, what is next?

What will be truly disruptive and accelerated is the following: we will see technology disrupting itself – quantum computing. For the last 50 years, everything we talk about in terms of technology, such as automation, has been on the back of bits and bytes, semi-conductors and we have managed to do amazing things we are experiencing today.

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With quantum computing, it is very different. For instance, genome sequencing of a citizen in a country might take a day today, but with quantum, it can happen in a few minutes. It is the ability of dealing with mountains of data, that is not available today.

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This is the magnitude that will amplify all these technologies. We have a responsibility as high-tech but also everyone in a leadership position, at a national and enterprise level, as an educator, and no matter where you are, to leverage the power of this technology. These changes taking place should be embraced with positivity, we should not be fighting because that will not lead us anywhere. The more we embrace it, the more we cater for it. The start needs to be with education and revamping the curriculum, which will enable future generations to leverage the power.

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This requires an eco-system across industries and sectors and a collective effort in terms of tackling some of its challenges. We need to think of policies that will promote innovation.