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Technological developments must not leave the poor behind

1 DAY AGO

Technology can be used to unite humanity rather than divide it, and smart technologies are as important for the poor as they are for the hugely rich, according to a panel discussion held at the World Government Summit yesterday.



Both speakers agreed it was not so much about cutting edge robotics or machines,

but inclusiveness and maximising the potential of even the most deprived people on the planet.

These were the two key messages discussed in a session featuring Osman Sultan, Chief Executive Officer of telecom du, and Karuna Gopal, President of the Foundation for Futuristic Cities, in Hyderabad, India, began with a definition of smart living, during a panel titled “Technology and the Future of Smart Living.”

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Critical of this utopian vision, moderator Richard Quest moved the conversation into the threats from the pervasive nature of technology and asked: “How have we turned into a community of people that know the price of everything but value of nothing?”

Gopal warned of the dimension of technology that was neither good or bad, but sat in a grey area. “It can transform our lives, but there is a popular perception that technological developments will be the cause of our destruction,” she said.



She talked of what she called a “cognitive cloud” or “mind fog” that can result from having access to new technologies without fully understanding their impact, and Sultan stressed the need to find answers to these problems – something he said would need to begin by posing the right questions.

However, both speakers were overwhelmingly positive about the technologically saturated world we live in. Sultan said future generations must stay ahead of the pace of change and implement a systemic methodology to frame open communicative discussions about developments before they become realities.

Gopal closed the session with what she said sounded like a utopian vision, but was in the realm of possibility. She said we can deploy technologies to pull out common threads between all human beings, which can overcome divisions and allow us to live in a safer, happier world.

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