

2024



APPRA 2024 Conference

Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence for
Sustaining Peace and Democracy

Date: 7-10 March 2024

Venue: University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.

APPRA 2024 Conference



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APPRA 2024 CONFERENCE

Funding Request Proposal

Asia Pacific Peace Research Association Conference 2024
Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence for
Sustaining Peace and Democracy

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Regional Peace Research Association (APPRA) and the Harmony Centre of the University of Vavuniya (Sri Lanka) are jointly organising the 2024 APPRA Conference in collaboration with The Gate Institute (UK) on “Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence for Sustaining Peace and Democracy” from 7-10 March 2024 at the University of Vavuniya in Sri Lanka.

This conference will bring together more than 250 participants, including prominent scholars, experts, civil society activists, human rights activists and peace practitioners from different parts of the world and serve as a great platform and an inspiring occasion for discussion, engagement and networking.

This brochure provides the necessary information and details for the sponsors who come forward to cover the cost of organising this important conference.



Context of the Conference and Theme

The research area of leveraging digital transformation and artificial intelligence for sustaining peace and democracy is highly relevant today. As digital technologies continue to advance rapidly, they have the potential to significantly impact various aspects of society, including governance, the economy, and social interactions. The AI revolution has completely altered how people gather and use data, and businesses operate in various sectors. Scholars from peace research and democratic theorists have started to take stock of this transformation and to trace how democratic theory and institutions should respond ([Bernholz et al., 2021](#)). Artificial intelligence can potentially revolutionise how we approach peacebuilding and democratic processes. However, there are concerns about the potential risks associated with these technologies, such as privacy, security, and accountability ([Thiel, 2022](#)). The United Nations has launched a strategy for the digital transformation of peacekeeping to drive technology innovation, maximise the potential of current and new technologies to help peacekeeping missions carry out their mandates, and ensure the responsible use of digital technologies by peace operations ([United Nations, 2022](#)).

Democratic peace theorists argue that digital technologies can enhance democratic processes by increasing citizen participation, promoting transparency, and facilitating the flow of information. They are also concerned about the potential risks associated with these technologies, such as privacy, security, and misinformation ([Reiter, 2019](#)). There is ongoing research and discussion on this topic as scholars continue to explore the potential benefits and challenges of these technologies for promoting peace and democracy. It is, therefore, crucial to carefully consider how we can leverage digital transformation and AI responsibly and ethically to promote peace and democracy.

We welcome submissions on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to:

- Impact of Blockchain on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law and peace.
- Innovations and ways of promoting peace and justice.
- Digital Platforms and AI in promoting transparency and accountability.
- Digital Technologies and AI in the media and the public sphere
- Digital transformation to promote economic development and reduce inequality.
- Ethical considerations of using technologies in peacekeeping and conflict resolution practices.
- New technologies and Artificial intelligence on democratic processes and institutions.
- The challenges and opportunities of regulating AI to promote peace and democracy.
- Technological advancements and commitment to Minimization of Ecological Footprint and sustainable practices.
- The potential of digital technologies to enhance citizen participation in democratic processes.

The conference also aims to address some of the cross-cutting themes:

- Arts, Performance and Creative Methods to Promote Peace.
- Climate Justice, Just Transition and Sustainability.
- Conflict Resolution, humanitarian aid, and disaster response in peacebuilding.
- Dynamics of migrations and mobilities of people.
- Entrepreneurship, Empowerment and reconciliation for sustaining peace and Harmony.
- Entrepreneurship and Peacebuilding.
- Existing challenges to Peace in Asia-Pacific regions.
- Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, and Democracy for sustaining peace and reconciliation processes.
- Media, Human Rights and Peacebuilding.
- Peace journalism, human rights journalism, communicating with communities (CwC) and nonviolent communication.
- Shifting power structures and world orders in international Relations.

Why the APPRA 2024 conference is important?

- The three key elements of AI, such as domain knowledge, data generation, and machine learning, have a great potential to instigate a revolution in approaches and mechanisms for protecting and promoting democracy, human rights, good governance and peace, parallel to the process it has triggered in health care, finance, security, marketing, entertainment, etc. However, the study on the nexus between democracy, human rights, good governance, peace, and AI is still in its infancy and has not been accentuated and intensified. APPRA 2024 is the first international conference to examine how AI and the latest digital technologies can contribute to democracy, human rights, good governance, and peace.
- APPRA 2024 will enable the reciprocation of experiences between experts in the interdisciplinary fields of international relations, conflict resolution, development, anthropology, media and communication, global security, information technology, and computer science.
- Arrangements have been made to publish at least two books and a special journal issue covering the research presented at this conference on how AI and digital technologies can bring a revolutionary change in building democracy, human rights, and peace through leading publishers such as Routledge Palgrave, Lexington Books, and the Asian Journal of Peacebuilding.
- The Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) is one of the five regional organisations under the umbrella organisation International Peace Research Association (IPRA). Since 1980, it has been conducting conferences and programmes to contribute to the realisation of the fullness of peace, justice, and humanity through peace research, peace education, and peace advocacy. As a part of this mission, the APPRA conference is held every two years in different countries. These conferences have significantly contributed to creating networks and collaborations among researchers, experts, practitioners, universities, and institutions in other countries, creating a peace research culture and instigating the desire among young researchers to engage in peace research in conflict-affected

countries. For example, after the APPRA conference in Nepal in 2015, the number of young researchers involved in peace research increased significantly. Nepalese researchers and organisations are collaborating internationally in various peace research and projects. Against this backdrop, it is significant that the APPRA conference is being held in Sri Lanka for the first time.

- Organising the APPRA conference in Sri Lanka is essential and timely, and this conference will create a platform for foreign and domestic researchers to engage in critical and transformative research and projects that contribute to positive peace in Sri Lanka.
- Also, this conference will create interest and involvement among researchers and practitioners in peace research and peacebuilding and lead to much-needed collaboration and networking with foreign researchers, academics, and institutions.
- Holding this international conference in Sri Lanka, which focuses on how AI and digital technologies can contribute to sustaining democracy, good governance, and human rights, will be relevant, meaningful, and impactful.

About the Co-organizers:

The Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA)

Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) is one of the five regional organisations under the umbrella organisation International Peace Research Association (IPRA). These five organisations are the Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA), Africa Peace Research and Education Association (AFPREA), European Peace Research Association (EUPRA); Latin et al. (CLAIP), and Peace and Justice Studies Association (North America).

The APPRA has a mission to contribute to realising the fullness of peace, justice and humanity through peace research, peace education, and advocacy. Thus, APPRA focuses on advancing interdisciplinary research on the conditions of peace and the causes of war and violence in all their manifestations. To this end, APPRA shall facilitate international collaboration designed to assist the advancement of peace research, education and action, and in particular, to promote national and international studies and teachings relating to the pursuit of international peace in line with the principle of freedom of scientific research; and to facilitate contacts between peace researchers, educators and advocates as well as specialists in conflict resolution throughout the Asia-Pacific region, the aim of these contacts being the enhancement of peace research, peace education and peace advocacy.

The Harmony Centre at the University of Vavuniya (Sri Lanka)

The Harmony Centre was established at the University of Vavuniya on 25th September 2021. The Harmony Centre is working to contribute to the realisation of peace, harmony and humanity through peace research, peace education, and harmony-related programs. The Harmony Centre at the University aims to encourage students' efforts in peaceful living, promote inter-ethnic, intercultural, and inter-religious understanding and interactions, and provide comprehensive education for conflict transformation in post-war Sri Lanka. Large-scale societal tensions have existed in parts of the North and East for the past thirty years. The war's conclusion resulted in the abolition of conflict structures, and the government has used the policy framework to re-establish strategic development mechanisms in these areas. The University of Vavuniya was established in 2021 by an order made under section 21 of the Universities Act, No. 16 of 1978, with three faculties, namely, the Faculty of Applied Science, Faculty of Business Studies and Faculty of Technological Studies, with ten departments. The University of Vavuniya's foundation in this highly war-affected region gives a new path for growth in these places. The Harmony Centre aims to promote a harmonious existence among students and staff through social, cultural, educational, research and scholarly activities and to function as a catalytic and resource centre for harmony and social cohesion at regional and national levels. The University aims to provide, promote, and develop higher education in the region and at the national level. Students from all over the country, ethnicities, and religions are admitted. The University is located in Vavuniya, which is a multi-religious location itself.

The Gate Foundation (Trading as The Gate Institute) (UK)

Since 2015, The Gate Foundation has functioned as a research group based in the UK and, in collaboration with international think tanks, NGOs, charities, and universities, organised several conferences, seminars, research projects and workshops to advance social and economic development and human rights of war-affected communities, particularly in Sri Lanka. Realising the need to scale up, formalise and institutionalise our activities, The Gate Foundation was registered as a non-profit organisation at Companies House in 2022 in the UK. Since then, in collaboration with local partners, the foundation has made significant progress in developing new pathways and delivery. The Foundation's vision is to become a prominent research and innovation gateway for sustainable development and governance, primarily in war-affected communities in Sri Lanka, by providing research and scientific-based innovative solutions to address socio-cultural, economic and human security issues and challenges.

The Conference Organizing Committee

Co-Chairs

Prof. T. Mangaleswaran (Sri Lanka)
Vice Chancellor, University of Vavuniya (UOV);

Rajib Timalisina (Nepal)
Co-Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA)

Kelli Te Maiharoa (New Zealand)
Co-Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA)

Senthan Selvarajah (Sri Lanka/ UK)
CEO, The Gate Institute, UK.

Convener

S.Mathivathany (Sri Lanka)
Director, Harmony Centre, University of Vavuniya (UOV)

The Conference Scientific Committee

Dr. Nesrin Kenar (Turkey)
Prof. Herbert Rosana (Philippines)
Dr. Vidya Jain (India)
Prof. Liu Cheng (China)
Prof. Raghuram (Sri Lanka)
Prof. Rameez Afthulla (Sri Lanka)
Dr. Jeyashankar (Sri Lanka)
Buddhi Kattel (Nepal)
Rahime Özgün Kehya (Turkey)
Lalit Jung Shahi (Nepal)
Dr. Sri Nuryanti (Indonesia)
Dr. Manish Sharma (India)
Dr. Aslam Khan (India)
Prof. Heather Devere (New Zealand)
Dr. Michael Fusi Ligaliga (Hawaii-Pacific)
Dr. Prisca Delima (Indonesia)
Rumana Mehdi (Pakistan)
Dr. Stella Micheong Cheong (S. Korea)
Roshan Pokharel (Nepal)
Dr. Cahyo Pamungkas (Indonesia)
Chiranjibi Bhandari (Nepal)
Dr. Sr. Chrisia Laura Pinto (India)

Conference Local Teams and Coordinators

Mr. S. Harikaran, (Sri Lanka)
Mr. S. A. Jude Leon (Sri Lanka)
Ms. P. Ruksani (Sri Lanka)

Conference Link <https://vau.ac.lk/ichr2024/>
Abstract Submission <https://appra.net/appra-conference-2024/>
<https://forms.gle/K1RHeBhvAqENBjcn7>

Important Dates

Abstract Submission Close	15th November 2023 30 November 2023	Notification of Full Paper Acceptance	21st February 2024
Notification of Abstract Acceptance Full Paper Submission	15 December 2023 30th January 2024	Camera Ready Submission Due Conference Day	28th February 2024 07th - 10th March 2024

For more information about this conference:

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