

Leap Year message from INAT President

This is the last day in February of a leap year. Some believe leap year brings bad news. However, other cultures think it represents something positive. Whatever your cultural beliefs, I encourage you to take a leap in your commitment to empowering the most distressed communities and people. Gaza by far is currently the most distressed community in the world. For over four months it has endured bombing and military aggression that is unimaginable. As of today over 30,000 have been killed in Gaza, over 70% were women and children. The destruction has left Gaza without electricity, communication systems, clean water, or sanitation. While numerous agencies and organizations have declared this aggression an act of genocide, Israel continues to drop bombs and destroy families. This is the most egregious display of the use of inappropriate technology. It has cost Israel an estimated \$60 billion in missiles, rockets, and bullets. What an awful waste of money. Billions of weapons technology destroy billions of infrastructure - housing, water, communication, transportation, and energy systems. This has left over a million Palestinians in a state of deprivation that will lead to thousands of more deaths. Everyone should be concerned about this situation. There must be a global call for peace and justice. Immediate relief for Palestine is a must.

Those engaged in science and technology have a unique role. We are most responsible for assessing the state of technology development and crafting more humane technology policies. For over twenty years, members of INAT have researched, developed, and implemented technology to empower people from rural water systems to sustainable agricultural schemes. We will continue to engage academics, practitioners, and communities to advance the wide range of technologies designed to empower communities and improve the well-being of the most disadvantaged.

We are in the midst of organizing our next international appropriate technology conference (the 11th ICAT). It will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 25th to 29th of November this year. The theme is *Building Sustainable Rural and Urban Cities for Economic Growth, Enhancing Health, and Eradicating Poverty*. The conference will bring together academics, students, practitioners and community activists. Conference participants share a concern for sustainable technologies that assure the basic needs of citizens, while empowering their communities to control their resources and development.

The *Appropriate Technology Manifesto* (ATM) categorises stakeholders in groups: 1) educational institutions; 2) government structures; 3) international agencies; 4) non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), and community organisations; 5) the private sector; and 6) engaged citizens. Each group can play a part in our 11th ICAT. The different stakeholders has different interests and different global perspectives. INAT takes on the task to engage these diverse stakeholders in particular ways to elicit support for the appropriate technology agenda.

We make our strongest appeal to the engaged citizen. You the reader can make a difference. If you are a member of INAT become more active. If you are new to INAT please join us in this struggle for humanity. Please check out our *Appropriate Technology Manifesto* for ways you can make a difference. Our first INAT book *Appropriate Technology Manifesto Shifting the Forces of Production to Empower People and Protect the Planet* is now available from Africa World Press - <https://africaworldpressbooks.com/science-technology/>.