

December 2021



## Dear colleagues and friends of the WOMENVAI platform,

This year in June, we elected the WOMENVAI executive board.

To this end, Lylian Coelho, is outgoing as Deputy Director that I am replacing. My arrival remains in the continuity of WOMENVAI's global strategy and its deployment, was achieved in the last quarter of 2021, among other things, by our participation in several events including in particular the COP26 for which we've been accredited. Also, the WOMENVAI Academy in Mauritania where we have trained, in collaboration with the CMFA and some local partners, women in female entrepreneurship in various fields related to education, sustainable environment, education and cosmetics. We also had the opportunity to raise awareness on gender in STEM

at local private and public Mauritanian schools so young girls aged 10 to 12 could taste engineering science through educational and fun games.

This latest 2021 issue therefore covers and details topics around COP26 and our main topics and works: sustainable environments, the latest technologies.

Even if we know that the next few weeks are going to be a bit difficult, our resilience will help us move forward. We wish you all the best for this end of year!

Good reading & best wishes ladies and gentlemen.

**Asma Brini, Vice-President and Co-founding Member of WOMENVAI**

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**Anja Hajdukovic**  
Environmental Scientist



**As an independent researcher, Anja has been assessing the impact of global warming on the thermal stratification and the mixing regime of natural waters for the past 3 years for the University of Geneva.**

Her research identifies the impact of these processes on the surface heat budget of lakes, as well as the risks of eutrophication. A paper presenting the results, for which

she is the main author, is set to be published soon in high impact international publications. With her adventurous spirit, she also had the chance to work last summer 2021 as the lead scientist of an Arctic expedition in the west coast of Greenland in order to better understand how climate change impacts the Arctic region.

**«This summer, I lived a once in a lifetime experience that I would like to share with you today.** A story that started in Iceland on a sailing boat, where I became an explorer and the lead scientist of an Arctic expedition to Greenland, sailing through a land of "Giant" icebergs and majestic fjords.

On behalf of the Fondation Pacifique and the Aquatic Physics Group of

(to be cont'd on page 2)

**Anja Hajdukovic** Environmental Scientist (cont'd from page 1)

the University of Geneva, I collected samples of plastic and measured methane and carbon dioxide concentrations in the air and surface waters. I also became a "sound hunter" in the field of "bioacoustics" - mapping ocean soundscape in order to understand how marine mammals adapt to noise pollution. I believe both visible and invisible pollution are considerable and must be kept in the scope of scientists for a better insight into environmental concerns.

Sadly, I faced the reality of climate change through high temperatures, melting ice and an inefficient waste management. I would never have imagined myself walking in a dress in Greenland or witnessing a staring polar bear invasion... I felt powerless and hopeless. It is difficult to express that feeling, but it is quite unreal to find plastic in the middle of the sea or in a wildlife country such as Greenland. I want to ask you: Is that the image we want to convey?

This pushed me to advocate for climate [...]. Climate change in the Arctic must be of a common and urgent concern. Temperature has risen 2-3°C since 1950 - warming 2x faster than the rest of the world due to the loss of solar-reflecting sea ice and snow. The Arctic Ocean plays a crucial role in global carbon dioxide and methane cycles. Atmospheric concentrations have been rapidly increasing since pre-industrial times, contributing to global warming. While the Arctic ocean is an important sink for CO<sub>2</sub> uptake, it also emits methane and may counteract this natural "carbon pump". In response to climate change, a better understanding of CO<sub>2</sub> sinks and CH<sub>4</sub> sources are needed in the Arctic. To remind you, CH<sub>4</sub> is about 85x more powerful GHG than CO<sub>2</sub>.

It is also a large area of frozen carbon stored in permanently frozen soil, or subsea permafrost - critical in the Arctic ecosystem. Warming impacts its stability of and can potentially trigger the release of considerable amounts of methane from the seafloor to the atmosphere. This oceanic source of methane should not be neglected given the complexity of the topic and the lack of adequate data in the remote Arctic regions. To give an idea, the Arctic and high latitude regions are responsible for about 20% of global methane emission.

To sum up, I think that research allows for a better understanding of our climate and the potential impacts on our societies. Moreover, it allows

to build an open data source for research as well as to develop a framework for policymakers and climate mitigation.

Let me ask you: how do you think your life would change if the Gulf stream collapses/changes, since it naturally acts as a heat pump to the European climate? Take a step back and you will see that the polar circle is closer than it first appears...

Seeing the fragility of the Arctic's ecosystem has given to me the will to act [...]. I would like to invite you to incorporate science into your daily life, make it a hobby and think about citizen science as a tool to act. [...] Everyone can participate. I believe that citizen science can trigger a "Data Action Chain" across the world, which could be a genuine commitment to the planet. To quote my dear dad, it is "the first time in human history that our survival depends upon our ability to realise such utopias" and maybe, this is a good step to start and act."



## WOMENVAI Academy held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, November 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Emeima Ahmed Tall Taleb

A management graduate, passionate about business, management, and leadership, coaching and leading the RIM-feed project - Production of fodder for cattle and other livestock by recycling papers with the addition of food waste, agricultural waste and vegetable waste.

"I have a positive vision that the future will be wonderful and safer when we share our visions, ambitions, experiences with each other and I believe that together we are stronger."



### Ghlane Ahmed

A business woman and Human Rights activist in gender issues. A Private Law Bachelor's and Human Right's Master's Degree graduate.

"In the future, I want to create projects to help women become economically independent. I want to take part in gender-equality projects."

### El-zein's Soaps

My project is manufacturing soaps - 3 types are available: basic soaps, liquid soaps and natural herb and oil-based cosmetic soaps.

# News from the Global Summit of Women 2021

The GSW was held this year in Lisbon, Portugal at the end of October after a two-year hiatus due to the global health situation.

The World Women's Summit was conceived as the nexus where all sectors - public, private and non-profit - would come together under the common vision of **strengthening economic opportunities for women globally** through international benchmarking in different areas, ranging from working conditions to management of the company, through the financing of its business and strategies to achieve the positions of leaders of listed groups.



**Launched in 1990 in the United States**, this international Business women's forum meets every year and brings together several hundred participants from all over the world. This year, the forum has brought great hopes in the areas of the green economy and in programs that put climate change issues at the heart of their actions.

**Led by Muriel Pénicaud, Ambassador of France to OECD, former Minister of Labor, the French delegation of 50 women met in Lisbon to talk with other delegations.**

**Yvette Ramos, Member of the delegation (pictured left), shares her vision with us:**

"This event shows us once again that the industry can do better to include women to leadership positions. While France, with its recovery plan (*Plan de relance*), is doing everything to boost the economy and make France a more ecological, competitive and united country, indeed it is impossible to ignore 50% of the graduate talents who are women! Much has already been done for gender equality and fighting against

stereotypes from an early age, but mentalities must be changed by implementing new practices, including in the workplace. Studies show that mixed teams obtain better results. However, women represent only 30% of employees in the industry and barely over 15% of senior executives. Industries must be at the forefront of professional equality between women and men, a constant struggle and a lever for competitiveness."



# Cop26

The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from October 31<sup>st</sup> to November 12<sup>th</sup> 2021.

The COP26 summit tried to bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Indeed the UK was this year committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.



At WOMENVAI, first year accredited by the UNFCCC, we were delighted to have a quota of 6, for each week, which meant that we had a delegation of 12 people.. Here are their thoughts, comments and many other anecdotes. **Yvette Ramos- President, Lidia Zakowska -Secretary General and Lylian Coelho- Contact point for UNFCCC, Co-founders of WOMENVAI:**

COP26 is of course disappointing for the people we came to represent here in Glasgow. But there is hope as demonstrated through the recent IPCC report which provides high-level summaries and helps all of us understand the current state of Climate on Earth, including how it is changing and the role of human influence. We have no choice than to act and we, engineers and scientists, women and men together are more than ever ready to co-design with all stakeholders and offer the Planet and our Humanity a change taking-off now, with the Paris-agreement basis and co-implement a wise and concrete Climate Adaptation plan.



## A first time at COP by Amélie Baechler (Switzerland)

As a member of Women for Environment in Switzerland, I had the opportunity to join the WOMENVAI team in Glasgow and attend COP for the first time. From the very beginning, my activist mindset was quite dubious about the results that would be delivered by the conference.

The venue was divided into the Blue Zone – with negotiating and plenary rooms, conferences and round tables – and the Green Zone, where grassroots events were held. In the Green Zone, I attended a very touching talk by Marie Christina Kolo about the consequences of the climate crisis in Madagascar, where women are on the frontline. The IPCC Report presentation brought tears to my eyes. “Human influence on climate is unequivocal,” said Valerie Masson-Delmotte (IPCC). We figured that out 50 years ago. Now it is time to act! I met some amazing people who are involved in the climate fight, which gives me some hope for the future. Hopefully, the “Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally” declaration will be more than just words.

We need to empower young women all over the world. We are not a less valuable species than men and we have a key role to play in the transition.

## People make the world greener by Cátia Rosas (Portugal)

From the airport to the city, adverts could be seen everywhere – on the street, in shops and on public transport. All with the same purpose: a call to action for sustainability. Would it be achieved? There were two weeks of intense negotiations, involving almost 200 countries. In addition to country delegations, NGOs from all over the world were also at the conference, lobbying for stronger commitments.

A whole series of different events were held. Numerous opportunities arose. I encountered other realities and explored possible synergies, namely for promoting Engineering, Science and Technology to young girls. I met inspiring people from different continents and ethnic groups and discovered their projects, from capacity programmes and solar ovens to technology for fertilization in remote locations. I was touched by all that I saw and experienced, including the “Stop Killing Us” mask that an indigenous woman was wearing. (to be cont'd on page 5)



## People make the world greener (cont'd from page 4)

The agreement reached at COP26 was a compromise between all the different parties, but it still fell short of some expectations. The path now continues to COP27 in Cairo. On Hope Street, I saw a sticker saying “People Make Glasgow Greener”. Yes! With WOMENVAI, our drive to partner with other people and organisations can help to make the world greener.

After Glasgow, the world is still watching us. Choose the greener path. Thousands of people – and their lives and territories – are depending on us!



## Transport and urban development by Elisabetta Venezia (Italy)



During COP26, I participated in numerous meetings on transport and sustainable urban development. I made various contributions to technical discussions about overcoming the current limits linked to travel behavioural models, especially given the vulnerability of both the global economy and health systems worldwide.

I specifically emphasised gender issues from a social sustainability perspective. I also analysed the current trends in the car market, in the development of electrification and alternative sources and in decarbonisation. The scientific contributions were aimed at the transport sector, where a reduction in consumption is conceivable and where electricity is not yet a viable alternative on a significant scale.

## Creativity is the key by Amélie Gelbmann (Switzerland)

One of my best memories of COP26 was participating in a workshop on the future of green transport. In groups, we had to find strategies so that a family would choose to go on holiday by train instead of by plane or car.

I loved coming up with new ideas and sharing them with such a diverse group of people, something truly unique to COP. Workshops are very interesting opportunities to be proactive, exchange with other people, present ideas and find concrete solutions. One of the Eurostar collaborators even congratulated me for one of my ideas, which he thought was great!

I had two key takeaways from the workshop: we all have huge potential for creativity and an economy that emits less (or no) GHG emissions should be seen as an opportunity and a step in the right direction. I look forward to participating in more workshops at the next COP and finding new solutions!



## COP26 Transport Day by Lidia Zakowska (Poland)



November 10 was Transport Day at COP26, with many sessions, debates and presentations devoted to the interplay between sustainable transport and climate change reduction goals. Emphasis was placed on cooperation between scientists and professional engineering organisations, on the one hand, and local communities as users of transport on the other, in creating and implementing innovative transport solutions. Alongside fellow transport expert Prof. Dr. Elisabetta Venezia, I was nominated and participated in the COP26 Transport Day.

The two main issues discussed at COP26 Transport Day were green solutions to reduce climate change and action to align transport with the 17 UN SDGs. It was concluded that synergies with the other objectives of the SDGs – in particular education, gender equality and clean energy – play a major role in the success of transport sustainability.

The outstanding panel discussions that we had the opportunity to attend concluded with the expressed interest to organise another Transport Day at COP27 in cooperation with WOMENVAI, as a manifesto for the joint efforts of all engineers – women and men – to work on transforming the idea of sustainable transport into solutions for a better life on earth.

The final day of COP26 finished with a march from the plenary room through the halls of the venue and into the city of Glasgow. The voice of Gender Climate Justice was shouted loud and clear to all parties and observers.

## Maintaining a critical approach to technology by Maureen Fordham (UK)

At COP26 in Glasgow with WOMENVAI, I was alert to the presence of technology and how we might engage and influence around gender inclusion. I admit to being a technophile, although always a critical one.

There was a lot of tech about in both the Blue and Green Zones as evidenced by the Principal Partners, Partners and Providers. I started to see that some of the environmental and sustainability concerns espoused by the partners were being interpreted in particular ways that were not as all-encompassing as I had imagined.

My interest was sparked by two articles in The Guardian newspaper that were published during COP26 (“Carbon cost of watching Netflix” and “‘Like slave and master’: DRC miners toil for 30p an hour to fuel electric cars”), which together raised significant environmental and social concerns about our sometimes narrow focus on the tech product and less on the tech process.

My takeaway message is about the need to always consider the whole lifecycle of the tech many of us admire and aspire to. We must be sure that we keep social and environmental concerns front and centre when making decisions and choices about the tech that we buy and use; and demand the same from the producers.



## COP26 Gender Day by Lylian Coelho (France)

At Gender Day on Nov. 9, I was invited by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) to sit on the jury and celebrate projects fighting for gender justice and taking local initiatives to protect women’s rights, while also contributing to ambitious global climate action.

Alongside several NGOs, all the team spent hours analysing projects involving gender-fair climate solutions and policies that include climate-resilient and transformative development models that bring multiple benefits for a fair transition. Six projects from around the globe were selected for the pilot round of the Gender-Just Climate Solutions Scale Fund, a new re-grant collective founded by women’s rights organisations and members of the Women and Gender Constituency, and launched at the July 2021 Generation Equality Forum.

Thank you Anne Barre, Bridget Burns, Gina Cortés and all the team. It was a pleasure to be part of such an amazing project!

## A call for women project leaders by Olivier Taburet (Switzerland)

I attended a conference on sustainable development in French-speaking countries at the IFDD Pavillion. After an introduction from Gareth Phillips of the African Development Bank Group (AfDBG) in Ivory Coast, a minister from Mali explained that 20% of climate transition financing is awarded to French-speaking countries and that \$50 billion a year is needed for sub-Saharan Africa. Canada has doubled its financing commitment and the Province of Quebec announced an additional several million dollars during the conference.

Audrey-Cynthia Yamadjako of the AfDBG talked about women’s resilience to climate change. She presented 16 practical projects from the Africa Climate Change Fund (FCCA), for which 8.6 million USD has already been committed. The projects are being deployed by government agencies, NGOs, the AfDBG and consultants. Audrey-Cynthia also made a call to action to women entrepreneurs and project managers to apply for more projects in clean energy and utilities, resilient agriculture and economic diversification for young people and women.

I had two chats with Audrey-Cynthia about young women in STEM. Hopefully, we will have further opportunities in the future to build on those discussions.



## Girls from the global South as protagonists of the youth movement at COP26 by João Pedro Rocha (Brazil)

The results of COP26 were not as positive as we had hoped.

Countries still need to show greater ambition to keep the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. (to be cont'd on p.6)

## Girls from the global South as protagonists of the youth movement at COP26 (cont'd from p.5)

But a big change is underway: women and girls from the global south are increasingly taking up space in the discussion.

At the opening ceremony, the young Brazilian indigenous activist Txai said: "The earth tells us that we have no more time. It is not 2030 or 2050. It is now." Alongside her, 90 young Brazilians formed the largest delegation in the history of COP. And girls led the way. It is a first step, but now girls need to be heard and included in the discussions. Solutions will only come from multiple voices.



## The importance of sustainability culture in small businesses by Betty Bonnardel (UK/France)

Thanks to WOMENVAI, I attended COP26. It was an opportunity to catch up with other like-minded members to discuss concrete actions to address the challenges caused by climate change. Together, our actions make a difference.

At COP26, there was a lot of talk about policies and regulations – but I am action-driven. Sustainability in business is critical. Right from the start, all businesses should have a sustainable approach and strategy.

That means addressing four areas: people, communities, governance and the environment. By establishing their principles and a genuine sustainable culture early, start-ups and SMEs can deliver their mission fully, while caring about the world.

## Commitment versus reality by Pascale Fressoaz (France)

COP26 was both mysterious and exciting. There were so many meetings happening that it was difficult to keep track of how the negotiations were progressing, but it was also inspiring to see the huge number of people involved (over 39,000 participants). In a struggle that can sometimes feel isolating because we do not yet represent the majority, we stood shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in the fight for the climate and more equality.

As for the outcome, I am slightly less positive. There is too much emphasis on communication or a "new initiative". Our society has not yet reached the turning point. We are still on a straight line, probably leading to a dead end.

Although steps have been taken in some areas (including coal, fossil fuels, methane and hydrocarbons), states are announcing measures for 2050, while also setting carbon neutrality targets for 2040 and seemingly forgetting about the targets for 2030 – or even the SDGs.

The gap between commitment and execution is still abysmal. Across the world, states are signing up to net zero without the slightest idea of how to get there. There is a real discrepancy between the commitments being made by states and the resources available to meet them. We cannot continue to plunder resources to make hybrid vehicles at the expense of the populations living in those areas, depriving them of access to water and their land.

Above all, COP is also an opportunity to bring more media focus to climate issues. As it directly concerns Heads of States, interest from the media increases. At some point, we will see a shift and climate issues will take up major space in the media.

## A qualified, influential role for civil society by Luiz Eduardo Rielli (Brazil)

In my opinion, COP26 in Glasgow was extremely successful in putting climate negotiations back on track and in regaining momentum after the hard times that Covid-19 has imposed on all countries, organisations and individuals.

At a time when attention could easily have been focused on economic recovery,



## Meeting African activist and leader Marie Tamoifo at COP26



**Marie Tamoifo is the Founding President of the Green Youth Association of Cameroon (Association Jeunesse Verte du Cameroun) as well as the Sub-regional Coordinator of the Network of Young Leaders for the Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems (REJEFAC),** with national representation branches in each of the ten countries of the COMIFAC/ Central Africa space.

She is an active member of the Conference on Central African Dense and Moist Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC), created at the initiative of the Ministers in charge of forests, civil society, the private sector of the Congo Basin.

She has been committing to the cause of youth and young women leaders for 21 years, and this was proven to the world when she was designated as spokesperson for African youth at the Summit of Heads of State of Africa and France in Bamako, Mali in 2005. Her achievements include leading many projects and programs, among which several advocacy and capacity building activities, promoted solar electrification in many rural communities, launch COP CHEZ NOUS events since 2015 linked to Paris Agreement.

### She tells us about her ambitions and vision:

“If I were a President, I would transform the lives of so many young people and women of the world, taking key decisions that would accelerate development at local and national levels, starting with key steps - roads, energy, water, food, security - all in connection with climate justice. Unfortunately it is not the case.

What I can do, however, is to start with WOMENVAI, with projects like conducting waste management projects in connection with schools to boost environmental awareness among young people, sustain the PODC project of solarhill and solar energy in rural health facilities, inspire and built a network of young African and Women experts on international climate negotiations.

My ambition is to launch my major entrepreneurship project - GreeningMedia Web TV, for which I need to raise \$300,000 - a projet aimed at young people , women and indigenous peoples that will showcase grass root climate actions - to be launched in 2022.

I stand for transparency in partnerships, inclusivity of the global South. From Ambition to Action with zero tolerance for oppression, bullying, power dynamics and language barriers, excluding the indigenous, vulnerable and marginalized, I have been serving my community at many levels - from admin task support to partnerships to work, both virtual and in the field, for 21 years of my life.”

**REJEFAC is a network of over 1,000 organizations and partners in the ten subregions of Cameroon and the ten countries of Central Africa.**

Its main mission is to increase and encourage the involvement of youths and gender in the various changes taking place on local, national and international levels regarding environmental, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development issues. Helping to promote talents, ideas and youth initiatives, while inspiring a sense of pro-activity, creativity, responsibility and freedom in them.



# Statement at the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

At the occasion of the Intersessional panel of the **United Nations CSTD** held in **Geneva, Switzerland** on November 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> 2021, **Yvette Ramos, president of WOMENVAI and of the SWISS ENGINEERING Geneva chapter**, delivered a statement on the priority theme “Industry 4.0 for inclusive development”.

She pointed out a few challenges in accessing technology including the political fragility factors, the looming barriers posed by climate change, and gender discrimination, these being accentuated by the pandemic, and expressed solutions WOMENVAI and its partners and ambassadors have been implementing over the past years, either through its WOMENVAI Academy or through technological solutions to fight sexual harassment and violence at school, on university campuses and in the workplace.

Full statement can be found [here](#).



## Call for contributions : WSIS by Denisse Salas



**Brainstorming and knowledge café for ICT's and gender Mainstreaming**

This event took place on Friday November 26<sup>th</sup> with the objective to include suggestion of the participants in the agenda of WSIS forum 2022 related with the following topics: Equal opportunities for Women in Innovation and Design, Women Entrepreneurs- Opportunities and Challenges, Equal opportunities for Girls/ Women with visual challenges focus specially in the needs of education in STEM for children with visual impediments, Girls in ICT focus on Empowerment of young woman via the ICTs and Women in UN (ICT for Development).

In the same session Ms Gitanjali Sah (ITU) and Ms Mei Lin Fung (People Centered Internet) launched “WSIS Gender Trendsetters”, that consist to nominate a person as gender ambassador that can fulfil the following 6 objectives:

- Gather inspiring trail blazers for Gender Equality all around the world and create a community
- Identify the current ICTs trends on gender issues to promote gender mainstreaming and equality
- Organize workshops in the WSIS Forum ICTs and Gender Mainstreaming special track
- Promote the WSIS Forum 50/50 gender balance challenge
- Promote and encourage stakeholders to join WSIS gender repository
- Advocate for the inclusion of gender issues and gender digital equity in ICT discussions.

The nominations can be submitted [here](#).



## A message from Nicola, who supported WOMENVAI during COP26, through PwC's corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme

Thanks to VENDREDI, a platform bringing together citizens, non-profits and businesses, WOMENVAI has gained citizens and businesses involvement. We shared the need for a volunteer to help us follow our activities at the COP26 and she did it!

"Originally from Glasgow in Scotland, I have lived in Paris for more than seven years. Through my job with PwC France, I have the opportunity to devote three working days every year to CSR causes. That is how I came to meet WOMENVAI. I had the pleasure to follow the delegates' journeys in Glasgow from afar and to wrap up their experiences for the newsletter. See you next year in Egypt!"



Nicola Crawford (UK/France)



In France and Maghreb, PwC provides consulting and audit services as well as tax and legal expertise to organisations of all sizes across all business sectors. With more than 6,000 employees, our multi-disciplinary teams pool their expertise within an international network of more than 295,000 people in 156 countries. PwC France and Maghreb's strategic ambition is to lead the way in building trust and delivering lasting transformation for companies, in line with the PwC global strategy, The New Equation."



## Who we are: the co-founding members

### Executive Committee

Yvette Ramos, president, France/Switzerland  
Asma Brini, vice-president, France/Tunisia  
Inès Aivazian, treasurer, France  
Sophie Magner, deputy-treasurer, Belgium/France  
Lidia Zakowska, secretary general, Poland

Lilian Coelho  
Ariane Barbier, France  
Camille Coq, France  
Guillaume Pahud, France/Switzerland  
Denisse Salas, Bolivia/Switzerland

### Ethics Committee

Soizic Vangrevelinghe, France  
Denis Aivazian, France,  
Sangeeta Wij, India

Liliane Dorveaux, France  
Marwa Zaghbib, Tunisia  
Nadia Souissi, Tunisia  
Betty Bonnardel-Azzarelli, UK/ France  
Lidia Santiago, Portugal

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