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THE

UK ACADEMIC SALON
2020 REPORT

OTE SPEAKERS
DISCUSSIONS

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UK nurtured and safeguarded innovation, and maintained its fruitful international collaborations.

"Collaboration which is not politicised, which is driven by the new knowledge creation above all else, is vital to all our futures," he said. That sentiment echoed in the subsequent panel talks, and in Sir Kenneth Olisa's closing remarks.

A non-executive director at Huawei, Sir Kenneth said that 5G was "a technological step-change with the potential to have an impact on society equal to or greater than the internet" but cautioned that politics and competition between nations must not be allowed to limit its potential.

Victor Zhang, vice-president, Huawei Technologies

Victor Zhang's keynote illustrated the importance of innovation to Huawei's history and how the pursuit of new technologies and systems remains a guiding principal for the company. Huawei's commitment to research and development manifested itself in its investments, said Mr Zhang, with the company now employing more than 80,000 people in R&D.

"Our investments in R&D have grown by over 30 per cent last year," he said, with more than $20 billion (£16.35 billion) allocated to R&D investment in 2020. Finding common causes with like-minded academic institutions was key, and Mr Zhang spoke of Huawei's new five-year strategic partnership with Imperial College London as a model for "connecting the digital ecosystem across academia and business."

Mr Zhang said that society will be transformed by artificial intelligence and 5G, and that academia and business must collaborate to enhance the social value of such innovations.

Ian Walmsley, provost, Imperial College London

Ian Walmsley expanded upon the theme of social value and innovation, including the importance of partnerships. He stated that ecosystems of ideas needed both "capacity and fertility" so that ideas can be both

Ensuring the UK remains a world leader
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THE PANEL
John Gill, editor, Times Higher Education
(moderator)
Sarah Main, executive director, Campaign
for Science and Engineering (CaSE)
Joe Marshall, chief executive, National

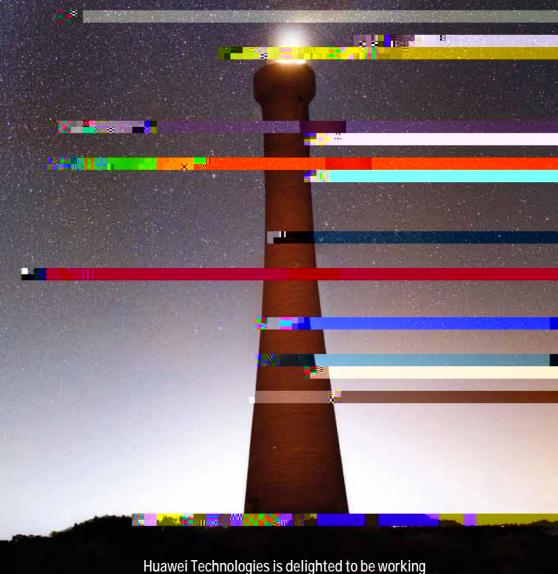How can technology and innovation address a global health crisis?

THE PANEL
Sarah Custer, digital editor,
Times Higher Education (moderator)
Sebastien Ourselin, head of school, School
of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging
Science, King's College London
Geraint Rees, pro-vice provost (AI), dean of
the Faculty of Life Sciences, UCL
Olga Kostopoulou, reader in medical
decision making, Imperial College London

Geraint Rees noted that, during the
Covid-19 crisis, AI was facilitating activities
such as online grocery shopping and load
balancing for broadband networks, but
older technologies such as apps have been
at the forefront of our response. Sebastien
Ourselin argued that this was data-related.

Citing Kings' College London's challenges
when developing its symptom tracking app,
Professor Ourselin said that "federated
learning" – where machine learning trains
algorithms to interrogate data across
multiple decentralised sources – was
needed to seed innovation.

The Covid-19 crisis had changed
the way doctors see patients, said Olga

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