



Summary of Session: Enabling digitization for people, planet and prosperity - a business perspective

International Chamber of Commerce

16 March 2023, 14:00 CET

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/336>

Whether it's in the underpinning infrastructure for economic and social progress or in providing solutions in sectors as varied as agriculture, energy, healthcare, manufacturing or education, the value of ICTs and digital technologies cannot be understated. These technologies, when properly managed, can be a formidable engine of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable economic growth, as well as a powerful catalyst to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. With 2023 marking the halfway point in the implementation of the SDGs, the session drew on the experience and expertise of global business developing, deploying and using digital technologies to share lessons learnt and discuss the way forward to unlock the power of digitization for people, planet and prosperity. Participants also shared their views on what policy and regulatory elements must be in place to support an enabling policy environment for realizing the SDGs by 2030 through digital technologies, highlighting the value of public-private partnerships as well as multistakeholder and cross-sectoral cooperation .

Key Issues discussed

The session offered an overview of best practices and lessons learnt from business, addressing how investments in digitization work for people, planet and prosperity. It showcased the efforts made to leverage the value of meaningful connectivity to facilitate inclusive development and address the gender digital divide. It shed light on the opportunities brought by digital services towards climate action, and it addressed the means of closing the connectivity and usage gap in rural areas, and the efforts made in helping companies accelerate their digital transformation and reach a sustainable business model. Throughout their interventions, participants called for holistic policy-making that considers economic, technical, socio-cultural, and overarching governance factors and is based on multistakeholder partnerships and input.

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

The workshop highlighted key recommendations for policymaking that move forward the implementation of WSIS Action Lines for development, while identifying key priority areas, including: *Promotion of ICTs for development, Enabling environment, Capacity building*. Across these identified areas of priority, the workshop delved into case studies showcasing business efforts with social, environmental and economic objectives, while highlighting the need to reinforce multistakeholder partnerships that maximize the benefit of digital technologies. Furthermore, the session also



addressed the challenges in bridging digital skills gaps, and the efforts made by business in supporting digital literacy and capacity building.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (3-5 bullet points))

For people: The interventions highlighted that solutions in digital transformation will thrive through cross-sectoral partnerships and multistakeholder collaboration, focusing on three elements: connectivity and access, applications and services, and skills, to use the Internet safely and productively. For example, the session showcased learnings from Microsoft's Airband Initiative, working towards connecting 20 million people in Africa by the end of 2025.

For planet: As a crucial component for the acceleration of sustainable development, the session presented the developments of research projects to support climate change adaptation and mitigation. The approach to drive digital transformation and green transition is two-fold: it requires cooperation in standardization of ICT sectors, and the collaboration to reap the benefits brought by ICT services in the economy. The session presented initiatives led by Orange in smart agriculture and smart buildings, as well as Ericsson's work in advancing accuracy of production processes and reducing waste through 5G enabling 27 million euros of savings annually.

For prosperity: The session drew input from ongoing projects focusing on digital literacy for SMEs, youth, women, progressing through initiatives such as Grow with Google, as well as connecting people in rural areas, facilitated through cross-sector partnerships, and bringing "everyone on the table" to close the digital divide, as showcased in Telefonica's Internet Para Todos, offering mobile broadband to unconnected rural populations in Peru.

Actionable plan (2-5 points)

The speakers echoed a holistic approach in deploying meaningful connectivity, through establishing partnerships.

The interventions called for scaling-up investments in private, public or cross-sector partnerships, by creating an enabling environment.

The session also highlighted the importance of supporting SMEs with cutting edge solutions to boost the productivity and digitization of their services.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

WSIS Forum 2024 should keep seeking in-depth discussions on deploying multistakeholder partnerships to spread connectivity and meaningful access to Internet and ICTs and how this contributes to bridging divides and closing gaps. The WSIS Forum mandate refers to taking stock of the progress made on the WSIS Action Lines. Thus discussions should gather more in depth multistakeholder conversations on the lesson learnt and progresses at advancing the Action Lines.