

## Session Outcome Document

(2 pages max)

### Embracing Multi-generational Digital Collaboration: Shaping the Future of Work

#### Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development

30th May, 2024. 16.00-16.45

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/297>

#### Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The impact of an extended life course on established societal roles and norms can already be observed in different aspects of life, including the workplace.
- It is still unclear how digitalization and generative AI will generate beneficial multi-generational co-existence and interaction.
- The social learning required of older people to adapt to a fast-paced world is challenging, as the supersonic change of technology makes successful adaptation to evolving life conditions more difficult.
- Social policies including social protection and welfare need to be more adaptable to the evolving demands and limited resources due to the lower number of young adult workers who contribute to social insurance funds. The discussion of generational justice needs to be broadened to identify synergistic and generative benefits for all.
- The mental health impact of aging is manifesting itself as loneliness, depression, and other maladaptive behaviors. Workplace learning should not be limited to task-related upskilling and digital upgrading but should also focus on personal development and interpersonal reskilling. After all, the healthy ageing phenomenon at large scale is relatively new. Better preparation for post-retirement should be started before retirement begins. Lifelong learning could leverage multigenerational human resources and expertise for collective learning and co-creation of tomorrow.
- Modernising access to social protection through better use of digital technology can prepare our societies for these older age-related challenges.
- Benefits resulting from the adoption of AI require national frameworks to identify potential beneficiaries and integrate them into social protection design. Advances in AI and ITC Technology will improve social program coverage and service delivery.
- Effective oversight and management of the challenges in leveraging technology and data advances to improve social protection must be priorities to ensure fairness and full coverage of beneficiaries.
- Ageism and sexism continue to affect policy choices and practices regardless of ageing. Human resource management needs to conduct regular audits to stop the negative impact of stereotyping against older workers and female workers. Multigenerational interactions and teamwork will help change perceptions and reduce stereotypical images of different age groups. Social cohesion is necessary to ensure a smooth transition to the reality of ageing society where population older than 60 years outnumber the younger than 16 years.

#### 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)

A rapid digitalization of major urban centers will be useful to cope with the fact that 70% of the world population (estimated to be 8.5 billion) will reside in large urban centers by 2050. Digital tools will be part of everyday experiences for all, especially in the urban territory and the rural areas connected to these urban centers for daily transactions and the delivery of public services and private goods. Without sufficient mastery of digital literacy and competence, today's youth will not be able to engage in better-rewarded work in the coming decade. Therefore, the digital divide in many countries will produce a "poverty trap" in the coming decade when artificial intelligence will replace many of the more routine types of work that do not require human sensitivity (relational intelligence) and judgment (critical thinking).

The 65 and older generation will also face fundamental challenges in this technology-fueled new world. Increasingly the older than 65 years of age will participate in the labour market for various reasons, such as

financial insecurity or desire for meaningful engagement with the larger society. This trend started over 20 years ago and is projected to increase significantly. Yet, evidence based on existing research shows that labor force participation in the older population is very much affected by the educational level and gender of older job seekers. Resilience in continuous learning and adaptation could be made easier if the ICT tools could enable such transition regardless age with accompanying multigenerational social interactions.

The following WSIS Action Lines can be better achieved through collaborative multi-generational relations. Different generations may bring different “assets” to the multi-generational reality through mutual learning and through a coaching/mentoring relationship. This relationship needs to be facilitated systematically within the work organization and the community at large. The action lines can be achieved through purposeful digital and social tools that are made available to promote effective multi-generational collaborations are:

- WSIS Action Line 1 The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development  
Governments can exercise their regulatory role in promoting the monitoring and reviewing of social cohesion and multigenerational interactions through appropriate mechanisms such as surveys, public education, and consensus building. ICT infrastructure development and related competencies could be better integrated into the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the HLPF and/or the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council. WSIS could serve as the focal point in ensuring greater accountability of the governments and stakeholders regarding promoting the ICTs for development in the political context of the "Leaving No One Behind" of the 2030 Agenda or the Digital Solidarity Agenda. The trend toward developing collaborative ICT tools applied to multi-generational teamwork needs to be encouraged.
- WSIS Action Line 3 Access to Information and Knowledge.  
Challenges concerning the digital divide, both in terms of infrastructure development and digital literacy, need to be addressed in the next decade. The latter can be accelerated through the curricular inclusion of digital proficiency and continued education and skill development.
- WSIS Action Line 4 Capacity Building  
Digital literacy programs for marginalized groups, such as women, Indigenous groups, and older but poor populations, can achieve inclusive digitalization. Building capacity through multigenerational channels and the right competence in the use of digital tools for learning, commerce, and cultural activities can spread the benefits of ICT technology more broadly.
- WSIS Action Line 5 Building Capacity and Confidence in Using ICTs  
Our societies need to create autonomous learning programs on ICT security and crime prevention for the less digitally proficient population. Multigenerational collaboration where the digital native can enhance the cyber security, an ever-increasing risk, of the vulnerable groups and older population. With the right support by the governments and multigenerational companionship, willingness to use the ICT will not be impacted significantly in a prolonged manner by the fake news, scams and other social pathological or criminal behaviour.
- WSIS Action Line 7, E-Learning, E-Health, E-Employment  
The provision of social services, such as education, medical services, and different forms of work through digital modality will continue to grow. To mitigate the potential discriminatory effect, hotlines supported by real persons, not bots, will be a growing demand by the less sophisticated citizens with their mastery of online activities. On the service provision side, multigenerational workforce will ensure the nuances of the pre-programmed responses and the quality of trouble shooting for the citizens when encounter difficulties in access or receiving services which are inevitable to happen.

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

- There was a recognition among the participants and the panelists that multigenerational collaboration through digital means could be a new frontier for research and development in the IT sector.



**Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)**

- To form alliances with other groups also working on the ageing issue to broaden the scope of the query concerning multi-generational collaboration through digital means.
- A concept note for the 2025 WSIS session on workplace learning and multigenerational collaboration could be circulated for consultation among researchers and specialists.

**Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (one paragraph)**

Multigeneration collaboration at the workplace through ICT and AI enabled tools