



HLPF 2019: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Side Event: “Fostering digital transformation and global partnerships for SDG achievement” [Aligning WSIS process with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development]

11 July 2019, 13:15 – 15:15

**United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
304 East 45th Street, 11th Floor, FF-1140, New York**

A side event hosted by Saudi Arabia and with the engagement of United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Stakeholders

Lunch will be provided from 12:15 to 13:15, sponsored by Saudi Arabia

Overview

ICTs are now integral to how people in many parts of the world live and work and are transforming societies and economies. Their potential to address complex and interconnected development challenges is also now widely recognized.

However, more needs to be done to fully leverage the potential of ICTs, and new and emerging technologies in general, to advance sustainable development through the digital transformation of societies and economies. This is particularly pressing as the digital revolution moves forward at an uneven pace around the world, increasing the digital divide. One of the main challenges of this digital and knowledge divide is the growing disparities in both the hard components (such as ICT infrastructure) and the soft components (such as policy, content and capacity development, including digital access and digital literacy) at the same time. As more advanced economies develop and deploy frontier technologies (such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, or the Internet of Things), many Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) do not have the necessary investment in capacities and access, including content in local languages on the Internet, infrastructure and use, especially in rural areas. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed to achieve the inclusive, more equal world envisioned in the 2030 Agenda, and requires increased cooperation called for by the UN Secretary General.

In this context, and in response to the UNSG’s call as well as to the imperative framed by SDG 17, cooperation must be further reinforced to ensure that technological progress is even across all regions and benefits all. This side event will highlight good practices at the national, regional, and international level in the field of digital transformation and global partnerships to achieve the SDGs. The side event will also reflect on the [WSIS-SDG matrix](#), which underlines the role that ICTs can play in achieving Agenda 2030.

Provisional Programme

13:15 – 13:25 Welcome from the Hosts

- Mr. Mansour AlQurashi, Director of International Strategy and Negotiation at the Saudi Communication and IT Commission (CITC), Saudi Arabia
- Mr. Jorge Chediek, Director, UN Office on South-South Cooperation and Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation

13:25 – 14:25 Enhanced digital cooperation for SDG achievement

- Moderator and Welcome Remarks: Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (co-chair of UNGIS)
- Ms. Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, Deputy Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Deputy Director of UNDP's Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) (co-chair of UNGIS)
- H.E. Ms Paula Ingabire, Minister, Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda
- H.E. Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York
- Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (vice-chair of UNGIS)
- Ms. Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) New York Office (vice-chair of UNGIS)
- Mr. Ricardo de Guimarães Pinto, Liaison Officer, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (vice-chair of UNGIS)
- Mr. Andrew Wilson, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Permanent Observer to the United Nations
- Ms. Karen McCabe, Senior Director of Technology Policy and International Affairs, IEEE

14:25-1500 Perspectives and case studies on digital transformation and partnerships for SDG achievement

{Moderated Discussion}

Moderators: Ms. Gitanjali Sah, Strategy and Policy Coordinator, ITU and Ms. Minerva Novero-Belec, Policy Specialist, UNDP

- **Financing the SDGs:** Director, UNDP Finance Hub [Dock for the SG's Task Force on Digital Financing] TBC
- **Regional Implementation of WSIS:** Mr. Oliver Chinganya, Director of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) and OIC of the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Division (TCND), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- **Implementation of WSIS Action lines C1, C7, and C11:** Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
- **Implementation of WSIS Action line C7 E business:** Ms. Riefqah Jappie, ITC Representative to the UN, International Trade Centre
- **Women Engineers and Scientists:** Ms. Gail G. Mattson, PE, CHMM, PMP, International Network of Women Engineers and Scientists (INWES) President
- **Frontier technologies (Virtual Reality):** Mr. Salar Shana, President, World XR Association, Switzerland
- **ICT Accessibility initiatives and projects:** Ms. Akiko Ito, Chief of the Programme on Disability Section, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA
- **Youth entrepreneurship:** Mr. Ted Chen, Focal Point for Technology and Science, UN Major Group for Children & Youth; Co-founder and CEO, Evercomm Singapore (Tech-Start up)

15:00-15:15

Close | ITU and UNDP

About UNGIS

[UNGIS](#) is an interagency mechanism established after the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to advance coordinated implementation of the Summit outcomes, enhance coherence of policy and programming on ICTs for development across agencies in the UN system, and promote partnerships and collaboration.

About WSIS, WSIS Action Lines and the WSIS Forum

WSIS was a Summit held in 2003 in Geneva and Tunis in 2005. The WSIS Action Lines serve as the framework for the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, organized according to the themes of the Plan of Action adopted in Geneva (facilitated by agencies in UNGIS). The [WSIS Forum](#) evolved since 2005 to become the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community. It facilitates the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to advance sustainable development as well as information exchange, knowledge creation and sharing of best practices, dialogue and debate on emerging technological trends and issues, partnerships building, and engagement on the evolution of increasingly digital societies. WSIS Forum 2020 will be held on 30 March - 3 April at the ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.