# **High-Level Track**

# WSIS 2023 High-Level Interactive Policy Sessions

The WSIS Forum 2023 serves as a key forum for discussing the role of ICTs as a means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, with due regard to the global mechanism for follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/70/1). The WSIS Forum also provides a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provides information and analysis of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

The WSIS Forum 2023 High-Level Track will take place on 14 and 15 March 2023, at ITU Headquarters in Geneva with enhanced remote participation, featuring an Opening segment, the appointment of the WSIS Forum 2023 Chairman, High-Level Policy Sessions, a Ministerial round table, and High-Level dialogues.

The High-Level Policy sessions will gather High-ranking officials of the WSIS Stakeholder community, representing the Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and International Organizations. Interactive policy statement sessions will be moderated by High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTFs), nominated and identified by each stakeholder type and will be grouped around different themes identified as important by the WSIS Stakeholders during the open consultation process. The main task of the HLTFs is to capture the vision, identify emerging trends, opportunities and challenges shared by the leaders of their session.

The concluding session of the High-Level Track will take place on 15 March 2023. During the concluding session, the WSIS Forum 2023 Chairman will provide an executive summary, giving a platform for all the HLTFs to submit the outcomes of their respective policy session. A publication entitled "WSIS Forum 2023: Policy Statements and Executive Brief" will be issued to encapsulate these outcomes.

# WSIS Forum 2022 Chairman



H.E. Professor Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami) Minister Federal Ministry of **Communications and Digital** Economy Nigeria

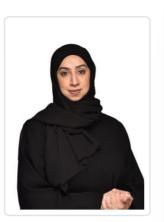


Prof. Salma Abbasi Chairperson and CEO eWorldwide Group **On-site Participant** 





Deputy Minister, **Ministry of Digital Development and** Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan AZERBAIJAN **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Ms. Mashael Al Hammadi Acting Assistant Undersecretary of Government Information Technology Affairs, Ministry of **Communications and** Information Technology QATAR **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Mohamed bin Thamir Al Kaabi Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications BAHRAIN





H.E. Mr. Admirim Aliti Minister, Ministry of Information Society and Administration NORTH MACEDONIA **On-site Participant** 





Mr. Joe Anokye Director General, National Communications Authority GHANA **On-site Participant** 



Dr. Mercedes Aramendia Falco Presidenta de Directorio de URSEC Unidad Reguladora de Servicios de Comunicaciones (URSEC) URUGUAY



Eng. Gilbert **Camacho** Mora Council Member. Superintendence of Telecommunications (Sutel) **COSTA RICA** 



H.E. Ms. Bella Cherkesova Deputy Minister, **Ministry of Digital** Development, **Communications and** Mass Media of the **Russian Federation** RUSSIAN FEDERATION **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Ousmane Gaoual DIALLO Minister, Ministère des Postes, des **Télécommunications** et de l'Économie **GUINEA On-site Participant** 



H.E. Dr. Stelios Himonas Permanent Secretary Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy CYPRUS **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Carlos Manuel Baigorri President, National Telecommunication Agency (Anatel) BRAZIL



Mr. João Cadete Matos Chairman of ANACOM's Board of Directors, Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações (ANACOM) PORTUGAL **On-site Participant** 



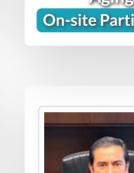
H.E. Mr. Jose Agustinho da Silva Minister of Transport and Communications, **Ministry of Transport** and Communications TIMOR-LESTE **On-site Participant** 



Eng. Napoleon Gai Director General, National Communication Authority SOUTHSUDAN **On-site Participant** 



Hillman Founder and CEO **Education Data** Digital Sovereignty (EDDS) **On-site Participant** 





H.E. Dr. Nizar Ben Néji Minister of communication technologies, Ministry of communication technologies TUNISIA

**On-site Participant** 



H.E. Dr. Vandeth Chea Minister of Post and

Telecommunications, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications CAMBODIA



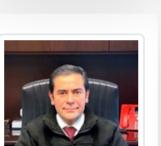
Ms. Moira de Roche **IFIP Vice President** International Federation for Information Processing IFIP **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Dr. Belete Getahun Minister, Ministry of Innovation and technology ETHIOPIA **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Michael Hodin CEO Aging



Dr. Hoda Baraka Advisor to Minister of ICT Egypt, Ministry of **Communications &** Information Technology EGYPT





Ms. Maria Manuela Catrina Deputy Director, National Cyber Security Directorate ROMANIA **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Thomas Coughlin 2023 President Elect 1993 **On-site Participant** 

H.E. Mr. Johnny G. Plate Minister, Ministry of **Communication and** Informatics **INDONESIA** 

**On-site Participant** 



Mr. NK Goyal President CMAL& TEMA **On-site Participant** 



**Director General of** Resource

Dr. Arturo Azcorra Secretary General of Telecommunications and Regulation of Audiovisual Communication Services, Ministry of **Economic Affairs and** Digital Transformation SPAIN



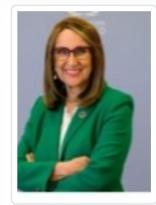
Dr. Olga Cavalli Director South School on Internet Governance SSIG



Mr. Guangzhe Chen WB Infrastructure Vice-President The World Bank **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Alexandre Fasel **Swiss Special** Representative for Science and Diplomacy Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs **On-site Participant** 



Ms. Rebecca Grynspan Secretary-General UNCTAD **On-site Participant** 



Dr. Tawfik Jelassi Assistant Director-

H.E. Mr. Adll

Karaismailoğlu **Minister of Transport** 

and Infrastructure, **Ministry of Transport** 

and Infrastructure

TURKEY

H.E. Dr. Nele Leosk

Ambassador-at-Large

for Digital Affairs,

Estonian Ministry of

**Foreign Affairs** 

ESTONIA

**On-site Participant** 

Mr. Masahiko

Metoki

**Director-General** 

UPU

**On-site Participant** 

H.E. Dr. Jenfan

Muswere

Minister of ICT, Postal and Courier Services,

Minstry of ICT Postal

and Courier Services

ZIMBABWE

**On-site Participant** 

Dr. Jacek Oko

President of the Office

of Electronic

Communications,

Office of Electronic

Communications

(UKE)

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**On-site Participant** 

H.E. Mr. Ousman A. Bah Honorable Minister of **Communications and** Digital Economy, Ministry of **Communications and Digital Economy** GAMBIA **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Devusinh Chauhan Minister of State for Communications, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications INDIA **On-site Participant** 



Dr. PAVAN DUGGAL CHAIRMAN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON CYBER SECURITY LAW **On-site Participant** 

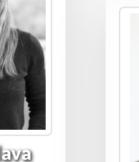


Eng. Wilfredo **Gonzalez** Vidal First Deputy Minister, Ministry of **Communications of** Cuba CUBA **On-site Participant** 



Ms. Ekaterine Imedadze Commissioner, **Georgian National** Communications Commission GEORGIA **On-site Participant** 





Dr. Velislava



**Global Coalition on On-site Participant** 

Ms. Tatyana Kanzaveli **Chief Executive** Officer Open Health Network **On-site Participant** 



Undersecretary of Transport, Ministry of Infrastructure, **Communications and** Transports MEXICO

H.E. Mr. Jama

Hassan Khalif

Minister of

**Communications and** 

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SOMALIA

**On-site Participant** 

Mr. Bernard

Maissen

Director General,

Federal Office of

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SWITZERLAND

**On-site Participant** 



Mr. Javier Juárez **Acting Commissioner** President, Federal Telecommunications Institute MEXICO

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Mr. Peter Kiplangat

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**Executive Director** 

**Ecosystem for Social** 

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Management and Equipment of Post and Informatics, Ministry **Communication and** Informatics INDONESIA

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POLAND **On-site Participant** 



Millinovic Director General, Communications **BOSNIA AND** HERZEGOVINA



H.E. Ms. Léocadie Ndacayisaba Minister, Ministre de la Communication, des Technologies de l'Information et des Médias **BURUNDI** 

**On-site Participant** 



Director





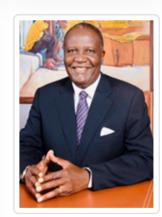
Mr. Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu President. Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) TURKEY **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Stephan A. Lang **Deputy Assistant** Secretary of State for International Information & Communications Policy, Bureau of Cyberspace and **Digital Policy** UNITED STATES **On-site Participant** 



Ms. Eglé Markevičiutė Vice-Minister of the Economy and Innovation, Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the **Republic of Lithuania** LITHUANIA **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Felix C. Mutati Minister of Technology and Science, Ministry of Technology and Science ZAMBIA **On-site Participant** 



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Mr. Apollo Knights

Director, National

Telecommunications

Regulatory

Commission

SAINT VINCENT AND

THE GRENADINES

**On-site Participant** 

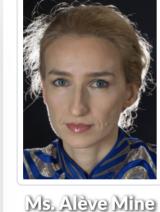
H.E. Mr. Phillemon Mapulane Deputy Minister of **Communications and Digital Technologies**, Ministry of **Communications and Digital Technologies SOUTH AFRICA On-site Participant** 



Mr. Rafael Eduardo Muente Schwarz Chairman of the Board and CEO, Organismo Supervisor de Inversión Privada en Telecomunicaciones (OSIPTEL) PERU



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Founder The OneGoal Initiative for Governance **On-site Participant** 



HLE. Mr. Nape Nnauye Minister for Information, Communication, and Information Technology, Ministry of Information, **Communication and** Information Technology TANZANIA **On-site Participant** 





Dr. Gift Kallisto

Machengete

Director General,

Postal and

Telecommunications

**Regulatory Authority** 



Eng. Indira Moudi **CEO** and Board Director Viandes Lafrance (Louis Lafrance et Fils Ltée)



Prof. Josef Noll Secretary General **Basic Internet** Foundation

**On-site Participant** 



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Ms. Bawani

Selvaratnam

Chief Development

Officer, Malaysian

**Communications and** 

Multimedia

Commission

MALAYSIA

**On-site Participant** 

Dr. Emilija

Stojmenova Duh **Minister of Digital** Transformation of the Republic of Slovenia, Office of the

Government of the

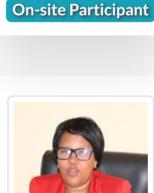
**Republic of Slovenia** 

for Digital

Transformation

**SLOVENIA** 

**On-site Participant** 







Ms. Maya Plentz The UN Brief

**On-site Participant** 



Mr. Drasko









Mr. AHM Bazlur Rahman **Chief Executive** Officer **Bangladesh NGOs** Network for Radio & Communication (BNNRC) **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Nicolás Silva Executive Director, Comisión de Regulación de Comunicaciones COLOMBIA **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Daren Tang Director-General WIPO **On-site Participant** 



Dr. Caroline Wamala-Larsson Associate Professor, **Director of SPIDER -**Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Region Stockholm University **On-site Participant** 

**Director-General** FAO



H.E. Dr. Ishaq Sider Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology, Ministry O

Telecommunications and Information Technology

STATE OF PALESTINE **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Daud Suleman Director General, Malawi Communication **Regulatory Authority** MALAWI

**On-site Participant** 

Eng. Marc Vetter

**Co-Founder**, President

of the Board and CEO

**4QT Holding AG** 

**On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Henri Verdier Ambassador for **Digital Affairs**, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs FRANCE **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Paul Scully MP

Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) UNITED KINGDOM

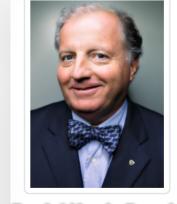


Ms. Jayne Stancavage Vice President, Policy and Regulatory Affairs Intel Corporation



Uy Secretary, The Department of Information and Communications Technology

**On-site Participant** 



**Prof. Alfredo Ronchi** Secretary General EC MEDICI Framework of Coordination **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Dan Sjoblom Director General, Swedish Post and **Telecom Authority** SWEDEN **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Mr. Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn **Minister of Digital** Economy and Society, **Ministry of Digital** Economy and Society THAILAND **On-site Participant** 



Mr. Mustafa Y. Sheikh General Manager, National Communications Authority SOMALIA **On-site Participant** 



H.E. Ms. Micaela Sanchez Malcolm Secretary of Public Innovation, Secretariat of Public Innovation of the National Chief of Cabinet of Ministers' Office ARGENTINA



Ms. Jūratė Šovienė Chair of the Council, Communications **Regulatory Authority** LITHUANIA **On-site Participant** 



Dr. P.D. Vaghela Chairman, Telecom **Regulatory Authority** of India INDIA





H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida Vice Minister, **Ministry of Internal** Affairs and Communications JAPAN **On-site Participant** 



WSIS Forum 2023 WSIS Action Lines for building back better and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs.











H.E. Mr. Ivan John

PHILIPPINES

# High-Level Policy Session 7: Bridging Digital Divides/Knowledge societies, capacity building and e-learning/ Ethical dimensions of information and knowledge societies/ Cultural diversity and heritage, linguistic diversity and local content

# **WSIS**

WSIS Forum 2023

## **Bridging Digital Divides**

Globally, over 1 billion new Internet users have been added over the last five years. Yet under half the world's people (3.7 billion) do not use the Internet. Many of them live in least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS).

OCP High-Level Track Agenda WSIS&SDG TalkX WSIS&SDG BlogX Registration

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According to the latest ITU data, 87% of people are using the Internet in developed countries, compared with 44% in developing countries. While virtually all urban areas in the world are covered by a mobile-broadband network, worrying gaps in connectivity and Internet access persist in rural areas. Globally, 72% of households in urban areas has access to the Internet at home, almost twice as much as in rural areas (38%).

Connectivity gaps in rural areas are especially serious in LDCs, where 17% of the rural population live in areas with no mobile coverage at all, and 19% of the rural population is covered by only a 2G network.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing digital divides between and within countries related to age, disability, gender, geography and socioeconomic status. With many essential services pushed online, there is a real and present danger that those without broadband Internet access could be left ever further behind.

For many people in the developing world, especially in LDCs, mobile telephony and Internet access remain unaffordable. The cost of broadband Internet access remains above the affordability target set by the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development - namely, 2% of monthly gross national income (GNI) per capita for a number of LDCs.

According to ITU's latest data, in 84 or nearly half of the analysed set of countries, the cost of the data-only mobile-broadband remains above the 2% target, while fixed broadband access is unaffordable in 111 countries (56%).

This means that children and young people from the poorest households, rural and lower income states are falling even further behind their peers in terms of digital inclusion and are left with fewer opportunities to catch up, facing disproportionate exposure to poverty and unemployment.

Assessing investment requirements to bring about affordable universal connectivity is important to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In some regions, bridging the connectivity gap means mainly upgrading existing coverage and capacity sites. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and East Asia/Pacific, nearly half of the necessary radio access network (RAN) infrastructure investments will be greenfield. [1]https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backg rounders/Pages/digital-inclusion-of-all.aspx 🗞

We are also fully aware that the benefits of the information technology revolution are today unevenly distributed between the developed and developing countries and within societies. We are fully committed to turning this digital divide into a digital opportunity for all, particularly for those who risk being left behind and being further marginalized. https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html %

First Phase of the WSIS (10-12 December 2003, Geneva) Geneva Declaration of Principles

Knowledge societies, capacity building and e-learning

Each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from, the Information Society and the knowledge economy. Literacy and universal primary education are key factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the special needs of girls and women. Given the wide range of ICT and information specialists required at all levels, building institutional capacity deserves special attention.

The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Content creators, publishers, and producers, as well as teachers, trainers, archivists, librarians and learners, should play an active role in promoting the Information Society, particularly in the Least Developed Countries.

To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced. Furthermore, partnerships, in particular between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, in research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing and utilization of ICT products and services are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society. The manufacture of ICTs presents a significant opportunity for creation of wealth.

The attainment of our shared aspirations, in particular for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to become fully-fledged members of the Information Society, and their positive integration into the knowledge economy, depends largely on increased capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information, which are major factors in determining development and competitiveness.

Geneva Declaration of Principles, WSIS 2003, https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html

Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

Cultural and linguistic diversity, while stimulating respect for cultural identity, traditions and religions, is essential to the development of an Information Society based on the dialogue among cultures and regional and international cooperation. It is an important factor for sustainable development.

a. Create policies that support the respect, preservation, promotion and enhancement of cultural and linguistic diversity and cultural heritage within the Information Society, as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. This includes encouraging governments to design cultural policies to promote the production of cultural, educational and scientific content and the development of local cultural industries suited to the linguistic and cultural context of the users.

# Session 145

**Wednesday, 15 March 2023** ~ *in 20 days* 

④ 09:00-10:00 (UTC+01:00)

**CC** Real-time human captioning

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**C** High-Level Policy Session

b. Develop national policies and laws to ensure that libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions can play their full role of content - including traditional knowledge - providers in the Information Society, more particularly by providing continued access to recorded information.

c. Support efforts to develop and use ICTs for the preservation of natural and, cultural heritage, keeping it accessible as a living part of today's culture. This includes developing systems for ensuring continued access to archived digital information and multimedia content in digital repositories, and support archives, cultural collections and libraries as the memory of humankind.

d. Develop and implement policies that preserve, affirm, respect and promote diversity of cultural expression and indigenous knowledge and traditions through the creation of varied information content and the use of different methods, including the digitization of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage. e. Support local content development, translation and adaptation, digital archives, and diverse forms of digital and traditional media by local authorities. These

activities can also strengthen local and indigenous communities. Geneva Declaration of Principles, WSIS 2003, https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html

## Ethical Dimensions of Information and Knowledge Societies

"The Information Society should respect peace and uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

We acknowledge the importance of ethics for the Information Society, which should foster justice, and the dignity and worth of the human person. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family and to enable it to play its crucial role in society.

The use of ICTs and content creation should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of others,

including personal privacy, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in conformity with relevant international instruments.

All actors in the Information Society should take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs, such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings."

Geneva Declaration of Principles, WSIS 2003, https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html



# H.E. Dr. Vandeth Chea (R)

Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Cambodia

H.E. Dr. Chea Vandeth has served as Minister of Post and Telecommunications since April 2020 and has overseen some of the key laws and regulations, including the Digital Government Policy, draft Law on Cybersecurity, draft Postal Law and Digital Startup Subdecree. In addition, Minister Vandeth has implemented a number of strategic reforms of the functions and operations of the ministry, including digital skill training programs for officials and revision to the administrative procedure through tech adoption. Recognizing the growing importance of digital technology, Minister Vandeth has engaged with the tech associations and startup communities to discuss challenges and opportunities, identifying elements that can accelerate tech sector development.

More recently, Minister Chea has placed high emphasis on improving the quality of telecoms services and working closely with telecoms operators in expanding cell and network coverage across the country.

With over 20 years of service, H.E. Vandeth has held various positions in the government. After completing his PhD degree in Russia in 1997, H.E. Vandeth served as assistant to H.E. Sok An, co-minister in charge of the Office of the Council of the Ministers (OCM) until 2004. At the same time, H.E. Vandeth was also tasked with the positions as the office chief of economy and later as the deputy director of the department of international relations. In 2004, H.E. Vandeth was appointed director of the cabinet of the minister in charge of the OCM. He

then went on to become the advisor to the Minister-in-charge of the OCM in 2008 and was concurrently appointed member of the board of directors of Telecom Cambodia. Following the 2013 election, H.E. Vandeth was appointed as advisor to the government.

H.E. Chea Vandeth graduated PhD in Economics from Russia in 1997. He also holds an Executive Master of Business Administration from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.



# H.E. Mr. Ousmane Gaoual DIALLO [R]

Minister

Minister

Ministère des Postes, des Télécommunications et de l'Économie, Guinea (Republic of)

Ousmane Gaoual Diallo, de son vrai nom Ousmane Diallo, né en 1968 à Labé, est un ancien lutteur, député et homme politique guinéen.

Il est le porte parole du gouvernement et Ministre des Postes, des télécommunications et de l'économie numérique depuis le 20 août 2022 dans le Gouvernement Bernard Goumou.

Originaire de Gaoual, il est issu d'une famille de huit enfants. Sa mère est enseignante et son père ingénieur. Il commence ses études

à l'école primaire Alpha Yaya Diallo.

Après le primaire et une partie du collège au Foutah, il rejoint Conakry où il termine son collège et lycée.

Admis à l'université de Conakry, il suit des cours en sciences mathématiques et en sciences économiques pendant deux ans, avant d'aller en France. Il y poursuit ses études universitaires qui le conduisent ensuite à l'université de Cambridge, au HEC Montréal du Canada et aux États-Unis.

Il entre à l'Université International Collège (UNC), où il obtient une licence en informatique de gestion

Il commence son engagement politique au sein du Parti guinéen du progrès (PGP) d'Elhadi Alpha Abdoulaye Portos Diallo. Le PGP étant proche de l'UFDG de Cellou Dalein Diallo, il finit par intégrer en 2005 leur équipe chargée des questions électorales.

Député à l'Assemblée nationale de 2013 en 2020, il est le coordinateur de la cellule de communication de l'UFDG.

Le 1er juillet 2022, il sera exclue de son partie politique UFDG Depuis le 4 novembre 2021, il est nommé Ministre de l'Urbanisme et de l'Habitat dans le gouvernement Mohamed Béavogui6,7.

Le 20 aout 2022, il change de fonction pour devenir Ministre des Postes, des Télécommunications et de l'Économie numérique



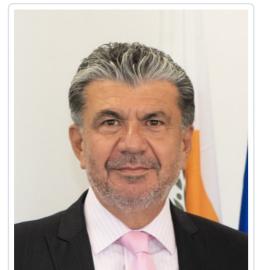
Eng. Wilfredo Gonzalez Vidal First Deputy Minister Ministry of Communications, Cuba

Wilfredo González Vidal is the First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Cuba. Previously he was Vice Minister of the Ministry of Communications and Vice President of Information Technologies at the Telecommunications Company of Cuba S. A. (ETECSA).

He was the Coordinator of the interministerial working group for the analysis and proposal of the Comprehensive Policy for the improvement of the Computerization of society in Cuba. Besides, he has coordinated several working groups associated with the computerization process of the country in the period 2013 – 2018.

He chaired the Cuban delegation in the WSIS Forum, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2014, 2015 and 2017. He also headed the Cuban delegation at the Plenipotentiary Conference held in 2018 and 2022.

He obtained in 2014 the Diploma of Public Administration at the Higher School of Cadres of the State and the Government of Cuba, and the Security and national defense Diploma at the National Defense College in 2019. In 1998 he received the degree of Enginner in Automation from the Higher Polytechnic Institute "José Antonio Echevarría" in Havana.



# H.E. Dr. Stelios Himonas

Permanent Secretary Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, Cyprus (Republic of)

Dr Stelios Himonas is the Permanent Secretary of the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy.

He previously served as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, as well as Director of the Department of Electronic Communications and Director of Telecommunications at the Ministry of Communications and Works.

From 2012 onwards, he has been appointed from the Council of Ministers as Digital Champion of the Republic of Cyprus, while having previously served as member of the Board of Directors of the Research and Innovation Foundation (then called Research Promotion Foundation), and the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (Cyta).

At European level, he served as Vice-Chairman of the Electronic Communications Committee (ECC) of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), as well as Chairman of the Regulatory Affairs Working Group (WGRA) of the CEPT/ECC.

He is a holder of Bachelor of Engineering, Master of Science and PhD in Electrical Engineering from the State University of New York in Stony Brook. From 1989 until 1997, he was an Associate Professor at the Department of Electrical Engineering at the New York Institute of Technology, USA, having also served as a Professor of Engineering and Informatics of Intercollege, Cyprus. From 1994 until 1997, he was collaborating with the Multimedia Communications Research Group of Bellcore's Applied Research Division in Morristown, New Jersey, USA. Dr Himonas has published numerous research papers in scientific journals and conference proceedings in the fields of detection and multimedia communications.



# Mr. Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu (R)

President

Information and Communication Technologies Authority, Turkey

Mr. Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu is the Chairman of the Board and President of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) of the Republic of Türkiye since August 13, 2018.

He was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1975. He is an Electrical and Electronic Engineer graduated from Eastern Mediterranean University.

Mr. Karagözoğlu worked as a software engineer at Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration (İSKİ) of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) from 2002 to 2004. Between 2002 and 2016, he held various managerial positions at BELBIM, a technology company of IMM.

He served as the Adviser to the Chairman and Board Member of the BTK from 2016 to August 13, 2018



# Dr. Hoda Baraka

Advisor to Minister

Ministry of communication and information technology, Egypt

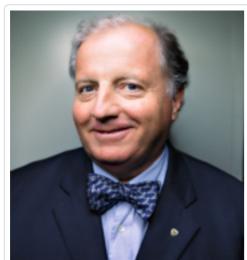
Dr. Hoda Baraka is a Professor of Computer Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, as well as the Advisor to Egypt Minister of ICT for Technology Talents Development. Currently, she is leading two national skilling initiatives The Digital Egypt Builders initiative DEBI targeting university graduates, and The Digital Egypt Cubs Initiative targeting students in schools from G7 to G11.

She was the Former First Deputy Minister of ICT since 2006 till 2013. From 2002 till 2013, she was also the National Director of Egypt's ICT Trust Fund, which is established to promote the use of ICT for Development.

Dr. Baraka successfully managed the implementation of several national ICT for Development projects in Egypt and abroad in a number of crucial sectors such as education, e-administration, e-health, etc. Her activities include formulating effective Public Private Partnerships,

policies' development and planning of ICT for Development, ICT projects' implementation, monitoring and evaluation and human resources development. Prof. Baraka has been awarded the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa prize for the use of ICTs in Education, for her contribution in the development and enhancement of education in Egypt using ICT. She was one of WEF/UNESCO Partnership for Education Technical Advisory Group on Capacity development, and a former member of WEF Global Agenda Council for Technologies in Education.

Dr. Baraka has more than thirty years of extensive experience as consultant in the field of digital transformation for public and private sectors.



# Prof. Alfredo Ronchi

Secretary General

**EC MEDICI Framework** 

Alfredo M. Ronchi - professor at Politecnico di Milano (Engineering Faculty), Expert/advisor in e-Services, Head of the JRC S2D2 (Safety, Security, Defence, Disaster Recovery and Management), General Secretary of the EC-MEDICI Framework of Cooperation, delegate at UNESCO IFAP and active member of the WSIS since the establishment (2003-/).

Mr Ronchi is member of the following Boards of Directors: Global Forum, World Summit Award, European Education New Society Association (ENSA), Fondazione Italiana Nuove Comunicazioni. Member of the Keio University NoE. Member of the Advisory Board of the School of Law under the aegis of GD Goenka University (New Delhi, India).

He cooperated as organizer or programme chair in W3C, ACM, IEEE, ITU-WSIS conferences; since more than thirty-five years he organizes and manages international conferences and workshops.

Author/contributor of more than 400 papers and various books on: e-Culture, e-Government, e-Safety & Security, and e-Services.



# Mr. Peter Kiplangat CHERUIYOT

Executive Director Ecosystem for Social Economic Development Organisation



Mr. PETER KIPLANGAT CHERUIYOT is a member of the indigenous Ogiek, the hunter gatherers of the Mau Forest in Kenya. He is a student of Masters in Development Studies while holding a Bachelor degree in Arts, Leadership and Management and Diploma in

Legal Studies from Kenya Institutions.

Currently, is the Executive Director of Ecosystem Social Economic Development Organization an NGO working on climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and empowering locals on land rights, gender issues and cultural diversity conservation. Previously, have been the Regional Director for the Jubilee Party in Kenya and UN indigenous fellow in Geneva, Switzerland.

With vast experience and exposure in both National and International issues, my interest is to ensure that aggreed policies frameworks and or reached resolutions in any gathering has been implemented so as the goals of SDGs 2030 can be achieved for the benefit of the society. My passions is to see languages, culture are preserved and transmitted to the future generations so as to arrest the trend of endangerment and extinctions.



# Ms. Moira de Roche

Vice President International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP)

Moira is a Vice President of IFIP (International Federation for Information Processing), and Chair of IFIP IP3. She was awarded the IFIP Silver Core in 2016 for service. She believes that ethical behaviour and leadership are keystones of any profession and works to develop understanding of ethics and the value of the IFIP Code of Ethics.

Moira is an accomplished speaker and has presented at conferences around the world. Notably, she has attended and presented at the WSIS Forum since 2012.

Moira is an independent consultant. Her current work is focused on instructional design and online course development, and she has worked with Subject Matter Experts on diverse topics, including corporate governance. She is also involved with an organisation which focuses on ESG matters, developing resources to help anyone understand ESG and report successfully on their organisation's achievements n addressing ESG.

Moira is a Professional Member and Fellow of IITPSA (Institute of IT Professionals South Africa), She received the IITPSA Distinguished Service in ICT Award in 2009. She is also a member of ACM and IODSA.

Moira serves on the Council for the National Museum in Bloemfontein, South Africa.



WSIS Forum 2023 WSIS Action Lines for building back better and accelerating the achievement of the SDCs.















High-Level Policy Session 7: Bridging Digital Divides/Knowledge societies, capacity building and e-learning/ Ethical dimensions of information and knowledge societies/ Cultural diversity and heritage, linguistic diversity, and local content.

#### Ethical dimensions of information and knowledge societies

#### Question One: How the "new normal" impacts and will impact ethical principles?

Recently, some messages strengthened their impact on society as a mix of incumbent tragedies (global warming, lack of food and water, pandemic crisis) and an ongoing full reshaping of society, a kind of imminent "new global order". Furthermore, the "cancel culture" movement, and the negative impact of man on nature are pushing the most radical thinkers of the 21st-century to face the prospect of the actual extinction of Homo Sapiens, the endpoint of the Anthropocene, the faith of anti-humanism. Transhumanism, instead, glorifies scientific and technological progress, the supremacy of reason. Genetic engineering and nanotechnology will allow us to alter our brains and bodies that will exceed human limitations, general artificial intelligence will improve itself to think faster and deeper recursively. Both trunks of thoughts basically consider humans' disappearance, on one side extinction on the other cyborg.

Digital transformation is often seen as a significant partner helping to solve or at least mitigate our problems; digital technology is intertwined with almost all the life sectors, posing several ethical issues. We are increasingly leaving the analog, face to face, paper-based world to enter the intangible one, digitally mediated.

Metaverse, if will succeed, will progressively create a clone of our environment, cyber-loneliness, one of the foreseeable risks, is a kind of addiction to this "parallel life" training users to shift from real to meta-life blurring the border between them, this may happen as much as the number of services and duties will be transferred on the other side of the Alice's mirror. Meta-life can propose a "new normal" that once accepted in the meta-life might be accepted in the real life.

#### Question Two: Till what extent we are keen to give up human rights to embrace innovation?

The challenges for the upcoming years are the ways to sustain the human's role and the inviolable right to freedom and personal privacy in an era of unlimited information gathering. Once again, the need to find a proper balance between humanities and technologies is omnipresent. Social sciences and humanities must establish a tight cooperation in designing or co-creation of cyber technologies always keeping humans in the focus. The WSIS can play a key role in this process.

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# WSIS Forum 2023 – High-Level Track: Summaries of the High-Level Policy Sessions

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# WSIS Forum 2023 – High-Level Track: Summaries of the High-Level Policy Sessions

### Introduction

At the WSIS Forum 2023, moderated High-Level Policy Sessions of the High-level Track took place on the 14th and 15th of March. These 11 sessions, moderated by High-Level Track facilitators nominated and identified by WSIS stakeholders, gathered High-ranking officials of the WSIS Stakeholder community, representing the Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and International Organizations.



### **Chairperson Summary**

#### • <u>WSIS Forum 2023 Chairperson</u>: **H.E. Dr. Emilija Stojmenova Duh**, Minister, Ministry of Digital Transformation, Slovenia

The topics you have discussed during last two days address very well the current challenges: bridging digital divides, enabling environment for digital technologies, inclusiveness and access to knowledge for all, digital economy and trade, ethical dimensions of ICT, climate change, knowledge societies and capacity building.

It is my pleasure to hear that you have contributed many interesting ideas and insights at different panels. You were concrete in presenting good practices and bold in providing ground-breaking solutions for the demanding challenges we face.

I would like to point out three main take aways:

- 1. Access, availability and affordability should be the driving forces of digitalization.
- 2. Digital education and digital skills play a crucial role in the adoption of digital technologies. They not only enable population to use the ICT for good, but also prevent harm and decrease risks.
- 3. Trust in digital is of key importance. We can only reach it by developing a human-centric and human rights-based approach to digital technologies with full inclusion of everyone, regardless of their gender, age, location and race.

The road ahead vision for an inclusive digital society demands a concerted and collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector researchers, academia and civil society.

Challenges that stand before us are numerous:

- lack of access to high-speed internet, particularly in rural and remote areas
- inadequate investment in ICT infrastructure development
- limited availability of affordable devices
- lack of digital literacy among marginalized populations, such as older adults, women, and those in low-income communities
- limited access and low adoption of e-services due to inadequate infrastructure, connectivity, or digital literacy

For overcoming these barriers, we need:

- to expand network coverage and increase investment in ICT infrastructure, in particular publicprivate partnerships
- to implement universal service funds to ensure connectivity in underserved areas
- to encourage manufacturers to develop low-cost and high-quality devices
- to develop comprehensive digital literacy programs targeting marginalized populations and bridging the digital gaps (women in STEM education, initiative for including silver age population, etc.)
- to integrate digital literacy into school curriculums and adult education programs
- to invest in the development and promotion of user-friendly e-services for health, education, and public administration



- to accelerate digital transformation in the public sector to improve service delivery
- to consider spectrum as a major enabler of the growth of the digital economy, especially with the promotion of 5G and next-generation services.

WSIS Forum 2023, bringing together over 1400 participants, has been an amazing opportunity to exchange numerous good practices from all around the world.

I was amazed at the example of Somalia, working on a universal access plan and e-government policies, Georgia building user confidence through digital literacy campaigns, Zimbabwe expanding telecommunications infrastructure across the country, India's project on digital identity destined to provide digital authentication to the entire population, Lithuania's partnerships with schools, public libraries and NGOs to fight against online child abuse, Comoros plans on National Digital Strategy and accessibility of Zambia's government services online.

Indeed, we are all facing numerous remaining challenges. Unequal access to digital services, gender, age and geographical digital divides persists. Risks to safety online, especially for the groups in situations of vulnerability such as children and older persons, is of utmost importance. Cybersecurity and cybercrime threats must be taken most seriously, and international cooperation is needed to work on a common framework in this regard.

Our "to do" list is long.

But international cooperation and multistakeholder engagement are the key.

Therefore, processes as WSIS are an immense contribution. They bring us together to meet and build meaningful partnerships. And they are of immense help on our way towards achieving sustainable development goals.

I would like to thank you all for your active participation and wish you success in your future activities.

Thank you.



### HLPS 1: Bridging Digital Divides

<u>High-Level Track Facilitator</u>: **Meni Anastasiadou**, Digital Policy Adviser, ICC

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Bilel Jamoussi**, Chief, Study Groups Department, Standardization Bureau, ITU

#### 1.1. Introduction

The session convened a conversation between a diverse group of stakeholders, discussing the current challenges and efforts in addressing the digital divide. Against this background, the panellists provided insights on the state-of-play and progress made under the principle of reaping the advantages and opportunities offered by information and communication technologies. The session showcased the importance of accelerating digital inclusion as a key contributing factor towards achieving sustainable development, while highlighting the multi-layer aspect of addressing the digital divide, thus underlining the importance of investing in collective action and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders.

#### 1.2. Vision and priorities

The session highlighted priority areas in bridging the digital divide, including (i) investment, competition, and innovation in the development and deployment of broadband services and connectivity devices, with the aim of expanding affordable access and end user choice for broadband connectivity (ii) investing in digital literacy and skills development, and supporting multi-sectoral initiatives (iii) accelerating gender inclusion with regards to access to digital technologies, (iv) prioritizing marginalized and low-income communities.

#### 1.3. Key challenges

One of the key challenges illuminated through the interventions, was the need to advance inclusive digital opportunities, through a global cooperation approach, aiming to contribute to bridging the gender digital divide holistically.

#### 1.4. Links to WSIS Action Lines and SDGs

#### Connection of the session to the WSIS Action Lines:

- C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C2. Information and communication infrastructure
- C3. Access to information and knowledge
- C4. Capacity building
- C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs
- C6. Enabling environment

#### Connection of the session to the sustainable development goals:

- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

#### 1.5. Case examples

- 1) Argentina's launch of Centre of Genders in Technology, with the aim of promoting a more equal labour inclusion and the training of women in STEM, through public-private collaboration as the main pillar of the Centre;
- 2) Promote a collaborative program with local authorities in order to eliminate barriers to telecom infrastructure deployment for rural, remote and hard-to reach areas in Colombia;
- IFT's digital literacy courses and talks focused on targeted groups, such as children, teenagers, as well as recommendations of safe browsing, the use of devices for elderly women and indigenous people in Mexico;
- 4) Poland's auction for 5G frequencies to provide consumers with the highest quality internet;
- 5) Alzheimer's collaborative and global health initiative modelled and created by the World Economic Forum in 2021, partnering across sectors to ensure that the health innovations, technological and beyond, are able to be accessed, regardless of geographical location;

#### 1.6. Road ahead

With a mutual understanding of the role of ICTs and digital technologies in accelerating sustainable development the panellists aligned on the need for a multistakeholder approach in bridging the digital divide. Such efforts will bolster social and economic growth for the achievement of the SDGs and the acceleration of digital transformation for all.



### HLPS 2: Enabling Environment

<u>High-Level Track Facilitator:</u> **Anja Jeanette Haga Engen**, Policy Manager, Access Partnership

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Stephen Bereaux**, Deputy Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

#### 2.1. Panellists

- **H.E. Jama Hassan Khalif**, Minister of Communications and Technology, SOMALIA (Federal Republic of)
- Stephan A. Lang, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
- Mercedes Aramendía, President of the Uruguayan Regulatory Unit of Communication Services (URSEC), URUGUAY
- **Dr. Gift Kallisto Machengete**, Director General, Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, ZIMBABWE
- Ekaterine Imedadze, Commissioner, National Communications Commission, Georgia
- Thomas Coughlin, 2023 IEEE President Elect, IEEE
- Andrew Wilson, Global Policy Director, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
- Sally Wentworth, Managing Director, Internet Society (ISOC)

#### 2.2. Introduction

High-Level Policy Session 2 entitled "Enabling Environment" – which is WSIS Action Line 6 – had good representation of all stakeholder types and regions across the panellist group, including representatives from Somalia, the United States, Uruguay, Zimbabwe, Georgia, IEEE, ICC, and the Internet Society. Our Action Line Facilitator was Stephen Bereaux, Deputy Director of the BDT.

#### 2.3. Goal & Vision

Session 2 aimed at reiterating the importance of an enabling environment for ICT development through tailored policies and regulations, developed nationally, regionally and internationally, with a view to accelerating economic growth and social development.

During the session, the panellists reiterated the vision of an "Enabling environment" referring to policy, legal, market, and social considerations that interact at both the domestic and global levels to foster ICT-led growth – with a view to create a digital economy that can enhance the role of ICTs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### 2.4. Priorities

The panellists agreed on several policy priorities that need to be addressed in order to create an enabling environment. These include but are not limited to: (i) Safety and confidence in the use of ICTs, (ii) consumer protection, (iii) privacy and data protection, (iv) competition and market entry, (v) balanced spectrum ecosystem, (vi) connectivity and universal service and access, (vii) energy sustainability, and (vii) an open, safe, inclusive and affordable internet.



The session emphasized that these policy priorities need to be based on multistakeholder collaboration to ensure that the voices of industry and civil society are heard.

#### 2.5. Case Studies

The panellists provided examples of how their country/organization is putting efforts in creating an enabling environment. Some examples include:

- The Ministry of Communications and Technology of Somalia works to implement the Telecommunications Act, prepare universal access plan, and e-government policies. The ministry is also implementing a digital literacy campaign, which educates almost 20,000 individuals in the field of digital and ICT development.
- The National Communications Commission of Georgia has been assigned to developing media literacy among the Georgian society, with a view to building user confidence in their interaction with information and communication technology. The Commission has implemented awareness programs on the internet and its use and online child protection programs associated with the educational system and in public-private partnerships.
- The Postal and Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe has implemented:
  - A convergent licensing framework that caters for different types and level of licences that reduces barriers to entry for small players.
  - Telecommunication tower construction projects through the Universal Service Fund. From 2016 to date, a total of one thousand and fifty-eight (1058) telecommunication towers are shared in Zimbabwe.
  - An innovation programme that has seen young people coming up with innovative solutions to achieve the SDGs related to no poverty, good health, quality education, affordable and clean energy, industry and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, decent work and economic growth, and sustainable cities and communities.
- The IEEE has implemented standards to enhance the circular economy, for example by extending the storage product life cycle.

#### 2.6. Links to WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs

The conversation touched upon the following WSIS Action Lines:

- The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development Action Line 1
- Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society Action Line 2
- Access to information and knowledge Action Line 3
- Capacity building Action Line 4
- Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs Action Line 5
- Enabling environment Action Line 6

#### 2.7. The Road Ahead

The road ahead to ensure "an enabling environment" include the following:

I. Stronger collaboration between public and private sector entities on policy and regulatory development, nationally, regionally and globally. This means:



- a. Adopting a people-first approach which strikes a balance between promoting innovation and protecting consumer's rights and interests.
- b. Promoting competition and facilitate market entry as markets are still developing. Competition enables consumer choice, innovation and investment.
- c. Considering spectrum as a major enabler of the growth of the digital economy, especially with the promotion of 5G and next-generation services.
- d. Promoting an open, safe, inclusive and affordable internet.
- e. Enhance digital literacy and skills to ensure an inclusive Information Society.
- f. Ensuring that the digital economy is fuelled by sustainable power, which means:
  - i. Using renewable energy by utilizing sources of energy that are naturally replenished, such as solar, wind, and geothermal power.
  - ii. Developing energy storage mechanisms to collect and save energy for current and future use.



### HLPS 3: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

Karen Mulberry, Senior Manager, Public Affairs, IEEE Standards Association

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Preetam Maloor**, Head of Emerging Technology Division, ITU

#### 3.1. Panellists

- **H.E. Ousman A. Bah**, Minister, Ministry of Information and Communications Infrastructure, GAMBIA (Republic of the)
- H.E. Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, Minister, Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, NIGERIA
- H.E. Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn, Minister, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, THAILAND
- H.E. Dr. Nizar Ben Néji, Minister, Ministry of communication technologies, TUNISIA
- **Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti**, Head of the Cyber Security, Cyber Security Council, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES [*WSIS Forum 2023 Platinum Partner*]
- H.E. Dr. Jenfan Muswere, Minister, Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, ZIMBABWE (Republic of)
- H.E. Henri Verdier, Ambassador for Digital Affairs, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, FRANCE
- Dr. Velislava Hillman, Founder and CEO, EDDS
- Stéphane Duguin, CEO, CyberPeace Institute
- Prof. Salma Abbasi, Chairperson and CEO, eWorldwide Group
- Dr. Olga Cavalli, Director, South School on Internet Governance SSIG

#### 3.2. Executive Summary

Security and addressing the risks and impacts of cyber threats is an ongoing challenge as the need to protect everyone as well as to maintain trust and confidence in digital platforms and information is critical as we all move further into the digital age. As more information, services and knowledge are online, access to a safe environment is important to building a better ICT environment for all.

The High-Level Panellists identified that addressing the issues and challenges of security requires both government policies, strategies and regulations and a public private partnership to develop approaches to meet growing cybersecurity threats. In addition, the High-Level Panellists identified actions that are being undertaken to establish collaborative efforts to raise awareness of the need for online security, noting growing cooperation with other countries, international organizations, and global partners in addressing and resolving cybersecurity threats.

The High-Level Panellists emphasized that in the digital age, security and trust are crucial to ensuring online access and the exchange of trustworthy information.



## HLPS 4: Inclusiveness – access to information and knowledge for all / Bridging Digital Divides

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

**Dr. Alessandro Caforio**, Doctor of Psychology, Head of Research and Innovation, Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO

#### WSIS Action Line Facilitator:

Dr. Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

#### 4.1. Panellists

- H.E. Dr. Emilija Stojmenova Duh, Minister, Ministry of Digital Transformation, Slovenia [WS/S Forum 2023 Chairperson]
- **H.E. Paweł Lewandowski**, Undersecretary of State for Digital Affairs, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Poland
- H.E. Ömer Fatih Sayan, Deputy Minister, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Türkiye
- Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, Director General/Chief Executive Officer, National Information Technology Development Agency, Nigeria
- Eng. Napoleon Gai, Director General, National Communication Authority, South Sudan (Republic of)
- Eng. Gilbert Camacho Mora, Council Member, Superintendence of Telecommunications, Costa Rica
- **Rafael Eduardo Muente Schwarz**, Chairman of the Board and CEO, Organismo Supervisor de Inversión Privada en Telecomunicaciones, Peru
- Mashael Al Hammadi, Acting Assistant Undersecretary of Government Information Technology Affairs, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Qatar (State of)
- Tatyana Kanzaveli, CEO, Open Health Network
- AHM Bazlur Rahman, CEO, Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication (BNNRC)

#### 4.2. Session Summary

Access to digital infrastructure is a key factor for inclusive information societies: digital inclusion encompasses individuals, communities, and vulnerable groups being able to have access and digital skills to use internet technologies and therefore to be able to participate and benefit from today's growing information society. Digitalization is also one of the greatest means to fulfil Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

According to the distinguished panellists developing the topic during session 4, an inclusive digital society must be built upon the foundation of five key elements: infrastructure and connectivity, affordability and accessibility of devices and equipment, digital literacy for all, e-services provided by governments, and accessibility of information and service provision.

1. Infrastructure and Connectivity:

Challenges:

• Lack of access to high-speed internet, particularly in rural and remote areas



- Inadequate investment in ICT infrastructure development
- Unequal distribution of network coverage

#### Recommendations:

- Expand network coverage and increase investment in ICT infrastructure
- Encourage public-private partnerships for infrastructure development
- Implement universal service funds to ensure connectivity in underserved areas
- Promote community networks and other alternative connectivity solutions
- 2. Affordability and Accessibility of Devices and Equipment:

#### Challenges:

- High cost of devices and equipment, creating barriers for low-income individuals
- Limited availability of affordable devices in some regions
- Insufficient support for users with disabilities

#### Recommendations:

- Encourage manufacturers to develop low-cost, high-quality devices
- Establish subsidy programs to help low-income individuals purchase devices
- Adopt accessibility standards for devices and equipment to support users with disabilities
- 3. Digital Literacy for All:

#### Challenges:

- Lack of digital literacy among marginalized populations, such as older adults, women, and those in low-income communities
- Insufficient digital literacy programs and resources
- Limited access to formal and informal digital education opportunities

#### Recommendations:

- Develop comprehensive digital literacy programs targeting marginalized populations and bridging the digital gaps (women in STEM education, initiative for including silver age population, etc.)
- Encourage collaboration between governments, NGOs, and the private sector to offer digital literacy training
- Integrate digital literacy into school curriculums and adult education programs
- Provide accessible online resources and platforms for self-learning
- 4. E-services Developed by Governments for Health, Education, Access to Public Administration:

#### Challenges:

- Limited access to e-services due to inadequate infrastructure, connectivity, or digital literacy
- Insufficient development and promotion of e-services by governments
- Low adoption of e-services by the public



#### Recommendations:

- Invest in the development and promotion of user-friendly e-services for health, education, and public administration
- Encourage digital transformation in the public sector to improve service delivery
- Provide training and support to help citizens adopt e-services
- Prioritize accessibility and inclusiveness in the design and implementation of eservices
- 5. Accessibility of Information and Service Provision:

#### Challenges:

- Limited access to information and services for individuals with disabilities, language barriers, or low digital literacy
- Lack of accessibility standards for digital content and platforms
- Insufficient awareness of accessibility needs among content providers and service developers

#### Recommendations:

- Adopt and enforce accessibility standards for digital content and platforms
- Provide training and resources to help content providers and service developers create accessible products
- Promote the use of assistive technologies and alternative formats to improve accessibility
- Foster collaboration between governments, NGOs, and the private sector to develop and share accessible information and services

#### 4.3. The road ahead

The vision for an inclusive digital society necessitates a concerted and collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and civil society. Governments must prioritize policies and regulations that foster ICT infrastructure development, enhance affordability and accessibility of devices, and promote digital literacy. The private sector should be incentivized to develop innovative, cost-effective solutions and to support accessible, user-friendly e-services. NGOs and civil society organizations must continue advocating for digital inclusiveness and providing essential services to marginalized populations.

Collaborative initiatives, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, can help share knowledge, resources, and best practices to drive inclusive digital development. Moreover, governments should consider integrating digital inclusion targets into their national development plans, aligning them with the SDGs, and regularly monitoring progress. International cooperation is also vital to ensure that countries with limited resources receive support in building their digital capacities.

Ultimately, a truly inclusive digital society must be people-cantered, focusing on the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities. By placing human rights, social justice, and sustainable development at the core of digital policy, we can work collectively towards bridging the digital divide and creating a better future for all in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



### HLPS 5: Bridging Digital Divides

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

Pierre Mirlesse, Smart City Consultant, Managing Director, Partner360.net

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: Jaroslaw K. Ponder, Head, Office for Europe, ITU

#### 5.1. Panellists

• **Burundi (Republic of):** H.E. Léocadie NDACAYISABA, Minister, Ministère de la Communication des Technologies de l'information et des Médias

#### Questions by HLTF:

- What are the strategies adopted by Burundi to bridge the digital divide and ensure digital inclusion? What are the investments taken by Burundi to achieve that?
- **Timor-Leste (Democratic Republic of):** H.E. Jose Agustinho da Silva, Minister, Ministry of Transport and Communications

#### Questions by HLTF:

- What is Timor-Leste's perspective on the issue of Bridging Digital Divides?
- How do you tackle the issue of Bridging Digital Divides in Timor-Leste?
- South Africa (Republic of): H.E. Phillemon Mapulane, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies

#### Questions by HLTF:

- The emergence of new digital technologies further exacerbates the digital gap, especially for developing countries. What interventions would you say South Africa is currently working on to address this challenge? There is a need to develop a tech-savvy society if we have to close the digital divide; this is not the work that any single entity can achieve alone, are there any strategic initiatives that your country is doing to skill your nation aggressively digitally?
- **Mexico:** H.E. Rogelio Jimenez Pons, Undersecretary of Transport, Secretary of Infrastructure, Communications and Transports

#### Questions by HLTF:

- You've mentioned some key actions that could support the achievement of the SDG. Could you further explain what steps has Mexico taken to attain the SDG?
- **Dominican Republic:** Dr. Nelson de Jesús Arroyo Perdomo, Presidente del Consejo Directivo, Instituto Dominicano de las Telecomunicaciones (INDOTEL)

#### Questions by HLTF:

 What measures or actions has the government of the Dominican Republic, led by INDOTEL, taken to promote the closing of the digital divide, enabling internet access in remote communities with low levels of purchasing power? From your point of view, what has made the difference, beyond investment in infrastructure?



• Malaysia: Bawani Selvaratnam, Chief Development Officer, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

#### Questions by HLTF:

- What are Malaysia's priorities for addressing digital divide? How does Malaysia promote digital adoption to enable equal economic and social upliftment for everyone?
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Drasko Milinovic, Director General, Communications Regulatory Agency

#### Questions by HLTF:

- What are the current challenges in the development of digital society in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What is the importance of international cooperation in reducing the digital divide?
- Brazil (Federative Republic of): Carlos Manuel Baigorri, President, National Telecommunication Agency Anatel

#### Questions by HLTF:

- Beyond the political and regulatory commitments, bridging the digital gap suppose interventions in the market. Could you comment on your vision about that?
- And once those areas are identified, in a world of tight budgets, how to get funding to connect them? Is connecting enough?
- **GESDA:** Alexandre Fasel, Swiss Special Representative for Science and Diplomacy

#### Questions by HLTF:

- Would you briefly share with us what is GESDA's vision for leveraging anticipatory science diplomacy to ensure the of use of quantum computing for the SDGs? And why should the diplomatic community care/engage?
- Intel Corporation: Jayne Stancavage, Vice President, Policy and Regulatory Affairs

#### Questions by HLTF:

• What are some important considerations about the digital divide and some mechanisms to help close it? What role does Intel play in expanding connectivity and digital equity?

#### 5.2. Session Summary:

This session has brought together outstanding contributors to a great panel. Participants shared insights about their progress towards the WSIS action lines in helping meet the United Nations SDGs and bridging the digital divide in their respective countries, sharing best practices which can be used in other countries. It was clear that a lot a progress has been accomplished in the past year, but also that a lot is still to be done. The WSIS process was recognized by all panellists as an essential platform to exchange successful ideas to leverage for the future.

Panellist reminded us that the digital divide refers to the unequal distribution of access to digital technologies, such as the internet and computers, between different regions and populations. Bridging the digital divide is a complex challenge that requires the collective effort of governments, private sector, civil society organizations, and individuals.



Some of the best practices shared were:

- 1. Infrastructure Development: Governments can invest in the development of infrastructure to provide affordable and reliable access to the internet and digital technologies. This includes building networks of high-speed internet connections, establishing public Wi-Fi hotspots, and expanding mobile phone coverage.
- 2. Digital Literacy Programs: Governments, NGOs, and private sector organizations must work together to provide digital literacy training to individuals who lack digital skills. This can include basic computer literacy, as well as more advanced training in areas such as coding and digital marketing.
- 3. Affordable Technology: Governments can work with service provides to make technology more affordable and accessible to low-income communities. This can include the provision of subsidies, tax breaks, or other incentives to encourage manufacturers to produce low-cost devices.
- 4. Community Outreach: NGOs and community organizations can work to raise awareness of the benefits of digital technologies and to provide training and support to individuals in underserved communities. This can include outreach to schools, libraries, and community centres.
- 5. Public-Private Partnerships: Governments can form partnerships with private sector organizations to fund infrastructure development and digital literacy program. This can include joint ventures with telecommunications companies or partnerships with technology manufacturers.

Overall, bridging the digital divide was highlighted as a comprehensive approach that involves investment in infrastructure, education and training, affordable technology, and community outreach. By working together, governments, private sector, civil society organizations, and individuals can help ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of digital technologies.



## HLPS 6: Digital Economy and Trade/Financing for ICT

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

Antonio Luque, Professor of Electronics Engineering, University of Seville

#### WSIS Action Line Facilitator:

**Torbjörn Fredriksson**, Head of the E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

#### 6.1. Panellists

- **Comoros**: H.E. Mr. Kamalidini Souef, Ministre, Ministère des Postes, des Télécommunications et de l'Economie Numérique
- Zambia (Republic of): Mr. FELIX C. MUTATI, Minister, Ministry of Technology and Science
- Armenia: H.E. Mr. Robert Khachatryan, Minister, Ministry of High-Tech Industry
- **Bahrain** (Kingdom of): H.E. Mr. Mohamed bin Thamir Al Kaabi, Minister, Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: H.E. Mr. Paul Scully MP, Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- India (Republic of): Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
- Lithuania (Republic of): Ms. Jūratė Šovienė, Chair of the Council, Communications Regulatory Authority
- People-Centered Internet: Ms. Mei Lin Fung: Chair and Co-Founder

#### 6.2. Introduction

The session dealt with the opportunities that new digital economies present for development through public-private partnerships, research and development, and education. The challenges that have to be addressed and the initiatives that the participants are taking to overcome them were also discussed. The panellists commented on how digital economies and trade can favour integration of underserved communities and also how regulations must be enacted to allow fair access to the benefits that digital trade and financing offer. Different perspectives were shared on these subjects.

#### 6.3. Vision and priorities

It was agreed that development of the digital economy is a top priority in all cases. Many examples were shared of initiatives intended to stimulate growth using specific policies, for example liberalizing the telecommunications sector, deploying 5G infrastructure, helping connect the unconnected, implementing digital identity for all population, etc. Also, there was agreement that digital economy presents challenges and threats and that they must be addressed in order to boost trust. For example, actions directed towards fighting internet scams or child pornography were shared. Finally, there was agreement that the digital economy must be inclusive and allow fair access to everyone.

#### 6.4. Emerging trends and opportunities

Everyone sees an opportunity in the new digital economy. It was mentioned that, when devising plans and policies for this new economy, informal economy must also be taken into account, as it represents a significant share of the larger economy in many countries.



It was also mentioned several times that bridging the digital divide is essential in order to fully exploit the benefits that digital trade can bring to everyone.

Access, availability and affordability should be the driving forces of digitalization.

#### 6.5. Key challenges

The main challenges identified were two:

- Unequal access to digital economy by groups of population, for example by gender or geographical location. Several initiatives to address them are launched.
- Threats linked to safety, harmful content, or cybersecurity. In many cases, increased digital education can mitigate these. In others, collaboration between governments, agencies, and private sector is key.

#### 6.6. Links to WSIS Action Lines and SDGs

During the session, several WSIS action lines were mentioned as essential:

- 1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- 2) Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society
- 3) Capacity building
- 4) and above all
- 5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

#### 6.7. Case examples

A few examples of adapting to new digital economy or preparing to it were shared. Among them we can highlight:

- Digital identity project in India, which will provide a digital authentication tool to the entire population and that has so far managed to open 485M bank accounts.
- Partnering with schools, public libraries, and NGOs in Lithuania to fight against online child abuse.
- Action Plan and commitment in the UK to extend digital access program to 2025 to promote safe and secure development access for partner countries. Connect pledges in which the UK is committed to mobilize resources needed to connect the unconnected.
- Modernization of the private sector of the economy in Armenia through digital platforms and smart solutions, increasing competitiveness.
- National digital strategy 2028 in Comoros.
- Digital inclusion in Zambia by putting all government services online and building access and confidence.
- Rolling out of a nation-wide 5G network providing high-speed technology in Bahrain.

#### 6.8. Road ahead

The near future will see increased confidence and trust in digital businesses if we are able to solve the challenges and provide equal access to connectivity and services. Bridging the digital divide is key for this and the opportunities that will open are worth the effort.



## HLPS 7: Ethical Dimensions of Information and Knowledge Societies / Bridging Digital Divides

<u>High-Level Track Facilitator</u>:

Dr. Caterina M. Berbenni-Rehm, Founder & CEO, PROMIS@Service

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Dr. Tawfik Jelassi**, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

#### 7.1. Panellists

- Cambodia: Mr. Sok Puthyvuth, Secretary of State, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications
- Portugal: João Cadete Matos, Chairman, ANACOM
- Pakistan: Aisha Humera, Additional Secretary, Ministry of IT & Telecom
- **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie**: Henri Monceau, Director, Digital and Economic Department, Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication
- International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP): Moira de Roche, Vice President
- Global Enabling Sustainability Initiative (GeSI): Luis Neves, CEO, Managing Director
- EC MEDICI Framework: Prof. Alfredo Ronchi, Secretary General
- Al&Society (Springer): Dr. Karamjit S Gill, Editor-in-chief & Professor Emeritus, University of Brighton

#### 7.2. Vision and Priorities

- Regulators must have a human-centric approach.
- Digital connectivity and Inclusion is key at all different levels of society and for citizens' access to services and their fundamental rights (health, education,) and to enhance new forms of relationship between the State and citizens and businesses.
- to promote greater competition in the market, as well as social and territorial cohesion.
- to identify digital vulnerability criteria and define a global agenda to support the most vulnerable populations. The Global Digital Compact can be an opportunity at the multilateral level.
- One Code of Ethics for all technology-led products and services with focus on and the requirement for standards and framework on the use of Generative AI.
- To make the fight against the digital divide more effective, by better understanding and recognizing its multidimensional character and aspects, like the design of the digital offer ("discoverability"): access to information in several language); IPR ownership; cybersecurity (to ensure trust).

#### 7.3. Case examples

- The project "Sustaining relevant digital inclusive education for young people (5-18 years of age)
- mobile broadband coverage obligations in less densely populated regions, through the establishment of obligations in the renewal of right of use of frequencies and on the 5G auction process
- As for international connectivity, the scope of the EU-Atlantic Data Gateway Platform, cables (the so-called CAM Ring).
- promoting the concept of SMART Cables within the UN system through the ITU.



#### 7.4. Road Ahead:

The need to find a proper balance between humanities and technologies is omnipresent. Social sciences and humanities must establish a tight cooperation in design and co-creation of cyber technologies always keeping humans in the focus.

The WSIS can play a key role in this process.



### HLPS 8: WSIS Action Lines and the 2030 Agenda/ Climate Change

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

**Prof. Abdulkarim Oloyede**, Associate Professor Department of Telecommunication Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

#### 8.1. Panellists

- Tanzania: Mr. Sok Puthyvuth, Secretary of State, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications
- **Tanzania** (United Republic of): H.E. Eng. Kundo Andrea Mathew (MP), Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information, Communications and Information Technology
- Romania: Ms. Maria Manuela Catrina, Undersecretary of State, Deputy Director, National Cyber Security Directorate
- Sweden: Mr. Dan Sjoblom, Director General, Swedish Post and Telecom Authority
- Estonia (Republic of): H.E. Dr. Nele Leosk, Ambassador-at-Large for Digital Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Huawei: Dr. Cao Hui, Head of Strategy & Policy, Huawei EU Public Affairs And Communication Office
- 4QT: Eng. Marc Vetter, Co-Founder, President of the Board and CEO
- International Commission on Cyber Security Law: Dr. PAVAN DUGGAL, Chairman
- The UN Brief: Ms. Maya Plentz, Director

#### 8.2. Vision

The panellists all have a vision that everyone should be connected to the internet in a sustainable way. This is because today, we live in a world where digital transformation is not only a technical issue, but a fundamental precondition for participating fully in today's society. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has demonstrated the need for connectivity. To realize the full potential of digital transformation, we need to bridge the digital gap and connect the unconnected. It is an important step towards global equality and cohesion, benefitting everyone everywhere. This was specifically mentioned by Sweden and shared by most of the panellist.

#### 8.3. Fresh Priorities

- Romania mentioned that building a secured and trustworthy cyber ecosystem is important and that Romania is committed to ensuring that women and girls are involved.
- Sweden mentioned that we need to ensure a meaningful access for all citizens as today we are seeing that vulnerable groups are not part of the digital society that needs to change.
- Sweden also mentioned that to meet the goals and action lines we need to work together, by building capacity to connect the unconnected to fulfil the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as building a better future for all by accelerating progress in gender equality, climate change, education etc.

#### 8.4. Emerging Trends

Tanzanian mentioned that they are now enacting the Data Protection Law. On 27 November 2022, the Personal Data Protection Act was assented by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania into law (DPA). The DPA provides for matters relating to protection of personal data and establishes the principles



guiding and conditions for collection and processing of personal data. It was mentioned that the DPA is expected to play a vital part in ensuring the security of data hence increasing user confidence while in the cyberspace.

#### 8.5. Vision

- Huawei mention that the mission of ICT companies is not just about pursuing their own green development, but also about using innovative digital technologies to enable emissions reduction in other industries and drive sustainability across society
- UN Brief mentioned that Technology will play an immense role on the discovery and cataloguing of species, so national programs for innovation must invest in research in the deep sea. It was also mentioned that we need more private and public partnerships like the Tara Ocean Foundation LINK.
- UN Brief also mentioned that We need to address skilling of women and girls in digital tools so they can actively participate in the digital economy and partake of its bounties.
- Un Brief mentioned that We have to stop support for below poverty level jobs being shipped to the Global South and that We need a skilled force in engineering, math, and natural sciences with a broad education in the social sciences, the humanities, the arts.

#### 8.6. Opportunities

Sweden mentioned that how to tackle climate change is a monumental question, and many aspects must be considered. However, ICTs are both the ones who can contribute to solving the climate crises and, at the same time, the ones that have a significant impact on the climate. So, by acting on drivers of climate change in ICTs we can make a difference, but we need to work together, from private companies to government and policymakers

#### 8.7. Key challenges

- 4QT mentioned that closing the gap is a multi-Stakeholder challenge. Policy makers benefit from knowing what is already feasible today, for example by talking to startups. It was mentioned that this allows stakeholders to satisfy demands and promises made. Being close to innovators is especially useful because they are driven and incentivized to grow in a new and challenging regulatory environment.
- 4QT also mentioned that is highly important to set the policies while staying as technology agnostic as possible. He mentioned that we should let the engineers and the market figure out the best technical solutions.

#### 8.8. Links to WSIS Action Lines and Sustainable Development Goals

Huawei mentioned that Digital ICT technologies like AI, cloud computing, big data, IoT, and 5G, will play an important role in carbon reduction, removal, and management. According to a study report, the ICT sector's emissions "footprint" is expected to decrease to 1.97% of global emissions by 2030. Furthermore, the use of ICT solutions can enable other sectors to cut emissions by 20%, nearly 10 times higher than ICT's own expected footprint in 2030.



#### 8.9. Case Examples

- Estonia mentioned that it is important for stakeholders to come together to pull resources together as it is being done in Estonia. It is important because it would allow countries to learn from each other and execute projects collectively.
- Estonia also shared its experience on digital signature and how the project was a joint project between Estonia and other neighbouring countries.
- Tanzania mentioned that they are ensuring that the remain the gateway and hub for efficient and affordable broadband in east and central Africa. They conducted spectrum auction on 700 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2600 MHz and 3500 MHz. Tanzania also has 3 tier -3 sizable data centre.
- 4QT mentioned that Digitalization enables novel solutions. Which in turn hold the potential for climate action. Startups such as 4QT make daily use of capabilities which have become possible recently. And which our customers benefit from successively. One example is the strong interaction with research, universities and policy makers. This enables us to take legacy equipment from diverse customers, upgrade it, and make it sustainable to use.
- Sweden mentioned that PTS is currently involved in a capacity building program in sub-Saharan Africa. It was mentioned that over the last six years PTS has worked closely together with SPIDER, a project with Stockholm University, funded by the Swedish government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA, and the program has contributed to capacity-building to more than 30 countries in the Sub-Saharan region. The project with resources from PTS supported regulators on fulfilling their strategic targets, meanwhile, engaging in discussions on joint challenges. By building capacity in countries and contributing to digital development, we help citizens and societies to be part of the global world. Digital development makes people grow, seek information, and help bridge the gaps in digital development and gender equality.

#### 8.10. Road ahead

- Tanzania has the plan is to have 15,000KM of fibre optic cable to cover administrative and rural areas to increase usage of Broadband internet from 45% to 80% in the year 2025 and thus transforming Tanzania to a digital enabled society with inclusive access of e-services and The Government set a remarkable goal of ensuring Broadband access and services coverage of 80% national wide by the end of 2025.
- Huawei mentioned that by 2030, it is predicted that more than half of our electricity will be generated from renewables. As the transportation industry goes electric faster, there will be 145 million electric vehicles on the road. Better architectural design, energy-saving and environmental-friendly new materials, and renewable energy will mean all new buildings are zero-carbon from 2030 onwards.
- Huawei also mentioned that innovation could address some social challenges we are facing today much more efficiently.
- UN Brief mentioned that private sector partnerships are fundamental for government sector administrators and UN officials to acquire the basic knowledge necessary for them to evaluate the technologies that they employ, deploy, and acquire for their organizations.
- Un Brief also emphasized that the private sector has another role: they can also help scale up commercial opportunities, with governance and policies in place that create shared wealth. But



any of these aspirations cannot take place unless national governments invest in education and digital infrastructure. Both within its institutions and in the programs that they roll-out.

• International Commission on Cyber security Law highlighted the importance of cybersecurity and how important cybersecurity is in this day and age. He mentioned that governments around the world must cooperate with each other to in the global fight against cyber security

Summaries of High-Level Policy Sessions



### HLPS 9: ICT Applications and Services / Climate Change

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

**Dr. Evelyne A. Tauchnitz**, Senior Researcher and Lecturer, Institute of Social Ethics ISE, University of Lucerne, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI)

#### 9.1. Panellists

- United Arab Emirates: Ms. Mubaraka Ibrahim, Acting Chief Information Officer, Emirates Health Services
- Indonesia (Republic of): Dr. Ismail Ismail, Director General of Resource Management and Equipment of Post and Informatics, Ministry Communication and Informatics
- Mauritius: Mr. Dick Christophe NG SUI WA, Chairperson, Information and Technologies Authority
- Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Emamyan, Advisor to the Minister of ICT
- State of Palestine (\*): Ms. Rania Jaber Naser, General Director of Tech Innovation Center and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology
- Ukraine: Mr. Slava Banik, Head of eServices Development, Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine
- Telefónica SA: Ms. Laura Fernández, Head of Sustainable Finance
- CMAI (Association of India): Mr. NK Goyal, President
- World Summit Awards: Prof. Peter A. Bruck, Chairperson

#### 9.2. Executive Summary

The importance of utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to facilitate sustainable development and achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was a key topic of discussion among high-level panellists. The panellists emphasized the need for sustainable digital development, which encompasses not only economic development, but also social development and is in alignment with nature. Collaboration among all stakeholders, including the public sector, private companies, civil society, and the youth was deemed crucial in achieving this vision. Moreover, the regulation of ICTs was highlighted as necessary to enhance their security, resilience, affordability, accessibility, and data integrity.

Emerging trends in e-government through mobile applications, online education, ICTs for climate change, and AI-enabled platforms for enhancing communication between public service providers and users were noted. ICTs offer numerous opportunities to improve the delivery of public services and government to its citizens, including health, communication, and business opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, ICTs can be leveraged to enhance the inclusion of marginalized communities, including women and youth, through inclusive education. Additionally, e-governance has the potential to improve the efficiency and accessibility of public services and enhance the resilience of public services during crises.

Different political views were expressed on platform governance, digital sovereignty, freedom of expression, and the digital divide. Enhancing digital cooperation by focusing on specific thematic issues across political and cultural divisions is key to overcome these challenges. In addition, Cyber threats on public infrastructure and supply chains, as well as data leakages, were identified as new security risks that need to be addressed.



#### 9.3. Vision:

- ICT's for promoting the SDG's and sustainable digital development, with an emphasis on "sustainable", i.e., development understood not only in economic terms, but coupled with social development and in alignment with nature.
- Most high-level panellists agreed that there should be collaboration between all stakeholders, i.e., among the public sector, private companies and civil society in developing digital infrastructure for health, education and climate action.

#### 9.4. Fresh priorities:

- Focus specifically how ICT's can be used for inclusive development which is a basic human right.
- Use ICT's not only for economic development, but also improve social and environmental sustainability.
- Regulation of ICTs is necessary to improve their security, resilience and data integrity.
- Development of ethical and responsible frameworks

#### 9.5. Emerging trends:

- E-government through mobile applications,
- education online, especially since covid pandemic,
- ICTs for climate change through increased energy efficiency
- Al enabled platforms for enhancing communication between public service providers and users (e.g., health services)

#### 9.6. Opportunities:

- Improve service delivery of the public sector and government to its citizens in areas such as health, communication and business opportunities.
- Increase inclusion of marginalized communities, including women and the youth; e.g., through inclusive education
- Support to small and medium enterprises, facilitate their digital access to capital, know-how, virtual marketplaces on a global and local level, and other business transactions.
- Increase efficiency and accessibility of public services through e-governance. This can also help to improve resilience of public service delivery during crises and assure that people have access to basic public services even in adverse situations.
- Climate change: Reduce global emission through increased efficiency and promotion of circular economy with ICTs.

#### 9.7. Key challenges:

- Overcoming the digital divide with meaningful, free and safe access for all
- New security risks through cyber threats on public infrastructure and supply chains as well as data leakages.
- There exist different political views on platform governance when it comes to digital sovereignty and freedom of expression. Key concerns are data privacy and censorship that limit the freedom of expression.
- Geopolitical tensions need to be overcome to enhance international cooperation and overcome the digital divide.



• Digital cooperation is necessary, focus on specific thematic issues across and overcoming political or cultural divisions.

#### 9.8. Case examples:

- mobile apps for e-governance,
- online education programs,
- online health services and monitoring
- Virtual marketplaces
- Protection of global activities
- Promotion of local and sustainable energy to marginalized communities.

#### 9.9. Links to the SDGs:

- Heath,
- quality education,
- climate action,
- sustainable cities and communities
- Strong institutions

#### 9.10. Road ahead:

The road ahead for utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to achieve sustainable development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires collaborative efforts among all stakeholders, including young people from civil society and the private sector. The emphasis is on sustainable digital development that aligns economic, social development with nature, and regulating ICTs to enhance their security, affordability, accessibility, and data integrity. Emerging trends in e-government through mobile applications, online education, ICTs for climate change, and AI-enabled platforms offer numerous opportunities to improve the delivery of public services and overcome the digital divide. Ultimately, we must actions follow words of commitment and learn from best practices to create human centric and inclusive information societies in alignment with the natural environment. Sustainable development is a basic human right that can only be achieved together with the equal participation of all stakeholders.



### HLPS 10: Bridging Digital Divides

<u>High-Level Track Facilitator</u>: **Dr Claire Somerville**, Ex Dir Gender Centre, Geneva Graduate Institute

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Sulyna Abdullah**, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General's Office, ITU

#### 10.1. Panellists

- **Philippines (Republic of the):** H.E. Mr. Ivan John Uy, Secretary, The Department of Information and Communications Technology
- Lithuania (Republic of): Ms. Eglė Markevičiūtė, Vice-Minister, Ministry of the Economy and Innovation
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Mr. Apollo Knights, Director, National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
- Malawi: Mr. Andrew Nyirenda Director of Economic Regulations Malawi Communication Regulatory Authority, Malawi
- **Germany:** Dr. Irina Soeffky, Director National, European and International Digital Policy, Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport
- Basic Internet Foundation: Prof. Josef Noll, Secretary General
- The OneGoal Initiative for Governance, Zurich AR/VR Meetup: Ms. Alève Mine, Founder
- African Tech Unicorn: Ms. Thoko Miya, CEO and Founder

#### 10.2. Summary

The panel discussion can be summed up under three headings under which digital divides are reproduced: Awareness, Affordability, Access

The well-balanced panel sought to unpack five of the big digital divides:

- 1. Income: the level of Internet use in low-income countries at 26% remains far below that of highincome countries, which are close to 92%
- 2. Urban-Rural: the share of Internet users is almost twice as high in urban areas at 82% urban versus 46% rural.
- 3. Gender: The gender divide, 69% of men are using the Internet, 63% of women- but of course, the digital gender gaps are multiple from lack of women and girls in STEM, to gender pay gaps that make access less affordable; and differences in time use often in the form of unpaid care work
- 4. Generations/age: 75% of youth use the Internet last year, versus 65% of the rest of the population
- 5. Education/skills: In nearly all countries where data is available, rates of Internet use are higher for those with more education.

Each of the country case-study examples provided national contexts for each of these digital divides, highlighting the very different country situations and therefore gravities of each of the five identified digital divides, and therefore, also, different policy priorities.

For example, population age profiles and Internet usage.



The current median age in the Philippines is 24 years old compared to the global median age of 31. Filipinos spend more than ten hours per day on the Internet compared to the global average of about 6 hours, and 4 hours on social media platforms versus 2 hours for the rest of the world.

By contrast, we heard how Individuals in Lithuania who live in rural areas as well as lower-income, less educated, elderly, disabled or unemployed individuals are less likely to benefit from using the Internet and risk being excluded from access to some services (e.g., healthcare, banking, e-government), which are increasingly reliant on digitalised systems.

Outlining the importance of regional and global coordination, examples from St Vincent and the Grenadines emphasized ongoing work toward legal frameworks that ensure access and affordability across networks neighbouring countries. In particular, they revised and ratified a new treaty, that sets a framework for ICTs in the subregion- which of course reminds us of the work going on to create the Digital Compact.

Finally, we heard about the income divide experienced by Malawi. Malawi has a GDP of less than 650 USD per head– with growth at just 3% per year. With a population of nearly 20 million, 85% live in rural areas, and 65% are youth. Malawi facing intersecting divides on income, age and on the rural-urban split.

Whilst these national differences in digital divides are significant, and each country faces unique contextual divides, the need for globally coordinated multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder efforts are critical to moving forward towards the SDGs.

With 2.6 billion people unconnected (meaning that they have never used the internet) – there was agreement that without a global effort to connect the unconnected, the 2030 agenda will not be achieved. This coordination demands not just member states, but also industry, academia and civil society actors working together. Such multi-stakeholder collaboration not only bring innovative approaches and solutions, but also ensures that risk is shared among networks of actors. Furthermore, core infrastructures, notably stable and sustainable energy sources, are critical if tech entrepreneurs are to develop innovative solutions to deliver a fair and just digital world.

#### 10.3. Road Ahead: Key messages

- 1. Whole-of-nation approach to ensure that we nurture a safe cyberspace
- 2. Targeted policies to address country-specific digital divides
- 3. Policies that ensure fair recruitment, training and advancement of women and girls in the ICT/STEM sector
- 4. Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approaches
- 5. Wide participation, including civil society, academia, private sector, and marginalized communities.
- 6. Global, regional and sub-regional levels of coordination and collaboration
- 7. Global/International legal frameworks
- 8. Sustainable renewable energy

#### 10.4. Relevant Action lines

- C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C2. Information and communication infrastructure
- C3. Access to information and knowledge



- C8. Capacity building Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- C10. Ethical dimensions the Information Society

### 10.5. Key points:

Awareness, Affordability, Access



## HLPS 11: Knowledge Societies, Capacity Building and e-learning / ICT Applications and Services

#### High-Level Track Facilitator:

**Dr. Liberato C. Bautista**, President, Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO)

<u>WSIS Action Line Facilitator</u>: **Paul Donohoe**, Digital Economy and Trade Coordinator, Universal Postal Union

#### 11.1. Panellists

- Cuba: H.E. Eng. Wilfredo Gonzalez Vidal, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communications
- **Guinea:** H.E. Mr. Ousmane Gaoual DIALLO, Minister, Ministère des Postes, des Télécommunications et de l'Économie
- **Mauritius:** H.E. Mr. Deepak Balgobin, Minister, Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
- **Cyprus:** H.E. Dr. Stelios Himonas, Permanent Secretary, Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy
- Iran: H.E. Dr. Mohammad Khansari, Deputy Minister and Head of Information Technology Organization (ITO), Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
- **Russian Federation:** Mr. Dmitrii OGURIAEV, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media
- **Türkiye:** Mr. Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu, President, Information and Communication Technologies Authority
- **UNIDO**: Zou Ciyong, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development
- **OpenUK**: Amanda Brock, CEO

#### 11.2. Summary

High-level policy session 11 had as its theme knowledge societies, capacity building, and e-learning. The basic premise for the session was that each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from the Information Society and the knowledge economy.

Literacy and universal primary education are critical factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the unique needs of girls and women. Building institutional capacity deserves special attention, given the wide range of ICT and information specialists required at all levels.

Furthermore, partnerships, particularly between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing, and utilization of IT products and services, are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society.

The seven high-level speakers from governments and two from the United Nations bodies all touch upon the multiple aspects of the above themes. In relation to a Knowledge Society, many speakers emphasized the importance of the positive integration of developing countries into the knowledge economy, which



significantly contributes to development and competitiveness. In this context, speakers of countries in the session emphasized opening up digital access to remote and rural areas and to all categories of vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups - economically disadvantaged persons, migrants, the elderly, and the disabled.

Since almost one-third of the world's population has yet to have digital access, considerable new efforts are being made, and they must be extended to this category of disadvantaged. Along the way, increasing access to public digital payment services is one step in the digital learning process of the broad strata of the population. The more the citizens become familiar with ICTs and more general aspects of digitalization, the greater the premise of a better and more fulfilling life will be.

Capacity Building measures in all countries also address this issue, emphasizing introducing schooled children and university students to the broadest range of digital technology and appropriate equipment. Building capacity requires open-source software, open hardware, and open data. Currently, access to data is too often restricted either by regulation or unawareness of the value of opening up knowledge. In this context, almost all speakers underlined the importance of having comprehensive ICT infrastructure, including high-speed broadband networks and digital platforms for e-government, e-commerce, and e-education. Several speakers also referred to the significance of tax incentives for start-ups and SMEs and research. Government authorities should also initiate and support this specific creation of ICT training centres.

Under the heading e-learning, many speakers addressed the necessity for achieving universal connectivity and the role of government in providing adequate administrative and financial backing to educational institutions at every level. The exchange of information among all relevant educational institutions must be supported both through policy and practical initiatives of the authorities. Also, under this heading, government procurement services should be digitally streamlined and more efficient.

The expansion of e-learning will lead to the number of specialists becoming available in the employment market to rise and fill the extensive gaps of competency that exist at the moment. The availability of skilled personnel will also attract investment in ICT applications, services, and artificial intelligence. Short-term solutions are needed today, leading to long-term investment and solutions.

Almost all participants commented on the importance of enhancing international cooperation in all aspects of ICT, including openness to all stakeholders. The creation of international standards in data protection will also be of increasing importance.