



XXI





# **INFOPOVERTY WORLD CONFERENCE**

3 December 2021 on UN WEBCAST

How to build a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society?

*How to build a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society?* 

## Introduction

Faced with the climate, health, economy, environment emergency, the G20 took note of the paradigm shift, formulating responses, the effects of which we will see, marking a turning point in the sign of reshaping the future, and of transition.

Towards what goals, then, is this transition headed? Which society is emerging from this process?

#### HOW TO BUILD A FAIRER AND MORE INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETY?

These are the topics of the **XXI Infopoverty World Conference**, to be held on **December 3**, **2021** virtually and to be viewed on the <u>UN Webcast</u>.

Remaining firm on its important mission of fighting poverty using innovative digital technologies, the Infopoverty World Conference was first established in 2001 with the launch of the Millennium Development Goals.

Organized by OCCAM with UN-GAID, and under the patronage of the European Parliament, the event hosted over 2000 top-level eminent panelists. Throughout the years, the Conference has continuously addressed the advancements brought about by the Digital Revolution and has progressively discovered and launched best practice models in the fields of telemedicine, e-learning, e-agriculture, and e-finance, followed by their successful implementation in many African and Latin American remote villages and disadvantaged communities.

Twenty years later, the **digital revolution** process is still underway, accelerated by the ongoing Covid pandemic, and it is realizing its **Entelechia**, thus reaching its highest level of self-accomplishment.

The shift from the real world to the virtual one emphasized how much networks and new languages crowd the Digital World, interconnecting individuals on all levels, and resulting in the disappearance of the time-space dimension.

A new, still unknown, **digital habitat**, whose paradigms are still to be decoded and understood, **is prevailing over the traditional one**, influencing the daily routine while strengthening its asymmetric homology.

Established by private companies, this **Digital Environment** is an unrestrained Medievalresembling territory, where ownership fragmentations, feuds and tolls, uncertain paths and unspecified laws stand by for their legitimation by a human-right inspired global legislation, as the UN Secretary-General said:

#### "In order to forge a new, universally fairer, inclusive and sustainable society"

The XXI Infopoverty World Conference will concretely address all these emergencies and challenges this transition inherently presents, while proposing a convergence of different disciplines in line with the orientations that emerged from the UN recommendations and the G20 Summit. Such concurrence will be deemed useful for an **encompassing synergy of efforts**, emphasizing the ability of the Digital Society to acquire more accurate views of ongoing and future situations.

The **Conference** will be the **pivotal meeting to discover and propose new solutions and best practices to solve the great challenges of the future**, guaranteeing access to basic e-services, health, education and training, moving towards the creation of jobs for all.

## *How to build a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society?*

Special attention will be also paid to food security and support to agriculture for fighting hunger, in light of the projects carried out by the Infopoverty Programme in disadvantaged communities in Africa, such as Sambaina – the UN Millennium Village created in 2006 in Madagascar – or the dozens of farmers' units activated in Sub-Saharan Africa by the EWA-BELT Project within the EU Horizon2020 Programme.

Equal relevance will be devoted to the **climate emergency**, which calls for a radical and substantial change in energy supplies. The time has come for a global consultation and an equal global effort to achieve the ultimate goal of a carbon-free society. Not only do we need to search for clean energy sources, but we also have to look for alternatives that minimize energy consumption, for example, by creating new systems and domestic machines operated at the same 12V power of solar panels, instead of the traditional, energy-intensive, 220V.

The **financial and banking field** appears to change too. Its dematerialization could become the energy of doing rather than the praxis of accumulating, potentially generating a new way of developing by guaranteeing wider access to the vast prairies of digital work, for protecting the planet, in symbiosis, not only interstitial, with the industrial revival, accelerated by IOT, robotics and artificial intelligence. However, it is important that the financial system will be able to manage the **current gap** between the real value of world GDP and the value of derivatives in circulation, which exceeds, according to data from the Bank for International Settlements, the astonishing figure of 2.6 million billion dollars, 33 times the world GDP. Hence it becomes clear the urgency of a new and more solid structure and an acceleration in terms of Smart Cities, production of goods and services, and active environmental monitoring, while also ensuring job creation and a generalized welfare.

Likewise, digitalization will further deepen the role of electronic services within the economy by attracting businesses to the global market. The rise of new **cryptocurrencies** like Bitcoin or Faircoin, together with increasing data flows, could open further opportunities in international trade, while weakening financial and physical borders across countries. In this context, regulations governing such inflows and outflows must be drafted as soon as possible.

To achieve these missions, there is the urgent need to strengthen a secure and apt **global infrastructure** capable of guaranteeing **broadband connectivity at affordable prices** open to all **in order to overcome the existing digital gap**. It is pivotal to allow for any shared form of remote working through the **use of e-services**: telemedicine – that provides access to healthcare to all; e-learning for young people and minorities to acquire the best forms of education and contribute to the development of their communities; e-commerce and e-government.

The long Covid confinement has provoked an increase in **mental illness** and substance abuse, also accentuated by the dichotomy between real and virtual experience. This problem is at the center of the mission of high-level institutes, opening also future horizons in the field of neurology, now developed by computer science, which aims to investigate the relations between mental and electronic processes.

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At this point, we need to ask ourselves where these transitions and progresses are leading us to:

## Will the next digital society help strengthen the participatory process of democracy to change the essence of power from an oligarchic privilege to something that is allencompassing and shared?

As with the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent introduction of universal suffrage, could the expansion of the democratic values and the dismantlement of the ancien régime legacy, make the State – currently a detached control body – some sort of social aggregator fueling these transformations and providing these services to its citizens?

This (r)evolution would certainly be facilitated by the horizontal and non-hierarchical nature of the Web through a progressive overturning of the decision-making pyramid, with the activation of models of **deliberation-democracy** to ensure extended and equal forms of participation.

These processes could be implemented by the development of new and more adequate **algorithms**, them being the key to access virtual life given their potential performative functions that include the replacement of laws as we know them by a univocal and immediately executive behavior.

However, algorithms do not come without issues. The main threat lies on the use of poorly designed algorithms by bureaucratic systems, resulting in widespread discomfort for users and damages to society. Algorithms are therefore the structural component of the platforms, driving forces where the transition from an analogic to a digital state takes place.

Platforms must be built with high competence. It is not sufficient to take turnkey applications prepared by big-tech companies whose rigid proprietary constraints can distort socially shared purposes. Rather, more awareness is needed to correctly design these elements, as well as official testing and validation, because **the Platforms are the invisible constitutive elements of the new digital society.** 

In the light of the complexities of the new virtual territories, the XXI Infopoverty World Conference will stress a critical rethinking of the state of such networks in order for them to be safer and more user-friendly. **The goal is to establish a New Digital Society capable of creating a safe, inclusive and more sustainable forum accessible to those feeling the need to commit themselves a better future for coming generations**. The final goal should be to give them the tools to make their vision explicit and valuable, and to translate slogans into reality. The new Marconi, Edison, Ford, Einstein – those capable of producing new revolutionary syntheses are perhaps already among us, working to create new paradigms for living in the Digital Age. At the same time, however, the old powers are still active, and increasingly thirstier for control, social hierarchization, ultra-territorial neocolonialism, spasmodic accumulation of resources stolen from the development and wellbeing of the populations. These warmongering powers, fervently fighting any type of change, must be neutralized.

The chance here is to promote and valorize all best practices, able to achieve the SDGs, and consequently a fairer, inclusive and sustainable Digital Society.

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## The journey towards the XXI Infopoverty World Conference

The XXI Edition intends to explore how the Digital Society is evolving, imposing new paradigms and forms of relationship, focusing on the ambivalence between the virtual and real spheres, investigating the inner calling of the main actors and driving forces of the transformation: Industries – driven by profits – Governments – led by the duty to social wellness – Civil Society – having its own priorities and needs to satisfy. New subjects need to be involved in this re-shaping process to define a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society by providing practical answers to some turning-point questions and highlighting new seeds that will nurture the telos of the Digital Society. The response to these questions can unveil the future, granting Human Rights, Social Welfare, and freedom, avoiding the Orwellian risk.

Each of us is called upon contributing to this urgent challenge and acting to address these topics:

Where is the Digital Revolution leading us to? How do you contribute to building a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society? How to clean the Web and avoid injustice, data breaches and "Algocracy"? How to implement e-services for a WebFare for all? Is a "Weblateralism" possible?

#### Grand Conversation - 21 June 2021

In order to enrich the current debate OCCAM held a <u>Grand Conversation</u> to define the Agenda of the XXI Infopoverty World Conference. The event hosted speakers and contributors from all over the world and from a wide range of fields of expertise.

Diplomats, representatives from governments and International Organizations such as United Nations, African Union, European Parliament, and ILO, foundations, Civil Society with the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN, prestigious universities and think tanks addressed the challenges emerging from the Digital Revolution under a great variety of points of view: from governance to finance, from employment to telemedicine and eLearning, from food security and e-agriculture to new forms of communications and ICTs. A specific focus was dedicated to the implementation of digital technologies for the development of rural communities in the African



continent. New approaches to cooperation, sustainability, accessibility, multilateralism, affordability and awareness emerged as the most relevant keywords for a fairer and more inclusive use of ICTs for development, where the human being – and in particular the younger generations – are at the centre.

## XXI INFOPOVERTY WORLD CONFERENCE How to build a fairer and more inclusive Digital Society?

#### Independent Dialogue - 19 July 2021

OCCAM convened an <u>Independent Dialogue</u> curated by the Desertification Research Centre at the University of Sassari, under the auspices of the **UN Food Systems Summit** and within the context of the **EU H2020** <u>EWA-BELT</u> **Project**.

The Dialogue was titled "The Role of Sustainable Intensification for Achieving Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa". It discussed with representatives of Research and Academia, Civil Society and Farmers from Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa the challenges and ways in which farmers can increase production of crops per unit of land, conserve or enhance important ecosystem services, improve resilience to shocks and stresses, while fostering livelihoods, equity and social capital to ensure a food security system for all. The results of the Dialogue have been transmitted to the UN Food Systems Summit, held at the UN Headquarters in September 2021, in order to influence and steer its agenda.



#### XXIII Euromediterranean Conference – 10 September 2021

OCCAM and UNESCO's International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication (<u>CICT-ICFT</u>) organised the <u>XXIII</u> <u>Euromediterranean Conference</u> on Cinema at the **78<sup>th</sup> Venice** International Film Festival. The event, titled "Expanded Cinema from Screens to Platforms in the Age of Covid", aimed at assessing conditions and perspectives for collaboration and active cooperation between the lands of film communication and those of digital communication, between cinemas and platforms.

Over the past ten years, new and powerful technologies allowed for everyone to produce and share their movies all over the world, in what has become the social media standard. At the same time, Covid-19 relegated people in their homes, increasing the number of watched



hours of fiction and series within domestic walls with a tremendous selection by streaming platforms. Starting from the undisputable fact that this cooperation is already in place at the productive level, it is reasonable to state that relations can be developed on a supply- and business-level, without losing anything in technological, economic and financial terms, but rather increasing these elements and integrating them through fundamental values such as social aggregation and cultural pluralism.

#### Sustainable Development Festival – 12 October 2021

The journey towards the Digital Society never stops. Further contributions emerged from the roundtable held in the context of the Sustainable Development Festival 2021. Eminent scholars discussed **Waste Management** and its consequences in a new urban texture aiming to a fairer and more sustainable future, where the real world will inevitably and irrevocably intertwine with the digital one, resulting in a new synergy.

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## **XXI Infopoverty World Conference**

3 December 2021 – <u>UN WEBCAST</u> <u>infopoverty.net</u> <u>occam.org/xxi-iwc</u> Save the date on <u>Facebook</u> and <u>LinkedIn</u>

#### Agenda (in New York Time)

#### **10:00 – Opening Session**

#### Institutional Greetings

**Marco Romiti**, First Councillor for Economic Affairs, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations **H.E. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami)**, Nigerian Federal Minister of Communications and Digital Economy

General Introduction Pierpaolo Saporito, President, OCCAM and Infopoverty Programme

#### 10:15 – First Session

#### A leap of civilization: building together a roadmap for the Next Digital Society

The emergency from Covid and climate change, as well as global instability, have deeply shocked the underpins of our society which, at the rendez-vous with globalization, calls for a redefinition of socioeconomic paradigms of our post-industrialization society. A global reset is in process: it is necessary to clarify its basic structural factors.

Daniela Rondinelli, Member of the European Parliament, Commission on Employment and Social Affairs

Neil Khor, Special Advisor to the Executive Director, UN-Habitat

**Paola Pisano,** Professor of Economics, University of Torino and Former Minister for Technological Innovation and Digitalisation – Italy

Vincenzo Paglia, President, Pontifical Academy for Life - Vatican

Anna Scavuzzo, Deputy Mayor, City of Milan – Italy

Imtiaz Dharker, Queen's Gold Medal Poet and Chancellor, Newcastle University - United Kingdom

#### 11:15 – Second Session

#### Clean the planet, clean the web: how the virtual dimension can operate for tackling the new priorities

The virtual dimension is prevailing on the real one, determining vast effects on our daily life. Even the main socio-economical and governance structures are becoming obsolete, facing the challenges of the dramatic emergencies. Public and private institutions are massively mobilizing to find a sustainable solution empowered by new digital technologies. The acceleration of the innovation process imposes a strong integration among scientific disciplines and a stronger interaction between the experts.

Heidi Tworek, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia - Canada

Syed Munir Khasru, Lead Author and Co-Chair, T20 Task Force on Digital Transformation – Bangladesh

Rosanna Di Gioia, Cyber & Digital Citizens Security Researcher, EU Joint Research Centre - Italy

Claudia Abreu Lopes, Research Fellow, United Nations University International Institute for Global Health – Malaysia

**Muhammad Khurram Khan**, Founder & CEO, Global Foundation for Cyber Studies and Research – USA & King Saud University – Saudi Arabia

Emmanuel Amos, Chief Software Architect, Programos - Nigeria

Tony Ojobo, CEO, African ICT Foundation - Nigeria

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#### 12:15 – Third Session

#### Digital way to prosperity for rural communities

Bottom-up experiences, shared in the virtual world, entail a strong effect able to influence the behaviour of communities. A series of best practices in action will be presented in the fields of food security, telemedicine, e-learning, and e-governance, able to outline the approaches and values of new generations.

Giovanna Seddaiu, EWA-BELT Project Coordinator, University of Sassari and Desertification Research Centre – Italy

Noel Makete, Centre Director Sericulture Research Centre, KALRO	Nyakach, Kenya
Bazoumana Koulibaly, Senior Scientist, INERA	Léo District, Burkina Faso
Deodatus Kiriba, Agricultural Research Officer, NM-AIST,	Aremeru, Tanzania
Joseph Adjebeng-Danquah, Senior Research Scientist, CSIR-SARI	Talensi, Ghana
Alemayehu Chala, Associate Professor, Hawassa University,	Hula, Ethiopia
Joseph Tholley, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, University of Makeni	Makeni, Sierra Leone

Toky Ravoavy, Ligne Verte NGO - in connection from Toamasina Young Research Centre, Madagascar

#### 13:30 – Fourth Session

#### The journey towards a sustainable, fairer and more inclusive Digital Society

A tentative synthesis from the Civil Society will be discussed on how to enrich and implement the results and suggestions emerged during the G20 Summit and the COP26, to meet the needs and expectations of disadvantaged communities.

Nicol Turner-Lee, Director, The Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings – USA

Andrea Ciucci, Coordinating Secretary, Pontifical Academy for Life - Vatican

Benjamin Horton, Project Lead, Common Futures Conversations, Chatham House - United Kingdom

Hassan Ghazal, President, Moroccan Association for Telemedicine and eHealth – Morocco

George Hara, President, Alliance Forum Foundation - Japan

Patrizio Civili, Special Adviser to the Director-General, International Development Law Organization

#### 14:30 - Roundtable

#### **Digital Society: New Generation voices**

Where are we going? How can we make an impact for the future generations? The new Marconi, Edison, Ford, Einstein – those capable of producing new revolutionary syntheses – are perhaps already among us, working to create new paradigms for living in the Digital Age.

MODERATOR: Maria Chiara Scipioni, Chargée de Mission, OCCAM - Italy

Erin McCluskey, Founder, Ocean Plastic Leadership Network (affiliated to the UN) – USA

Irene Okike Mmam, WSA National Nominee - Nigeria

Roberta Bosu, Global Sustainability Project Leader, Avery Dennison - The Netherlands

Abishek Kumar, CEO, Lung Foundation – India

Michel Alimasi, Social Impact Strategist - United Kingdom

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION AND FINAL DECLARATION**

The results of the Conference will be defined in the Final Declaration, to be delivered to the UN System and to Governments

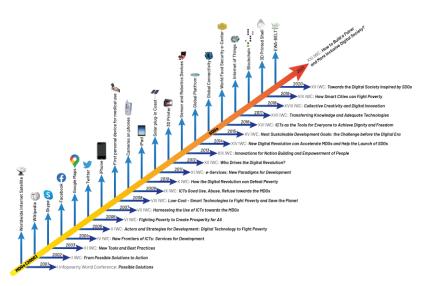
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## **History of the Conference**

The first Infopoverty World Conference was organized by OCCAM in June 2001, on the momentum of the signature of the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, where the joining States were committed to the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals. The Conference represents, for its continuity, operational capability and strong interoperability with the UN System, a unique global forum, gathering leading experts, academics, opinion leaders, managers, government officials and philanthropists. Working in



collaboration with the European Parliament Liaison Office, various UN bodies, the C. Smithers Foundation and other scientific and academic institutions, the Infopoverty World Conference rallies leaders worldwide to operate for the realization of the ICT4D tasks.



## e-Book of Past Editions

This <u>e-Book</u>, edited by OCCAM, is a precise synthesis of each year's conference, with posters, agendas, main contributions, and final declarations. The work represents a helpful and significative synthesis of the cooperation's experience between the United Nations and OCCAM.

This Book constitutes a unique point of reference for the digital revolution since 2000, discussing the increasing flow of innovations, with an evaluation in terms of capacity to accelerate the achievements of MDGs and SDGs with concrete ICT solutions experimented on the ground in the ICT Villages, in synergy with more

21 YEARS OF Infopoverty World Conference

than two thousand high-level speakers, expressing the mood of these crucial twenty-one years.



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### **Infopoverty Programme**

To realize the suggestions emerging from the discussion, the Infopoverty Programme was established to concretely help the poorest and most disadvantaged populations in the developing world through the use of ICTs. The Infopoverty Programme operates as the executive arm of the deliberations of the Infopoverty World Conferences stated in the final declarations drafted at the end of each Conference. It puts into practice the guidelines issued by the Conference through the creation of the ICT Village Model. Such a model follows a process of flexible intervention easily replicable in many areas of the globe and provides various services designed to promote endogenous and sustainable development processes.



Find out more on occam.org/infopoverty-programme



#### **ICT Villages**

The ICT Village Model follows a process of intervention flexible and easily replicable in many areas of the globe, providing various services designed to promote endogenous and sustainable development process. The first ICT village project was carried out in 1999 in Honduras hit by the devastating hurricane Mitch. Thanks to the use of solar panels, the supply of electricity was guaranteed. A connection to 108 mb/sec for more than 30,000 people, a real record for the time, enabled the creation of the first e-learning and telemedicine services, allowing the population to use these new technologies advantageously and to connect to the rest of the world through e-commerce and egovernment initiatives. Find out more on occam.org/projects

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#### The World Food Security e-Center

The World Food Security e-Center (WFSeC) aims to provide digital services to support agricultural development and food security, transferring technologies and knowledge from the excellent network of Italian universities and laboratories directly to populations and communities in need through a high



connectivity digital Platform, using new sensors and robotic devices able to collect and receive data. The project was presented on the occasion of EXPO Milano 2015 and took its legacy in the following years to put into concrete action its core principles. **Find out more on** occam.org/e-services



#### **EWA-BELT**

The most relevant and effective implementation of the WFSeC is EWA-BELT, an EU Horizon2020 project (GA 862848) aimed at developing the sustainable intensification of agriculture productions in organic, agroforestry and mixed crop and livestock farming systems in 38 study areas of 6 countries belonging to East (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania) and West (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone) Africa. It is coordinated by the University of Sassari (Italy) and carried out by a consortium of 20 partners from Europe and Africa. Through integrated participative research, innovative tools and identification and dissemination of best practices, all countries will be linked into an

interregional East-West African BELT able to reinforce sustainable intensification in agriculture. The Internet of Things and e-Agriculture in EWA-BELT will be managed through the PLANTHEAD platform. The Platform will also allow for the creation of a database for scientific research and for the use of an Artificial Intelligence for phytopathogenic recognition and diagnostics. Furthermore, taking stock from the World Food Security e-Centre, the project is introducing other highly innovative cost-affordable technologies, to be easily used in the field by unskilled personnel. Technical benefits provided by all implemented techniques are evaluated for their environmental, social, and economic effect on farmers and along the value chain. Finally, EWA-BELT addresses gender issues and women empowerment at every stage of the process. To maximize its impact, project results are disseminated yearly during the Infopoverty World Conference. **Find out more on** <u>ewabelt.eu</u>

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#### eMedMed

eMedMed is a project born in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean. It aims to bring an innovative and efficient diffusion of health services in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Egypt through telemedicine. It is the result of the experimentation of over 15 years of applications in various ICT Villages in the field of maternal care, emergencies, cardiology, and traumatology.

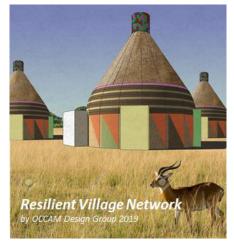
The goal is to improve health conditions in Southern Mediterranean countries through the participation of a network of clinical centres and European experts connected with local structures through a specific



platform with ICT Solutions and innovative scientific m-devices. The system integrates the resources



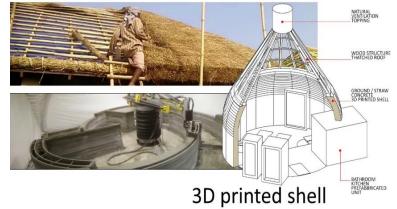
of hospitals and service centres in the area and the data collected on the field (diagnostic imaging, medical records, patient records, consultations, training, etc.) through the network, optimizing the home care of the patient, reducing costs and improving the use of resources. Due to political uncertainty, the project still needs to be validated. **Find out more on occam.org/projects** 



The project, selected at the "Resilient Home" Challenge 2019, promoted by World Bank and UN Habitat, uses this new 3D Robotic Technology to create different housing typologies for slums recovery and emergency, able to realize thousand dwellings a day at minimum cost. **Find out more on** <u>occam.org/projects</u>

#### The 3D Robotic Building System

The 3D Robotic Building System is an innovative technology project designed by the OCCAM ARCHGROUP (Pierpaolo Saporito, Cesare Casati, Ivan Shumkov, Joseph di Pasquale) to provide large scale and fast housing for emarginated people and slums inhabitants. Due to the low cost and hight capacity of inclusion in terms of easy auto-constructions facilities, the project aims at supporting families in disadvantaged areas.



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## **Infopoverty Worldwide attendees and speakers**

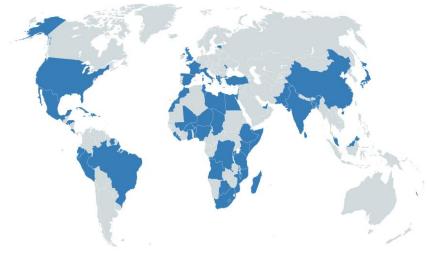
The Conference represents a highlevel elaboration forum for ICT solutions and digital services for the SDGs achievement. In the past editions we established a strong network relationships of and contacts thanks to the attendance of over two thousand speakers, hundreds of companies and public and private institutions, including:



• International Organizations: UN, FAO, IFAD, ILO, ITU, WHO,

UNDP, UNESCO, European Space Agency, NASA, World Bank, European Union, Inter-American Development Bank, African Development Bank, CERN, OECD, International Federation of the Red Cross, C. Smithers Foundation

 National representations: Albania, Andorra, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, DR Congo, East Timor, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Macau, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Palau, Palestinian Territories, Peru, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu, Vatican



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