The post-COVID-19 pandemic and the advent of AI have altered the perspective on the imminent future increasing the perception of risks and unknowns of a digitally shaped society. Operating since the dawn of the digital revolution, the Infopoverty World Conference has punctually recorded the most significant turning points of this era, highlighting projects and best practices worthy of the attention of the United Nations system, within whose framework it was born, with the mission of promoting the achievement of the MDGs and SDGs through ICTs and new technologies.

Now a new phase is opening up, brought by a new generation of digital natives and by the exploitation of new technologies that have become the formative paradigm of development. In this context, addressing this heterogeneity of new, often unethical, instances, induced more by private forces, which, by offering the infrastructure and operating platforms, in fact determine their uses and purposes, has become of the utmost importance and cannot be delayed any longer. The powerful advent of A.I. has turmoilled the digital processes: it is now crucial to understand how to act to ensure human rights and provide e-welfare for all. How should we steer the impetus of AI to orient it towards overcoming of inequalities, climate emergencies, and challenging instances?

During the last UNCTAD 26th Commission on Science and Technology for Development held in Geneva, we addressed the gaps and the paradoxical binomial between digital excellence and its diverted use, them being at the basis of a struggling achievement of the SDGs putting the protection of human rights on the back burner, while simultaneously stressing how digital services dedicated to providing generalized e-welfare – telemedicine, food-security, e-governance – have been neglected or presented with inadequate solutions at best (i.e. climate change).

On top of this, the Digital Revolution is developing unbalanced and, on the surface, with limited capacity for infiltration into global basic action plans and policies.

On these premises, the 23rd Infopoverty World Conference will constitute a think-tank gathering the most eminent experts and high-level and advanced projects to reach the UN 2030 Agenda and beyond.

Since its foundation, OCCAM has been driven by the core principle of becoming a pilot explorer actively involved in the digital revolution, while applying innovations through best practices for helping disadvantaged communities.

Under the aegis of the United Nations, in 2001, on the waves of MDGs, OCCAM launched the annual Infopoverty World Conference, held at UNHQ in New York, to gather eminent stakeholders and concretely help the poorest and most disadvantaged populations, giving them access to the ICTs. Since then, many projects have been implemented within the Infopoverty Programme acting as an operative branch of the annual resolutions and declarations drafted at the end of each Conference.

We thank the previous speakers

M. Bachelet, President of Chile and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
L. Fernández, President of the Dominican Republic.
M. Ravalomanana, President of the Republic, Madagascar.
J. Shirley Jr., President of the Navajo Nation.
J. Kerry, Secretary of State, US.
T.R. Kennedy, New York State Supreme Court, US.
G. Fini, President of the Chamber of Deputies, Italy.
G.B. Zepeda, Minister, Honduras.
H. Mongi, Minister, L. Baldrini, President of the Chamber of Deputies, Italy.
L. Moratti, Minister, Italy.
L. Sgaier, Secretary of State I/T, Tanzania.
R. Schifani, President of the Senate, Italy.
S. De Mistura, UN Secretary General Assistant and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.
A. J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.
S. M. De Badaroux, Executive Board Unesco, President, K. Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.
H. Touré, ITU Secretary-General, S. Al Basheer Al Morshid, Director ITU, C. Williams, Director UNHabitat, P. Civili, Special Advisor to the Director General of IDLO, J.A. Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General, UNDESA, D. Bas, Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development UNDESA, N. Rochdi, UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, M. Bukuru, Director UNCCD Liaison Office in New York, A. Mantica, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Italy.
Amb. David B. Dunn, US.
Amb. Dawit Yohannes, Ethiopia, Amb. F. Lobasso, Italy.
Amb. Mohammed K. Khiai, Tunisia.
Amb. Zina Andrianarivelo, Madagascar, Schwab Klaus, Founder And President, World Economic Forum, C. Smithers & A. Smithers, Smithers Foundation.

AND OTHERS FOR PARTICIPATING TO THE CONFERENCES (cfr. Infopoverty e-book)
HISTORY OF THE CONFERENCE

It may well be said that the history of this Conference is the history of digital itself. It began with the initial Solar villages established in 1999 in collaboration with the Ministry of Technology of Honduras, and the World Bank, and was empowered by ICTs, creating the ICT village model, as realized in Borj Ettouil, at the 2005 WSIS in Tunis, in Meiss al Jabal in South Liban, presented by Staffan de Mistura, Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General, and in Sambaina (Madagascar), declared UN Millennium Village in 2007. All were furnished with telemedicine services supported by NASA, ESA, and Niguarda Hospital in Milan, along with e-learning facilities in partnership with Oklahoma University, the US Department of Education, and the Politecnico di Milano. The Conference is also remembered for being the backdrop for significant announcements, such as the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Account proclaimed in 2001 by Chris Isaakel - former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy at the US Department of Commerce, the launch of the European Union’s Horizon 2020 program in 2017 by Vice President and Commissioner for Technology, Neelie Kroes, with an allocation of 80 billion. The success of the Conference lies in the participation of over a thousand eminent personalities, academic scientists, diplomats, policymakers, representatives of NGOs, and civil society, whom we thank for contributing to discussions with their studies, projects, and proposals. This wealth is vividly portrayed in the recordings still disseminated by UN Webcast.

MAIN ACTIONS:
FIGHT POVERTY THROUGH ICTs

Infopoverty Program: ensure e-welfare for all

The Infopoverty Programme was established to concretely help more disadvantaged communities through the use of ICTs, operating as an executive arm of the deliberations stated in the Final Declarations of the infopoverty World Conferences. It puts into practice the guidelines issued by the Conference through the launching of ad hoc projects and services in various fields, including telemedicine, education, food-security, and e-governance.

ICT Village Model

The ICT Village Model follows a process of intervention that is flexible and easily replicable in many areas of the globe, providing various services designed to promote an endogenous and sustainable development process. The ICT Village of Sambaina in Madagascar was proclaimed Millennium Village by Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the UN Millennium Project in 2007.

EWA-BELT Project

Ethiopia - Kenya - Sierra Leone - Burundi - Tanzania - EWA-BELT is an EU Horizon2020 project (GA 862848) aimed at developing sustainable intensification of agricultural productions in organic, agroforestry and mixed crop and livestock farming systems in 38 study areas of 6 countries in East and West Africa.

Digital services to provide e-welfare for all

- E-LEARNING
  Providing tools and infrastructures to the existing school structures in disadvantaged communities.
- TELEMEDICINE
  E-health services are incorporated in existing local medical facilities or in other locations fit to host the first nucleus of health structures.
- WORLD FOOD-SECURITY CENTER
  Providing digital services to support agricultural development and food security through a high connectivity digital Platform.
- COMMUNITY ACCESS CENTER
  Providing internet connectivity to disadvantaged communities.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

April 12, 2024 - from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm (EST)
UNHQ, New York

First Session

How the turmoil provoked by AI in the field of digital can enhance the human condition or, vice versa, compromise it.

Second Session

Urging the fight against poverty towards e-welfare for all.

Third Session

Gaps to bridge: telemedicine, food-security and e-services 4dev

Fourth Session

Best practices to lead the transition

Concrete examples worldwide of new AI applications and advocated models will serve as inspiration for various entities—International Organizations, public and private businesses, and Civil Society, to prompt collaborative efforts, policy reforms, and targeted interventions, envisioning a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Fifth Session

General Debate and Final Declaration