COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development | #CSocD #SDGs #GlobalGoals WEBSITE: social.un.org/csocd

62nd Session of the Commission for Social Development

Panel discussion on emerging issues

**The Influence of Digital Transformation on Inclusive Growth
and Development: A Path to Realizing Social Justice**

Wednesday, 7 February 2024, 3-6 p.m., Conference room 4, UNHQ

Concept Note

1. Background

Digital technologies are transforming economies and labour markets and posing challenges to governance frameworks and social institutions. These new technologies have great potential for contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting inclusive growth and social justice. However, there are many challenges to harnessing digital transformation for social development, as it risks entrenching existing inequalities and leaving some people further behind.

Frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data analytics, the Internet of Things, three-dimensional printing and robotics, are revolutionizing economies and the world of work. Digital transformation presents multiple opportunities thanks to its potential for increasing productivity, creating opportunities for financial inclusion, providing new tools for making social policies more effective and facilitating the inclusion of groups living in vulnerable situations. can create new and better jobs, improve the delivery of services such as education and health care, improve assistive technologies for persons with disabilities and help integrate vulnerable groups into the labour market.

However, these opportunities will not materialize automatically. They depend on a purposeful, multi-stakeholder process of change that harnesses digital technologies for social development and social justice. Additionally, digital transformation is associated with many risks. Digital technologies are resulting in increased inequality and polarization in the labour market, and many of the new opportunities created by them, such as task-based employment via online platforms, do not ensure workers access to social protection and decent work. Algorithm-based decision-making risks exacerbating discrimination against particular social groups, and there are concerns around transparency and accountability when such decisions are made. Technologies like social media have contributed to the spread of misinformation and eroded social cohesion and trust. As more

information and services move online, digital divides are exacerbating pre-existing inequalities.

There are many pathways to steer digital transformation towards inclusive economic growth and social justice. Bridging digital divides, with a focus on promoting meaningful universal connectivity, is an essential step. Governments can support workers in a changing labour market by strengthening social protection systems and promoting the acquisition of digital skills, including through re-skilling and life-long learning. New frameworks for governing digital transformation, including for data protection, accountability and oversight mechanisms, can promote technologies based on inclusivity, accountability and human rights. International cooperation can improve the global governance of digital transformation and support developing countries in gaining access to new technologies.

The Commission for Social Development will convene its sixty-second session from 5 to 14 February 2024, with a priority theme of "Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication". On 7 February 2024 from 3 to 6 p.m., a panel discussion on emerging issues will focus on *The Influence of Digital Transformation on Inclusive Growth and Development: A Path to Realizing Social Justice.*

2. Objective and structure

The panel's main objective is to identify opportunities and share experiences on the contribution of digital transformation to promoting inclusive growth and social justice. Panellists will discuss questions such as: How can digital technologies support the creation of decent work opportunities? How can social policies benefit from digital transformation? How can Governments ensure that digital transformation is truly inclusive, fostering growth and development for everyone? What are good practices for bridging digital divides? How can marginalized communities benefit from digital transformation? How can Governments combat the spread of misinformation and disinformation?

Panellists are invited to structure their 12-minute presentations around solutions and strategies for countries to promote inclusive digital transformation by bridging digital divides, creating decent work and promoting effective social policies. The outcome of the discussion will be reflected in the Chair's summary as part of the inputs from the Commission for Social Development to ECOSOC's high-level segment and the 2024 High-Level Political Forum.

Proposed time allocation for the panel discussion

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Moderator: Remarks and introduction	5 minutes
Panellists: Presentations	12 minutes per panellist
Q & A: From the floor	60 minutes
Panellists: Concluding remarks	3 minutes per panellist
Moderator: Summary and conclusion	7 minutes
Chair: Closing	3 minutes