

High-level thematic roundtable on:

Digital innovations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Tuesday, 23 April 2024, 9:00-10:00 hours

Background

Digital innovation - the development of new products, services, or processes that bring value-added to economies and societies using new digital technologies – is a key accelerator for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new technologies, where the impacts are promising include but are not limited to, cognitive digital technologies, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and Big Data. As an innovation hub, the Asia and the Pacific region is poised to benefit from the impacts of digital innovation on sustainable development as already being witnessed in such areas as digital finance, GovTech, healthcare, smart energy, and transport systems.

Deliberate policy actions are required to align the development and scaling of digital innovations with the needs of rescuing the SDGs that are decelerating or lagging. Increasing the benefits and impacts of digital innovations on sustainable development knowledge, services, and practices, is not solely a technical endeavour, consisting in the implementation of novel hardware and software. It requires social interventions, such as policy reforms, institutional, and organizational transformation to address the barriers and conditions that make their adoption and scaling challenging.

Objectives

The roundtable will highlight successful examples and identify the greatest opportunities for countries in the region to leverage digital innovations for accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It will provide policy recommendations to the Commission to further strengthen regional cooperation to scale and increase the impacts of impactful digital innovations for the benefit of all countries and citizens in the region.

Guide questions:

- 1) Could you provide country-specific examples of digitally driven innovations that are already accelerating and/or could potentially accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Can you share success stories and impactful outcomes? What made this possible? What are the greatest opportunities and challenges for the region? What are you most optimistic about?
- 2) What advice do you have for countries looking to maximize the benefits of digital innovations for SDG acceleration? For example, around policy action, capacity building, and fostering an enabling environment?
- 3) How can regional cooperation further contribute to realizing the potential of digital innovations to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, particularly for Countries in Special Situations?

Confirmed speakers

- 1) Mr. Tony Blair, Executive Chairman, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change and Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland **(special remarks by video)**
- 2) H.E. Mr. Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Indonesia (via Zoom)
- 3) H.E. Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP, Honorable Minister of Finance, Bangladesh (in-person)
- 4) H.E. Mr. Askar Zhambakin, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan (in-person)
- 5) Ms. Ko Barrett, Deputy Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (in-person)
- 6) Ms. Xirui Lian, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Lvdoya, China (in-person)

Moderator

Ms. Dhra Dhirakaosal, TV News Anchor, NHK World and National Broadcasting Services of Thailand

Programme

Moderator's introductory remarks

Special remarks by Mr. Tony Blair (pre-recorded video)

Remarks by panellists (5 minutes each)

Interventions from the floor

Final remarks by panellists (2 minutes each)

Moderator's wrap up

Total: 60 minutes