Digitalization to Achieve the SDGs: promoting effective and coherent UN support through mapping and country-level initiatives

Co-organized by the Office of Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology and
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

6 May 2022

The event aimed to raise stakeholder awareness on how digital technologies can boost the process to achieve SDGs and the significance of interagency system-wide coordination to implement the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. Through presentations by UN Agencies and Resident Coordinators, the event also explored how digitalization can help facilitate the achievement of socio-economic and environmental, sustainable development, with a specific focus on country-level needs.

- Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro Massieu, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, highlighted the importance of developing countries prioritizing digitalization for sustainable development, especially by addressing issues in data protection, online human rights, misinformation, Artificial Intelligence and digital public goods. She also emphasized the vital role of the UN on coordinating with all stakeholders to harness the 4th Industry Revolution, as well as recognized the role played by the Office of the Tech Envoy in promoting coordination, and the importance of the forthcoming Global Digital Compact.
- ASG Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, acting Envoy on Technology, gave a brief introduction on the joint mapping exercise of UN-system digital initiatives conducted by the Tech Envoy Office and DESA. She stressed that it was crucial that we maintain a sense of strategy and coordination when conducting digital related works, so they are undertaken within a broader framework, with the SDGs at its heart.
- Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN RC, Mongolia, introduced Mongolia's Digital National Strategy in Vision 2050, as well as how UNCT Mongolia supported the national strategy through Digital Cooperation Plan of Action, prioritizing digital inclusion, digital literacy, capacity building, e-governance, and enabling digital policy in specific industries, e.g., green economy, agriculture, e trade.
- Ms. Ana Patricia Graça, UN RC, Cabo Verde, highlighted that as one of Small Island Developing States, digitalization was one of the key priorities and the driving force for inter-agency collaboration supporting the country sustainable development in Cabo Verde. She underscored the significance of strengthening partnership for digital connectivity and capacity-building.
- Zhang Fan from the Tech Envoy Office and Louisa Kupfer from DESA presented on the joint mapping exercise, including a summary of key results – touching on the geographical distribution of activities and relationship between SDGs and Roadmap action areas. The full report and database of UN digital-related initiatives will be present by 2022 HLPF.
- In the session showcasing UN system digital initiatives, Marisol Estrella presented UNEP's Up-Scaling Community Resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction tool to improve the environmental resilience and reduce disasters; Victoria Padula de Quadros outlined

FAO/WHO's Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool which harnesses data to monitor food consumption and promote food security; Joy Mutai introduced UN-Habitat's City-Wide Public Space Assessment Tool to steer the city space for sustainable development; Torbjörn Fredriksson briefed on UNCTAD eTrade for Women Initiative; Jean-Martin Bauer, introduced the use of blockchain applications in humanitarian contexts in WFP; Keyzom Ngodup presented UNDP programmes in harnessing digital public goods for SDGs; and Walid Mathlouthi briefed on ITU's initiatives Connect2Recover to reinforce digital infrastructure in post COVID recovery.