



Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

Title: Shaping Future Generations through Innovation and North-South Digital Cooperation

Date & Time: 21 September 2024, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (Nairobi Time)

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Organized by: The Youth Café, World Food Forum (WFF), Global Democracy Coalition (GDC), and the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)

Background:

This side event, held during the Summit of the Future Action Days, attracted over 200 participants, including youth advocates, policymakers, digital innovators, and development agencies, to deliberate on North-South digital cooperation. The event focused on addressing the growing digital divide between the Global North and South, with special attention to empowering African youth. The Youth Café, along with its partners—World Food Forum, Global Democracy Coalition, and OHCHR—facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas and solutions aimed at promoting digital literacy, gender inclusion in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, and fostering cross-regional partnerships.

In addition to exploring digital cooperation, the event highlighted the need for intergenerational collaboration to bridge the gaps between older and younger generations, both in terms of access to technology and shared leadership. This intergenerational gap, often compounded by differing technological skills and priorities, was a central theme. The discussions emphasized the importance of creating platforms where knowledge and experience can flow both ways—older generations contributing wisdom and leadership, while youth bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions.

Key Issues Discussed:

1. **Digital Divide:** The event underscored the deepening digital divide between the Global North and South, with African youth disproportionately impacted by limited access to technology and digital literacy resources.
2. **Digital Literacy and Infrastructure:** Participants stressed the need to enhance access to digital tools and infrastructure in underserved regions. The role of both young people and older generations in addressing these gaps was emphasized, especially in the area of capacity-building.
3. **Gender Equity in STEM:** A strong focus was placed on promoting gender diversity in STEM fields and the digital sector. Discussions centered on ensuring equal opportunities for women and girls, particularly from marginalized communities, to access technology and leadership roles.
4. **Youth-Led Innovation:** Participants highlighted successful African youth-led digital projects and their integration into national and regional policy frameworks. These innovations were seen as critical for sustainable development, while the contributions of older generations were noted as key for mentorship and strategic direction.
5. **Cross-Regional Partnerships:** The dialogue emphasized the importance of partnerships between African youth organizations and Northern digital hubs. These partnerships can catalyze



technological innovation and entrepreneurial growth, with a focus on leveraging the experiences of both young and older generations.

6. **North-South Digital Cooperation:** International collaborations were identified as essential for building inclusive innovation ecosystems. These partnerships were deemed critical for ensuring both young and older people benefit from digital initiatives, creating a balanced approach to future digital leadership.
7. **Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing:** The event highlighted the intergenerational gap in digital skills and leadership. Speakers advocated for creating structures that facilitate knowledge transfer between older and younger generations, allowing both groups to learn from each other and work together on shaping a more inclusive digital future.
8. **Youth Empowerment and Leadership:** The role of North-South cooperation in empowering youth to take leadership in addressing global challenges, particularly in areas such as digital inclusion and innovation, was emphasized. The inclusion of older generations in these efforts was seen as critical for mentorship and institutional memory.

Key Recommendations for Action:

1. **Expand Digital Literacy Programs:** Governments and development organizations should collaborate on creating policies that enhance digital literacy for youth and older generations, ensuring equitable access to technology in underserved regions, particularly in Africa.
2. **Promote Gender Diversity in STEM:** Stakeholders should develop targeted capacity- building programs to promote gender equity in STEM, ensuring that women and girls from marginalized areas have access to innovation and leadership opportunities.
3. **Integrate Youth-Led and Intergenerational Innovations into Policy Frameworks:** Governments should work towards integrating youth-led innovations, alongside intergenerational collaboration, into national and regional development strategies, ensuring that older generations' expertise is not sidelined.
4. **Strengthen Cross-Regional and Intergenerational Partnerships:** Enhance cross-regional partnerships between African youth organizations and Northern digital hubs, while also fostering intergenerational mentorship to drive technological progress and entrepreneurial growth.
5. **Increase Funding for Youth and Intergenerational Projects:** International donors should prioritize funding for projects that bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive, intergenerational innovation, contributing to sustainable development.
6. **Establish Intergenerational Mentorship Programs:** Governments and international organizations should establish mentorship programs that enable knowledge transfer between younger and older generations, fostering leadership and innovation in the digital economy.

Webpage for More Information:

For further details, resources, and ongoing initiatives related to the side event, visit: <https://www.theyouthcafe.com/upcoming-events/shaping-future-generations-through-innovations-and-north-south-digital-cooperation-summit-of-the-future-action-days-side-event>