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**WORK PLAN FOR THE MEETINGS**

**OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT**

**FOR THE PERIOD JULY-DECEMBER 2022**

(Approved during the regular meeting held on July 26, 2022)

**INTRODUCTION**

Heads of State and Government of the Americas adopted a “Regional Agenda for Digital Transformation” on June 9, 2022, as part of the outcomes of the at the Ninth Summit of the Americas. The Regional Agenda for Digital Transformation affirms the essential role of dynamic and resilient digital ecosystems in supporting vibrant digital economies, enhance preparedness for future health, natural disaster, and climate events, promote digital inclusion for all peoples, increase innovation, competitiveness and investment, among others, by leveraging emerging and digital technologies.[[1]](#footnote-1)/

Furthermore, on December 8, 2021, during the Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology (VI REMCYT), member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Declaration of Jamaica “Harnessing the Power of Transformative Science and Technologies to Drive our Communities Forward”, with a focus on increasing connectivity for all in the Americas, and providing youth and other populations in situation of vulnerability with the necessary skills and capabilities to participate in the digital and innovation economy.

As a result of the pandemic, every sector of the economy, including education, health, commerce, transportation, energy, communications, governments, and businesses (from big companies to MSMEs), moved as fast as possible to use digital tools and technologies to maintain day-to-day operations. The transitions were 20 to 25 times faster than previously thought possible.[[2]](#footnote-2)/ However, not all sectors or people achieved the same level of access or capabilities. In the midst of this transition, lower income households and disadvantaged communities faced more financial, health, learning, social and emotional hardship and uncertainties.

The Chair proposes to focus the discussions in the CIDI meetings for the second semester of 2022 on the theme of Digital Transformation, to allow member states to closely examine needs, challenges as well as opportunities for cooperation for the people of the Americas to join, contribute to, and benefit from the digital and innovation economy.

The intent of the work plan for this cycle of CIDI, July–December 2022, is to engage member states in a series of discussions on concrete hemispheric priorities and good practices that can lead to enhanced regional cooperation on digital transformation. The range of issues for consideration span all the areas of integral development under the umbrella of CIDI.

CIDI will schedule meetings on the five (5) sub-topics presented in this work plan. Ahead of each session, a concept note will serve to highlight the main issues for consideration of member states and the specific initiative(s), good practice(s) or proposal(s) to be put forward for discussion. Member states will be invited to provide ideas for cooperation and specific contributions, such as steps and measures to advance hemispheric engagement.

Meetings will include presentations with interactive dialogue guided by the Chair with invited experts and member states. The discussions will be guided by the concept note and every effort will be made to share presentations and materials for each session in advance.

**Structure of the second semester of 2022 for CIDI meetings**

The second semester of CIDI meetings will be structured as a series of discussions among delegations from member states, leading experts and partners around concrete initiatives on development.

**CIDI meetings schedule for July-December 2022**

**July 26, 2022: Digital Transformation and Integral Development**

 Digital technologies have advanced and transformed societies more rapidly than any other innovations in our history – reaching around [50 per cent](https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf) of the developing world’s population in only two decades.[[3]](#footnote-3)/ Digital technologies can enhance connectivity, financial inclusion, access to education, health and trade, as well as provide tools to promote sustainable development and address climate change.

 In the health sector, AI-enabled technologies are helping to diagnose diseases and personalize treatments. In education, distance learning and virtual learning environments have opened up access to programs for more students and communities. In the financial sector, there are more options for banking services and financing thanks to new technological solutions including, for example, with the use of blockchain and digital platforms. In agriculture, sensors can help optimize the use of water, improve crop cycles and address changing climate patterns. The impact of digitalization reaches all development sectors.

 This meeting will discuss the importance of Digital Transformation for Integral Development in the region from a public policy standpoint. Experts will present ongoing initiatives of digital transformation in many sectors such as: Health, Sustainable Development, Creative Industries, Fintech and Digital Currencies, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Member states will also share good practices to illustrate how governments have successfully leveraged the digital transformation as part of their strategic agenda, and what challenges and opportunities they experienced by doing so.

 Questions for member states will feature:

 1) What type of policies and programs exist in your country to support digital transformation for development?

 2) What type of solutions can you share to bridge the digital divide for development concerns?

 3) What are some examples of innovative regulatory frameworks or practices in your country to support digital transformation for development?

**August 30, 2022: Joint PC-CIDI: Youth and Skills in the Digital Economy**

 The COVID-19 pandemic has left the region with record high unemployment rates, with youth, women and girls and rural and indigenous communities, among others, particularly affected.[[4]](#footnote-4)/

Upskilling the Americas’ workforce is fundamental to help youth and unemployed citizens access and benefit from the digital and innovation economy. A recent survey conducted by The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – the world’s largest HR professional society with members in 165 countries – concluded that 4 out of 5 companies have trouble finding highly skilled workers, especially when it comes to industries related to digital technologies.[[5]](#footnote-5)/

This meeting will address the need for specialized training and certification in the Americas for youth to access jobs and opportunities in the digital and innovation economy. Presentations and questions will focus on the Americas Youth Academy on Transformative Technologies, a flagship program of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), launched during the Sixth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology held on December 7-8, 2021 under the leadership of Jamaica. The OAS Youth Academy is a dedicated mechanism created to provide youth with the necessary skills and capabilities to have access to opportunities in the digital and innovation economy. The goal of the Youth Academy is to train 10,000 youth in transformative science and technologies by 2024 and 100,000 by 2026.

 **September 27, 2022: Artificial Intelligence, Automation and Machine Learning: Ethical Considerations and Public Policies for Development**

**\*Only 2 speakers to leave enough time for preparations of the General Assembly**

Visual recognition, speech recognition, automated translation, reaction to data in specific environments, fast decision-marking, and the ability to project multiple steps in the future (foresight) are only a few examples of where AI is reaching every aspect of our daily activities. [[6]](#footnote-6)/

AI, Automation and Machine Learning present a number of important questions related to the research and development capabilities for development concerns in OAS member states; business development and economic opportunities as well as new approaches or solutions for multiple fields and regional challenges. There are also a number of ethical questions about the use and implementation of AI and how to best regulate it.[[7]](#footnote-7)/

This session will provide a space for member states to address some of these important questions. Experts from the initiative ***Prospecta Americas*** on transformative technologies will present opportunities and challenges on the use of Artificial Intelligence and automated systems. Discussions will cover AI accuracy, biases, applications and technologies, among others.

**October 25, 2022: Digital Transformation to Promote Sustainable Development and Tackle Climate Change**

A study published on June 15, 2022 by the World Economic Forum indicates that digital technology could help reduce global emissions by 20%, therefore halting climate change.[[8]](#footnote-8)/

Digital technologies can play a key role in understanding how and where energy is consumed, lost or wasted, or how land and water are being used, or which are the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in a nation. Monitoring environmental-related conditions is fundamental to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda and mitigate climate change.

For example, considering that buildings account for nearly 40% of energy-related CO2 emissions annually, digital technologies can help control and optimize existing infrastructure into smart, safe, and carbon neutral buildings that meet sustainability and efficiency targets.[[9]](#footnote-9)/ This in turn helps lower energy and water consumption, reduce hazardous waste and save money globally.

New business models have also emerged as a result of digital transformation in the wastage industry, among others. More and more, robots and artificial intelligence systems are deployed to accelerate and improve sorting abilities in recycling centers; cloud solutions are implemented to store and process data on the type of waste collected and its origin (residential, industrial, agriculture, biomedical, etc.), and biomass and biofuel refineries are now turning over to geospatial analysis to track new sources of feedstock.[[10]](#footnote-10)/

Examples abound on how digital transformation can promote sustainable development and tackle climate change. This session will focus on member states initiatives and policies to promote the use of technologies for sustainable development, including in infrastructure, water, energy, transportation, agriculture, and waste management, as well as opportunities to develop new industries and quality jobs, as the region undertakes meaningful actions to tackle the climate crisis.

 Questions for member states will feature:

1) What are the innovation and technology solutions available in your country?

2) What kind of partnerships, policies and investments are needed?

3) What offer of cooperation can be put forward from your country? Are there any innovations or technology solutions deployed in your country that have proven successful in addressing climate change?

**December 13, 2022: Policy Imperatives for the Labor Market in the Digital Economy**

According to the World Economic Forum’s **Future of Jobs Report 2020**, by 2025, widespread workplace automation will entail a reduction of approximately 85 million jobs. At the same time, up to 97 million new roles may be created as a result of the digital economy.[[11]](#footnote-11)/

Digital transformation poses critical challenges, especially for employers and employees who need to adjust their work organization, job allocation, and skills, to avoid a growing polarization of the labor market (between lower-educated workers and workers with a tertiary education degree). In an effort to close the labor gap, governments ought to equip their citizens with the tools and capacities they need to participate in the digital economy and the Industry 4.0.

This meeting will be a space for member states to share policies and experiences in line with the new labor market – and the new workforce – brough about by the digital economy. Experts and member states will discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital economy in line with job creation, job profiles and a new work organization.

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<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/09/how-to-build-zero-carbon-buildings/>, September 8, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . World Economic Forum, **How Digital Transformation and Sustainability can flourish together**, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/here-s-how-digital-transformation-and-sustainability-can-flourish-together/>, March 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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