OEA/Ser.W

CIDI/INF. 507/22

14 July 2022

Original: English

CONCEPT NOTE

Regular meeting of THE

Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)

26 JULY 2022

(Prepared by the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development)

THEME: **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. **Background/Justification**

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.[[1]](#footnote-1)/

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.

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. 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.

Leveraging the accelerated digitization and the digital economy can make an important difference for OAS member states to achieve a faster and more inclusive recovery from the pandemic and to pursue sustainable growth strategies. Furthermore, it is a unique opportunity to address historic and widening gaps on access to technology, skills for digital and innovation economy, social mobility, economic opportunities and better services for citizens.

1. **Purpose of the Meeting**

This CIDI 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 sectors such as: Health, Sustainable Development, Creative Industries, Fintech and Digital Assets, 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.

**3. Relevance to the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) and OAS Mandates**

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.[[3]](#footnote-3)/

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, providing youth and other populations in situation of vulnerability with the necessary skills and capabilities to participate in the digital and innovation economy.

In the Declaration of Jamaica Ministers Committed to: “6. Strengthen national actions and regional cooperation to connect education to the economy, building capacity for the voluntary acquisition/transfer of skills and technology on mutually agreed terms to fully function/operate in the digital and innovation-driven economy and the enabling environment to fully integrate into society” and resolved to “15. To urge member states to exchange… good practices, lessons learned, experiences, training opportunities, and technical assistance to promote … the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies, the development of sustainable bioeconomy and the digital transformation of member states within the framework of the COMCYT and its four Working Groups.”

“Promoting inclusive and competitive economies” is one of the strategic lines for Integral Development in the OAS Comprehensive Strategic Plan **(AG/RES.1 (LI-E/16)**. One of its Strategic Objectives (1.3) is to: “Increase cooperation for strengthening member States institutional capacities onincorporating innovation and transformative technology to create added value and diversification in their economies in a sustainable and inclusive fashion.”

**Resolution “Advancing Hemispheric Initiatives on Integral Development” 2021: AG/RES. 2967 (LI-O/21),** regarding the strategic line: “Promoting Inclusive and Competitive Economies”, “3. To urge member states to exchange good practices, experiences, training opportunities, and technical assistance to promote: … the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies and digital transformation of member states within the framework of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) …”

1. **Structure of the Meeting**

Experts will be invited as guest speakers to present some of the main opportunity areas and challenges related to the impact of digital transformation on integral development. Member states will be invited to ask questions to the experts on their presentations and/or main points covered during their interventions as part an interactive dialogue guided by the Chair. Following the Question-and-Answer period, delegations will be invited to share good practices, specific offers of collaboration or needs related to this topic. The key guiding questions for these interventions by member states are:

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?

Expert Presentations (7 Minutes/Max 10 minutes)

* Ramón Sánchez Piña, Director of the Sustainable Technology and Health, T.H. Chan Public Health School, Harvard University (confirmed)
* Bahamas, Speaker (tbc)
* Hon. Carlos James, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development and Culture, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (tbc)
* Brazil, Office of the Minister of Economy
* Pablo Zamora, President of the Chile Foundation (tbc)

1. **Outcome of the Meeting**

It is expected that the meeting will contribute to:

1. Providing information on main trends, challenges and opportunities on Digital Transformation for Development in OAS member states;
2. Encourage member states to present good practices with opportunities for cooperation to reduce existing gaps on digital transformation and identify opportunities to collaborate within the different development sectors;
3. Receive feedback and recommendations of member states for strengthening the work of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development to incorporate solutions and address challenges presented by digital transformation and pursue concrete actions and partnerships with governments, private sector and other leaders within the scope of work of CIDI ministerial and high level meetings.

CIDRP03590E01

1. ## . UN75 Dialogue, The Impact of Digital Technologies, <https://www.un.org/en/un75/impact-digital-technologies>, September 2021.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . McKinsey Global Institute, How Covid-19 has Pushed Companies over the Technology Tipping Point and Transformed Business Forever, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>, June 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . IX Summit of the Americas, **Regional Agenda for Digital Transformation**, June 9, 2022, Los Angeles, United States. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)