<u>**WORKSHOP TOPIC:**</u>

Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in a Digital Future: Where Do Youth Stand?

The economic transition of developing countries is creating new business opportunities for its citizens most especially the youth in the digital age. For example, people are demanding greater connectivity and the growing middle class has increasing consumer needs that are generating a significant amount of "big data" that, if managed and analyzed, can further contribute to the growth of any economy most especially the developing world.

Technologies such as mobility, cloud computing, business intelligence and social media are transforming businesses and enabling sustainable economic growth. Maintaining this momentum is another set of issues that needs to be discussed and this depends on countries fostering inclusive growth. Most developing countries have already demonstrated a zeal for harnessing information and communications technologies (ICT), the backbone of the digital economy. This digital economy presents a different kind of opportunity for the youth to build sustainable careers and livelihoods, as well as contribute to making communities more resilient.

The digitized essence of culture has also opened up the world both geographically and socially. Media culture and ICT do not automatically translate into the globalization of the economy alone; they also provide new opportunities for engagement and resistance. At the moment, it is impossible to know for certain what ICT-based democracy and activism will mean in practice, though there have been some initial incursions into this area, the global network and email have already been successfully utilized for globalized civic activism. In this sense, Internet is a competitive playing field used by both the right and the left, and by dominant media corporations from above and radical media and other activist groups from below. In the likely event that new technologies constitute the dominant forces of tomorrow, it is up to critical theorists and activists to illuminate their nature and effects, to demonstrate the threats to democracy and freedom, and to seize the opportunities for progressive education.

The digital divide has produced what is known as the participation hypothesis, according to which ICT influence the involvement of young people. The new opportunities for participation created by ICT may strengthen the civic engagement of those youth who are already active in this respect. In the other hand, ICT may serve to mobilize young people not previously interested in any form of political or social engagement. Similarly, young people who do not read newspapers or follow

the news on television may be attracted by the opportunity to participate in societal debate through the Internet. It may be too early to tell whether the participation hypothesis is accurate on either of these counts.

Regrettably, in the dialogue on digital culture and bridging the digital divide in the developing countries, the perspectives and opinions of children and young people are often disregarded, and efforts are rarely made to observe these phenomena from within the context of their living environment.

In this regard, the proposed workshop will take the form of an interactive, intergenerational discussion to leverage the expertise and research experiences of the diverse organizations taking part in the session. The focus of the discussion will be at the intersection of ICTs, policy, youth, and sustainable development. It will highlight the ways in which ICTs can be used to share knowledge, promote citizen-based reporting on the SDGs, build capacity, and enable access to tools for implementing the SDGs. Enhancing digital literacy is especially important to leverage the potential benefits that come from ICTs. It will further highlight the importance of engaging youth in decision-making processes surrounding ICTs, allowing them to deliberate and share perspectives on the intersection of ICTs, policy, society, and governance. For example, youth are actively engaged in conducting impact assessments on the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of ICTs, including its design, development, deployment, scale, and appropriate and inclusive use. As pivotal catalysts in implementing the SDGs, engaging youth is crucial to mobilize long-lasting change.

During the workshop, the panelists will present examples of youth-led initiatives to enhance and democratize access to Internet and appropriate use of ICTs, as well as youth-led participatory technology assessments and foresight surrounding ICTs, and a range of other topics. Speakers come from diverse regions, backgrounds, and field of practice - which contribute to an engaging and fruitful dialogue. The panel will then discuss various topics at the intersection of ICTs, policy, and society, focusing on the role of youth using ICTs as a vehicle towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. The panel will give a chance for the presenters, along with other invited panelists, to discuss some of the questions highlighted below.

During the panel discussion with the audience both on site and remotely, the following questions will be addressed:

1. How can ICTs be used to enhance participation of youth towards the SDGs? (e.g. knowledge share, awareness raising, reporting)

2. How can ICTs be used as an enabler for youth to contribute to implementing the SDGs? (e.g. digital skills, ICT tools)

3. What avenues do youth have to formally engage in ICT-related discussions and decision making at the global, regional, and national level? What barriers do they face?

4. What are examples and best practices for democratizing access to ICT knowledge, building digital literacy, and ensuring appropriate use ICTs for sustainable livelihoods and community resilience?

5. How can youth in developing countries leverage the rapid rate of digitization, as well as different e-governance structures that give rise to unique patterns of innovation, in order to leapfrog into the digital economy?

6. How and in what ways do the generic properties of 'digital creativity' create different kinds of opportunity for decent jobs and movement across traditional work roles?

7. What is the importance of youth engaging in participatory technology assessments for ICTs? How can they meaningfully engage?