SDC Digital Watch Newsletter

Issue 2, July 2020

DiPLO

Welcome to the second issue of the *DigitalWatch* SDC newsletter. The last couple of months have put digitalisation centre stage in global economic, societal, and health discussions. The COVID-19 crisis placed a greater strain on the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and the conduct of multilateral diplomacy. As the world prepares to return to the 'new normal', we look at how the future of meetings might unfold and what skills will be required to run hybrid meetings successfully.

In this issue, we provide a round-up of top news on development, climate action, and food security.

We share figures on the 2019 digital health market, and forecasts for 2026.

PAST EVENT

GIP's online conference Navigating Geneva's Digital Policy Landscape tackled the approaches and initiatives of Geneva-based actors on digital policy issues.

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FINTECH FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The advantages and risks of fintech in attaining the objectives of inclusive finance.

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SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL GOALS

Mapping the role of digital technology as an accelerator of sustainable development goals (SDGs)

More on page 4

Harnessing tech for development

Development

- Facebook has launched the My Digital World, a project designed to equip the youth and general public across sub-Saharan Africa with digital skills.
- Pakistan has set up the Digital Victim Support Directory which provides child victims of violence, harassment, and abuse with information on finding support.

Food Security

- Liquid Telecom partnered with Kenya's Twiga Foods to deploy Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, such as sensors for measuring soil moisture to improve precision farming.
- The Microsoft for Agritech Startups programme launched to assist Indian start-ups in developing agritech solutions.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has set up the Food Systems Dashboard to help national decision makers learn about and compare food systems across the world.

Gender equality

- The Connected Women and European Union – United Nations Women have partnered to assist female entrepreneurs in the Philippines to develop digital platform skills.

Climate action

- Following the publication of a Greenpeace report, Google announced that it will stop producing AI tools for the oil and gas industry.

Migration

- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has launched the Data Innovation Directory (DID), a data platform intended to help monitor migration trends in times of crisis.

Humanitarian

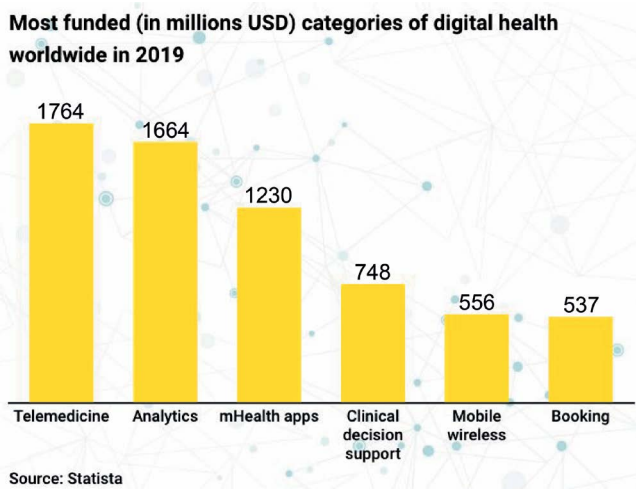
- Wingcopter has partnered with the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) to boost humanitarian health-supply chains.
- The German Aerospace Centre (DLR) has initiated the Data4Human project that aims to help humanitarian organisations quickly communicate the information they require.

Water management

- The Communications, Advocacy and Policy Opportunities and Outreach for Poop (CAOOP) launched an online resource-sharing platform for actors in the water, hygiene, and sanitation industry of Africa.

Digital health

- Babylon Health, an mHealth app, has confirmed a data breach of its video consultations with patients.



COVID-19 has shed light on digital health and the use of technologies for predicting and preventing pandemics. However, the industry is much more versatile. According to data from 2020, telemedicine received an estimated USD$1.76 billion of investment worldwide, making it the most funded digital health category in 2019. mHealth apps have received around USD$1.23 billion. While reports show that the digital health market was worth USD$106 billion in 2019, predictions indicate that its value will amount to USD$639.4 billion by 2026. Consult our latest trend updates to learn about the technological and policy implications of digital health.

Heading toward the digital realm

Hybrid meetings: Walking the line between onsite and online

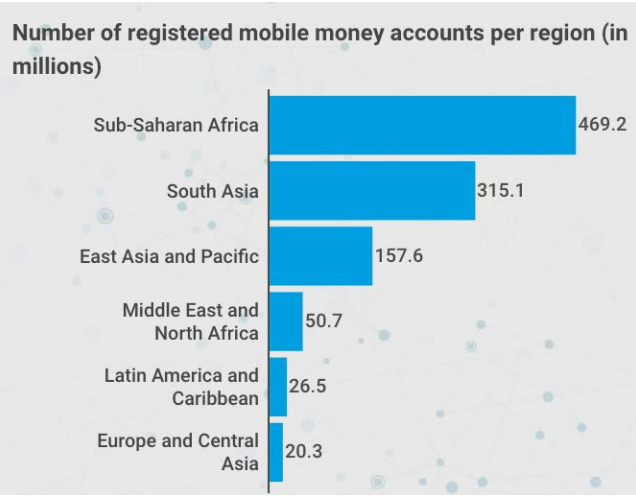
As communities enter the 'new normal' and develop strategies for economic recovery and how to build back better, questions about business continuity, and ultimately meetings, are coming into sharp focus.

As holding onsite-only meetings remains challenging, the in-betweens will gain more ground. To illustrate with the most recent example, the 43rd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has been organised in a hybrid format, combining both in situ and virtual contributions.

While technical practicalities can be resolved relatively easily, translating engagement and interactivity, and conducting effective moderation that is inclusive of both online and onsite participants, will demand further attention. The emerging culture of how we meet will require a new mindset, reflect our new circumstances, and encompass the technical, security, diplomatic, and behavioural aspects of online and hybrid meetings.

Fintech for financial inclusion

Inclusive finance measures, such as access to financial products and services for women, food producers, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and improved capacities of domestic banking institutions, are amongst the 169 targets set forward in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Much hope is being placed in the development of fintech solutions.



According to a report by McKinsey Global Institute, fintech services, including mobile money (such as mPesa in Kenya and Orange Money in many African countries), as well as digitised salary payments and digital saving accounts, can reach an estimated 1.6 billion unbanked people out of which more than half are women.

Given that over 60% of the adult population in Africa and the Middle East is unbanked, followed by South East and South Asia with 59% and 53% respectively, it should come as no surprise that sub-Saharan Africa, with 468.2 registered accounts, has the largest number of mobile-money users. The lowest number of mobile-money services can be found in Europe and Central Asia, where 39% of the adult population is financially excluded.

That said, digital finance also raises a number of concerns. Many financial online services collect and use personal data. For instance, mobile payment transactions collect ID numbers, purchase histories, and location data which in turn give way to profiling customers and clients. Instead of being inclusive, online services can actually lead to discrimination.

Other issues, such as data privacy, data ownership, and data leakage and loss, are also coming up as topics of concern with the increasing use of fintech.

Past event: Navigating Geneva's Digital Policy Landscape

On 23 June 2020, the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP) held the online conference Navigating Geneva's Digital Policy Landscape during which participants were informed about the work on the Geneva Digital Atlas which will be presented to the international community in early September. The Atlas will help officials, diplomats and other actors to understand which Geneva-based organisations are working on which digital policy issues including health, devlepment, migration and trade.

Sustainable Digital Goals

The digital implementation of SDGs

In order to explore the role of digital technology as an accelerator of sustainable development, we conducted an analysis of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their respective targets.

In addition to identifying over 90 'digital targets', i.e., targets that could benefit from digital technologies, we also detected existing examples, mostly from the developing world, where AI, big data, and the Internet are being used to attain the targets in question.

According to our mapping, SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) is the most 'digitally oriented' SDG: we identified tech solutions for 8 out of 13 targets, including OpenWHO, an online platform that facilitates capacity building and knowledge sharing on epidemics and pandemics, the use of mobile phones for reducing maternal mortality rates, and data dashboards for reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous air pollution.

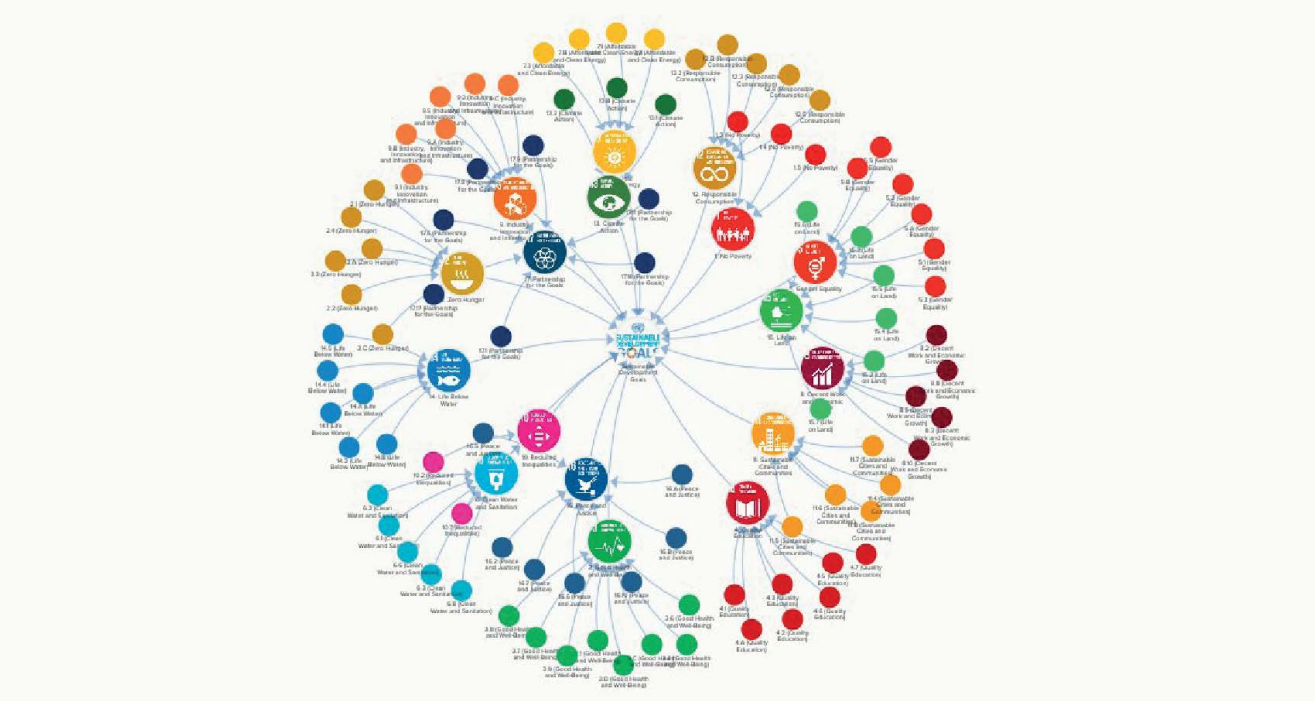
Digital technologies, such as chatbots, that facilitate access to public information and online fraud reporting tools, could help attain more than half of the SDG 16 (Peace and Justice) targets.

Click through the visualisation to find more examples of the interplay between digital technology and SDGs.

UN Roadmap for Digital Cooperation: What is in it for sustainable development?

Released on 11 June 2020, the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation sets out actions on global connectivity, digital public goods, inclusion, capacity-building, human rights, and digital trust and security grounded in sustainable development. It drafts out the way forward for digital cooperation which will be key for delivering on 2030 Agenda.

Take a look at just-in-time analysis to learn more about the Roadmap.



Visit DigitalWatch to explore our visuational and see examples of the interplay between digital technology and SDGs.