Workshop background

Halfway to the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, the UN’s 2023 SDG Progress Report Special Edition shows progress on more than 50 percent of targets of the SDGs is weak and insufficient; on 30 percent, it has stalled or gone into reverse. Unless we act now, the 2030 Agenda could become totally failed. According to 2023 SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda from ITU and UNDP, Digital technologies, such as mobile devices, digital public services, and emerging innovations including Artificial Intelligence are reshaping the global landscape. They can play a pivotal role in achieving the SDGs. In fact, digital technologies can play a role in achieving 70% of all SDG targets.

Digital technologies provide new means to operate human lives. They shape in many ways how people access and share information, form their opinions, debate, and mobilize – they have deeply transformed the “public square”. But they are equally used to suppress, limit and violate people’s voices, exacerbate pre-existing forms of gender-based violence, and introduce novel forms of abuse, for instance through surveillance, censorship, doxing, and online harassment. This is especially true for those who are already vulnerable or have been left behind, or those who are seeking to defend and promote their voices and values. The digitalization of our societies has, in many instances, eroded social protections, deepened inequalities, and exacerbated
existing discrimination, in particular through the use of technologies such as facial recognition, robotics, digital identification and biotechnology.

To cement digital access, inclusion and trust are pivotal themes for the world. In 2021, The EU-US Trade and Technology Council was established to drive digital transformation and cooperate on trade and technology serving the societies and economies. In 2022, The African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms was updated to promote Internet rights standards and principles of openness in Internet policy formulation and implementation as a Pan-African initiative. In 2023, The G20 Digital Agenda: Cross-Presidency Priorities was launched in World Economic Forum to stress the digital access and inclusion in emerging markets

There is no time to waste, and digital inclusion roadmap is urgent to outline within the multi-stakeholders to take this forward. The digital technology advancement will be spearheaded mainly by the private sector due to its huge economic potential. To make everyone benefits from these profound advances and new frontiers and limit their harmful effects, state and civil society engagement will be necessary. This workshop aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including private sector, governments, civil society, technology groups on how to unleash the power of
digital technology and make everyone benefit from the digital technology accessibly, equally and inclusively.