Seasons' Greetings from WITSA

On behalf of WITSA, we thank you very much for your support and wish you and yours a very happy holiday season and a prosperous and safe New Year!

Season’s Greetings
and Best Wishes for the New Year

New Network Readiness Index Report Reveals Most Future-Ready Societies

WITSA on December 18th applauded the publication of the 2019 Network Readiness Index (NRI) report, ranking the network readiness of 121 economies based on their performance across 62 variables. Initially launched in 2002 by the World Economic Forum, the NRI has been redesigned in 2019 to reflect how technology and people need to be integrated within an effective governance structure in order to have the right impact on our economy, society and the environment. Recognizing the pervasiveness of digital technologies in today’s networked world, the Index is grounded in four fundamental dimensions: Technology, People, Governance and Impact. This holistic approach means that the NRI covers issues ranging from future technologies such as artificial intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT) to the role of the digital economy in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2019 NRI is being released by the Portulans Institute, a Washington D.C. based technology and innovation think tank, in collaboration with WITSA. "WITSA sincerely appreciates being selected as a 2019 NRI, Knowledge Partner. We consider this report to be critical for Global ICT development," said WITSA Chairman Yvonne Chiu.

See the press release here!
See the full report here!

At the December 18th launch event in Geneva, Switzerland:

From left: Dr Soumitra Dutta, Irene Mia, Global Editorial Director, the Economist Intelligence Unit; Chrystiane
From left: Chrystiane Roy, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva; Carolina A. Rossini, Co-Founder and CEO, Portulans Institute; Dr Soumitra Dutta, Cornell University; Dr Bruno Lanvin, INSEAD; Dr. Jim Poisant, Secretary General of WITSA
From left: Dr Soumitra Dutta, Cornell University; Carolina A. Rossini, Co-Founder and CEO, Portulans Institute; Chrystiane Roy, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva; Dr Bruno Lanvin, INSEAD; Dr. Jim Poisant, Secretary General of WITSA
From left: Dr Soumitra Dutta, Cornell University, Carolina A. Rossini, Co-Founder and CEO, Portulans Institute; Dr. Jim Poisant, Secretary General of WITSA and Dr Bruno Lanvin, INSEAD

WCIT 2019 Opening Remarks by WITSA Chairman Yvonne Chiu

See the video here!

WCIT 2019 Recap
WCIT 2021: Bangladesh is moving forward in information technology

Dr. James Poiant, Secretary General of the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), said that Bangladesh is doing well in information technology and is giving enough importance to WITSA to Dhaka for the World Conference. There are Bangladesh Vision 2021, through which ICT is moving forward. Leadership is the key to success in any country. Bangladesh has it.

See the full article in Omega Underground here!
WCIT 2020 - Connecting The World - BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

From the global heads of governments and businesses to the world's leading technology, WCIT2020 will connect the dots. Explore collaboration and partnership with us to maximise the return. Talk to us now! partners@wcit2020.org

See the video!
Tickets!

WITSA MEMBERS

✔ 3 exclusive days of conference
✔ Welcome reception
✔ Night out at Georgetown, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site
✔ Gala and Awards Dinner
✔ Site tours to Tech and Industrial Parks

⭐ BONUS: For every 5 passes, 2 will be complimentary

USD800

WITSA's Public Policy Corner
WITSA Action Plan to support an Ambitious WTO Agreement on Digital Trade

Following the recent publication of our policy statement entitled “Supporting Digital Trade Rules for Innovation and Sustainable Economic Development: A Case for a Trade Agreement”, WITSA on November 24th presented an action plan to members on how best to support the ongoing efforts at the World Trade Organization to negotiate a new comprehensive e-commerce agreement. The Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce (JSI) presents a critical opportunity for the global trade body to prove its relevance in the current political environment and could lead to broader WTO reforms as well. WITSA is concerned about the very real risk that the significant achievements in multilateral trade liberalization since 1948 might begin to erode, as nations become introspective and protective in the face of global financial and economic challenges. This is a serious and complex issue for the global business community, affecting not just the future of multilateral negotiations, but - equally important - the future of global trade rule making and dispute settlement. A successful conclusion of the WTO e-commerce negotiations resulting in an agreement by the 2020 WTO Ministerial would invigorate global digital trade at a critical time and enhance the stature and relevance of the global trade body.

Members were requested to urgently contact their permanent representatives in Geneva as well as their local trade officials in order to encourage the successful conclusion of an inclusive, high-standard plurilateral WTO agreement that builds on existing WTO agreements and frameworks, agreed to by as many countries as possible. Members were encouraged to make the following key points in support of a new WTO ecommerce trade agreement, which should:

- Permanently prohibit customs duties and other discriminatory measures from being applied to electronic transmissions.
- Be compliant with WTO non-discrimination principles, such as Most-Favored Nation (MFN) and National Treatment (NT);
- Enable the secure movement of data across borders;
- Prohibit the forced localization of data or computing facilities for all sectors;
- Permanently prohibit customs duties and other discriminatory measures from being applied to electronic transmissions;
- Include further commitments on trade facilitation that help enable cross-border e-commerce for businesses of all sizes, especially micro-, small- and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs);
- Include protections against requirements that companies provide source code or proprietary algorithms as a condition of market access, which severely limits open trade and investment and violates the principle of non-discrimination so fundamental to the entire trade system;
- Prohibit governments from imposing measures requiring companies to purchase or use a particular technology and governments from according a preference to a particular technology in their markets and should retain the obligation to support international standards which are integral to interoperable software, hardware and services which underpin the open Internet;
Strengthen existing cybersecurity collaboration mechanisms;
Recognize that personal information must be protected regardless of where it is located, but also acknowledge that different approaches can achieve comparable levels of privacy protection and provide a mechanism to guarantee international transfers of protected data;
Recognize the importance of open government data by promoting access in machine-readable and open formats leveraging international standards.

WITSA was pleased to announce that the World Trade Organization General Council on December 11th agreed to extend the moratoriums related to customs duties on electronic transmissions and the initiation of “non-violation” complaints under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) - see the press release. WITSA believes that a WTO agreement should permanently prohibit customs duties and other discriminatory measures from being applied to electronic transmissions. As the Internet and electronic commerce become increasingly important elements of global trade and economic growth, it is essential to provide the certainty and maintain trade flows that are driving economic activity and innovation. Last but not least, the moratorium made an entire area of trade effectively tariff-free from its inception. That is a fundamental objective of the entire trading system. Rolling back on that commitment would send a terrible signal and lead to further questions about the viability of the system as a whole.

We would like to thank any members who contacted their Geneva representatives and local trade officials to help ensure this positive development.

WITSA Signs Contract for the Web
Sir Tim Berners Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, through his World Wide Web Foundation on Nov. 25th launched a “Contract for the Web” initiative, calling for signatories from all stakeholders: https://contractfortheweb.org/

WITSA joins several big tech companies, including Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Reddit and others who have signed the Contract, which consist of 9 principles intended to “fix the Internet”. The principles are broad and covers important areas such as access, data privacy, affordable, reliable internet access and to respect civil discourse and human dignity. The broad principles are as follows (with subsections on each detailed on the their web site linked above):
WITSA believes this is an important initiative and that the stated principles align well with established WITSA policy positions, aims and objectives. For more information, please also see the following articles:

Member News

PIKOM’s new chairman and council members
KUALA LUMPUR: The National Tech Association of Malaysia (PIKOM) recently welcomed Danny Lee as its new chairman together with a new line-up of council members for the 2019-2020 term. Next year, PIKOM will be hosting many key international events, amongst them WCIT 2020 in Penang, AFACT 2020 and APICTA 2020 in Kuala Lumpur. These events will serve as an extended platform for PIKOM members to reach out to global markets and to be recognised as up-and-coming tech players within today’s borderless landscape. See the article on New Strait Times.
Contribute to the 2019 edition of the ITC Census!

The 2019 Edition of the ALETI+ Census of the Information Technology and Communications Sector has the following objectives:

- updating information on the ICT Sector to obtain a detailed picture of the Sector, a necessary item for the formulation and monitoring of development strategies, including but not limited to public policies, as has been done annually since 2014;
- generate business opportunities and cooperation among participating companies, including business opportunities and research, development and innovation projects;

Since 2017, the initiative includes, in addition to the 19 member countries of ALETI, the possibility of participation for ICT companies located in any country. Thanks in advance for completing the following questionnaire - the estimated total time is twenty minutes.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ITCensus2019_

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**Media Release: AIIA announces new Board and State Council Chair appointments to represent Australia's ICT industry**

Melbourne, Australia - 9 December 2019 – The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), the peak member body for the ICT industry, today announced four new Board appointments and three new State Council Chairs. Former AIIA Board Deputy Chair, Rob Hillard, has been appointed as new Chairman. Rob is currently Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer at Deloitte, former Managing Partner of Deloitte Consulting, and a recognized industry technology expert.
Existing Board members Angela Fox and Mark Nicholls take on the shared responsibility of AIIA Board Deputy Chair, while Murray Hurps has been appointed Treasurer, and John Paitaridis remains on the Board as Immediate Past Chair. See the full BOD at the AIIA Web Site.

A Vision for UK Digital Trade Policy, techUK report launch

techUK will be launching our report A Vision for UK Digital Trade Policy at techUK, 10 St Bride Street at a special event on Monday 13 January 2020 from 8.30 - 10.00. The report sets out 12 business backed digital trade principals to support the UK's development of a successful digital trade policy. The report launch will make techUK one of the first major business representation groups to set out UK businesses priorities for UK digital trade policy. See more here.

techUK launches 2019 Manifesto - 'Towards a Better Future'

techUK has published its 2019 manifesto, Towards a Better Future, setting out the vision for how the next government should use technology to achieve a better future. The tech sector is the UK’s great modern success story, growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy and securing the UK's position among the world's top tier tech economies. Our manifesto argues that the smart use of digital technologies across the UK, is not only key to economic success but will be key to meeting the biggest challenges that the country faces in the years ahead, such as the climate emergency and securing the success of the UK tech sector in the next decade. The manifesto calls on government to put technology to work to make things better for people, society, the economy and the planet.

NASSCOM Events: Innovation needs Diversity

NASSCOM Technology & Leadership Forum 2020 - Mumbai, February 12-14

22.8% of NTLF attendees have been women & 2020 will see an↑ Calling all #WomenInTech! At #NTLF2020 connect with other women leaders, attend closed-door discussions by experts, learn & exchange ideas with people who matter Know more��https://www.nasscom.in/ntlf/
NZTech Inform - When Fake News Matters!
Recently, I have heard concerns that New Zealand may be targeted for testing in the latest wave of technologically enabled social engineering, ahead of the 2020 election. How will you know what you are reading, hearing or viewing is true? Could this present an opportunity for the media to collaborate and create some form of trust mark - only publishing news that they can guarantee is real? See more here.

ITAN Lagos Chapter Hosts 2019 Dinner/Awards night at Sheraton hotel Lagos Dec 13, 2019

See more here.
United Nations: The Impact of Digital Technologies
Technologies can help make our world fairer, more peaceful, and more just. Digital advances can support and accelerate achievement of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals - from ending extreme poverty to reducing maternal and infant mortality, promoting sustainable farming and decent work, and achieving universal literacy. But technologies can also threaten privacy, erode security and fuel inequality. They have implications for human rights and human agency. Like generations before, we - governments, businesses and individuals - have a choice to make in how we harness and manage new technologies. See the full article here.

ILO bats for making the future of work inclusive of persons with disabilities
The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has just released a report that highlights how challenges to participation in the workforce make persons with disabilities vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion.

The report titled Making the future of work inclusive of people with disabilities is a joint publication by the ILO Global Business and Disability Network and the ONCE Foundation.

There are an estimated 1 billion people worldwide who live with some form of sensory, motor, mental and other types of disabilities.

See more here!

WTO members agree to extend e-commerce, non-violation
moratoriums
WTO members meeting as the General Council agreed on 10 December to extend two existing moratoriums related to customs duties on electronic transmissions and the initiation of “non-violation” complaints under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). They also approved the WTO’s budget for 2020. Read the WTO press release here.

WEF White Report: Corporate Tax, Digitalization and Globalization
Digitalization enables companies to interact with users and the economy of a country without establishing a physical presence there. Unique, intangible assets make it difficult to apply the arm’s length principle in determining how to value transactions between related entities in different countries. Tax competition among countries and remaining opportunities for profit shifting to low tax jurisdictions have raised concerns. This report tackles topical issues as:

- Corporate tax challenges in a globalized, digitalized economy
- Remote business models
- Data and user participation
- Tax competition among countries

WEF Paper: Competition Policy in a Globalized, Digitalized Economy
Digitalization and online platforms provide numerous benefits to firms and consumers, including increased choice and economic opportunity, but they can also raise market concentration and competition concerns. With competition governance questions entering mainstream political discourse, there is a need for a balanced, evidence-based reassessment of the proper role of competition policy. This paper supports informed debate on the following issues.

- Features of multisided digital platforms
- Impact of digital platforms on the economy
- Regulatory good practice and Policy interoperability

The digital economy is facing two divergent trends. Information is moving across borders at record volumes, yet domestic restrictions on these flows are also on the rise. Privacy, security, law enforcement access, among others, are all important policy concerns that governments today seek to protect. Restrictive data policies, however, may not be the optimal solution. This new WEF report tackles such vital topics as:

- Data flow restrictions
- What data flows enable
- Good practices & Country Case studies

UN/CEFACT standards can pave the 'digital silk road' and streamline trade for the Sustainable Development Goals
By aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the ambitious Belt and Road
In the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) spearheaded by the government of China, there is potential to enhance connectivity as a catalyst for trade and development from Asia to Europe, stretching down to Africa. To make the most of this opportunity, physical connectivity needs to be complemented by digital connectivity. The trade facilitation recommendation and electronic business standards developed at UNECE can help make this a reality. Read more [here](#).

OECD Report: Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data - Reconciling Risks and Benefits for Data Re-use across Societies

Access to data is crucial for competition and innovation in the digital economy - not only for businesses, but also for governments and individuals. Overall, data access and sharing are estimated to generate social and economic benefits worth up to 2.5% of GDP across the public and private sectors. This report shows how new approaches to enhancing access to and sharing of data - and mitigating associated risks - can help increase the social and economic value of data re-use. It also examines good practice and policy initiatives in OECD countries and partner economies to address some of the most critical barriers to data access and sharing.

WEF: Encryption is under threat - this is how it affects you

The news that Interpol is about to “condemn” the spread of strong encryption is just the latest salvo in the crypto wars, a decades-long controversy between proponents of strong encryption, law enforcement and investigative bodies over the widespread use of encryption by technology companies. See more [here](#).

How Social Media Companies are Failing to Combat Inauthentic Behavior Online

Fake ‘Likes’ Remain Just a Few Dollars Away, Researchers Say. Despite Big Tech’s attempts to combat manipulation, companies that sell clicks, likes and followers on social media are easy to find.

WEF: Passwords should become a thing of the past. Here’s why

When the man who invented passwords says it’s time to move on, it probably is. Four years ago, Fernando Corbato, who invented the first computer password in the 1960s, said that passwords had become “a nightmare”. Considering that his creation was not intended for the web, how data breaches have shaped the digital era, and the rise of privacy-awareness, it’s clear that things need to change. See more [here](#).
Welcome to this year's last edition of our newsletter. This month we celebrated the 5th anniversary of the e-Residency program of Estonia, one of our key partners, active since the launch of the eTrade for all initiative.

UNCTAD Nowcast shows international trade and global economy cooling down

After a continued surge last year, global trade and economic output have stagnated this year, according to UNCTAD's nowcast published in the 2019 Handbook of Statistics. Merchandise trade is predicted to drop by 2.4% to US$19 trillion, after significant growth rates in 2018 (9.7%) and 2017 (10.7%). Trade in services is predicted to only increase by 2.7% to $6 trillion, a considerable deceleration from 7.7% in 2018 and 7.9% in 2017.

UNCTAD: Making Digital Platforms Work for Development

Digital platforms create new opportunities for companies of all sizes to engage in trade. They can lead to efficiency gains through lower transaction costs and reduced information asymmetries supported by rating systems. Other benefits include lower consumer prices, increased market access, more competition, better use of underutilized resources and increased flexibility for the providers of services. However, gains are not automatic, and there are growing concerns over the rising market power of certain platforms and the related implications for competition, data protection and ownership, consumer protection and taxation and employment policies. See the full report here.
The third issue of the publication (previously called “Capacity Building in a Changing ICT Environment”) features eight articles from international experts, which take a critical and analytical approach towards the subject of capacity and digital skills development, tackling such issues as:

- Digital literacy frameworks
- New methods of teaching and learning in view of digital developments
- New capacity building concepts and initiatives in the digital age.