

## SPOTLIGHT

### Letter from the Chairman

Dear members,

I would like to wish you and yours a safe, healthy, and prosperous new year!

During these unprecedented times when we are all trying to safeguard our families' health, our jobs and our economies' viability while struggling to face the future through an optimistic prism, one thing is for sure, "*The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams*", as stated by Eleanor Roosevelt.



I strongly believe the time is right to set digital technology as a leading industry, both for economic growth and for society's prosperity, all over the world. The development of a strong digital technology industry can support and drive economic growth and promoting innovation. It is time to seize the opportunity and make this vision a reality.

Within this context WITSA is positioning digital economy as the new strategic pillar for bringing growth and introducing a new production model worldwide. As a global digital ambassador and accelerator WITSA is introducing a new digital future. *The time is now to set digital technology as a leading industry all over the world and fulfill the Promise of the Digital Age, by:*

- Promoting cooperation and forming viable realistic proposals and practices for realizing the benefits of technology and across industries, economies, and societies.
- Improving the quality of digital skills and leadership in the workforce. Promoting international cooperation and joint digital skills' programs to increase awareness and penetration of e-skills in all industries, sectors, and markets.
- Driving innovation all around the world, through joined research programs in current technology issues (AI, Innovation, Robotics, BI, Security, Privacy, Data Protection, smart cities, etc.).

- Promoting and driving awareness of competitive advantage of the digital technology industry (and beyond) in developing diversity and inclusivity programs.
- Promoting greater international economic cooperation by supporting multilateral win-win agreements.
- Promoting the value of digital technology industry, at the local level, as a leading pylon for economic growth and social prosperity.
- Utilize the importance of digital SMEs to the global economy and society, enabling other industries to increase their competitiveness by utilizing the unique power of digital solutions and tools.
- Promoting strong regional initiatives on generating business opportunities.
- Sharing best practices and case studies that could benefit everyone.

I am confident that we can work all together and promote cooperation, by synthesizing views and joining forces we make it possible to identify common issues and areas of cooperation, exchange valuable information and experience, inspire common values and priorities all around the world and realize a new global digital production model.

Dear colleagues,

Our dream is not something we will never achieve. Our Dream is what we have not achieved yet! So, let's "build a digital world" all together!



*Yannis Sirros*  
WITSA Chairman

## **Letter from the Secretary General: ICT's Continual Contributions to the World**

Dear Colleagues,

It is certain that history will not fondly remember 2020. The year was the most tragic in recent times. As we begin 2021, millions of people, from all walks of life from around the globe, continue to be negatively affected by this unimaginable COVID-19 plague on humanity.

As we look forward, however, there is hope on the horizon with several vaccines making their way methodically into our populations. The end is in sight, but we simply do not know exactly when the end is. We do know that, like all preceding human tragedies, this too shall pass. In the meantime, there is much to do to as the pandemic fades into the annals of history.

On a positive note, the world continues to witness acts of true heroism and countless acts of kindness rendered by front-line medical workers, first responders and volunteers responding to the never-ending crises brought on by the pandemic. Some countries are recovering rapidly, and their lessons and best practices are being adopted by many others.

As the world continues to struggle to recover from one of the worst pandemics in more than a century, a "new normal" of everyday life, work, commerce, communications, media, politics and social interaction is emerging. As it emerges, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry is continuing to play a key role as an enabler of solutions that help people maintain a sense of normality while the pandemic ravages the entire world.

ICT plays a huge part in improving standards in world health systems, organizations, hospitals, patient information and care, testing facilities, contact tracing, laboratories and science. Modern hospitals and healthcare facilities now have digital tools and information technology everywhere.

ICT plays a critical role in global communications, informing people of the latest updates on the virus to include preventative measures, contact tracing and vaccine availability and coordination.

Businesses around the world find themselves relying heavily on ICT to keep critical operations and projects running smoothly. Everything from supply chains to human resources to remote working is dependent on ICT. For millions of workers, it is hard to imagine not being able to work from home; not to mention the effects on businesses, commerce and economies if they were not allowed.

If not for ICT, educational institutions and schools would be completely shut down. Instead, they are utilizing ICT to create alternative learning pathways through digital technologies and online educator resources. Video calls, file sharing, remote access to learning centers, and platforms enable students and teachers of all age groups to cooperate and ensure that interruption to education is as limited as possible.

In the field of entertainment, ICT has allowed for a number of mediums, such as video streaming, online multiplayer video games and virtual tours. ICT not only allows us to communicate, it also enables us to enjoy many previously unimagined forms of entertainment.

We are indeed fortunate, if not privileged, to be part of an industry that continues to contribute to improving the lives of our fellow citizens; however until every person on earth is benefiting from our efforts, our true mission will not be completed!

On behalf of WITSA, I wish you and your loved ones all the best for a safe and prosperous New Year! Keep up the great work!



*Dr. Jim Poissant  
Secretary General*

## **WITSA Elects New Officers for the 2020-2022 Term**

Fairfax, Virginia: At its Board of Directors meetings on December 1, 2020, the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) voted on a new slate of officers for the 2020-2020 term.

Joining WITSA's Chairman, Mr. Yannis Sirros, Mr. Sean Seah representing the National ICT Association of Malaysia (PIKOM) was elected WITSA's Deputy Chairman, who will serve in the absence of the Chairman, assuming all appropriate responsibilities. WITSA also elected eight Regional Vice Chairmen, who will be WITSA's front-line representatives in their respective regions as well as conduits for new members joining WITSA.

Additionally, WITSA established two new committees that will be crucial to WITSA's future: The *Business Development Committee* (BDC) and the *Strategic Planning Committee* (SPC).

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## Last Call to Participate in WITSA Member Survey

Further to our December 17<sup>th</sup> WITSA Annual Membership Survey announcement, we are extending the deadline for responses to **Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>**. If you haven't already done so, kindly complete the survey before this date. The survey is very short and your input is important for the planning of WITSA activities in the year ahead. Many thanks to members who have already completed the survey: Argentina, Costa Rica, Egypt, Greece, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, USA, and Venezuela. Thanking you in advance for your support!

[Take the Survey](#)

[Now](#)

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## WCIT NEWS



### Bangladesh to Host WCIT 2021: The Great Equalizer

WCIT 2021 will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from November 11-14, 2021. Program updates, registration details and other pertinent information will be provided shortly.

[Learn More about WCIT](#)

[2021](#)

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# PUBLIC POLICY

## WITSA Highlights the Positive Impact and Contributions of ICT During a Time of Global Crisis

Fairfax, VA: The World Information Technology and Services (WITSA) today published a statement of policy entitled [“The Impact and Contributions of ICT During a Time of Global Crisis: Embracing Digital Technology in the New Normal”](#). The paper takes stock of how our industry has stepped up to the task during the crisis. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, changes have taken place in our homes, our workplaces, our governments, businesses, meetings, education, travel, our healthcare system to include medical research-thus we have adopted new ways to conduct our lives-this is our new normal.

The paper shows that the pandemic has forced an exponential growth in and usage of digital technologies, leading to a “new normal” that fully embraces digital transformation and opening the door to the 4th Industrial Revolution and

“Sooner than later, the COVID-19 virus pandemic will go down in history among other global catastrophes”, said WITSA Chairman Mr. Yannis Sirros. “The most important question is how the world will recover and learn from this crisis and prepare for the next one. The digital technology industry can support society’s prosperity, drive economic growth and promote innovation, introducing a new digital future, all over the world”, continued Mr. Sirros.

[Read the Full Press](#)

[Release](#)

## WITSA Congratulates President Biden

January 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
NW Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

*On behalf of the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), we congratulate you on winning this important election and on having been inaugurated as the 46<sup>th</sup> United States President.*



Yannis Sirros  
Chairman

Dr. Jim Polansky  
Secretary General

January 20, 2021

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The White House  
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NW Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the *World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA)*, we congratulate you on winning this important election and on having been inaugurated as the 46<sup>th</sup> United States President.

Looking ahead and facing the wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic, it is more important than ever for the United States to provide global leadership on a range of issues affecting its national prosperity, including international trade, climate change, sustainability, rule of law and support for a rules-based global economy.

WITSA is the leading recognized international voice of the global ICT industry, whose members from over 80 countries and economies represent more than 90 percent of the world ICT market. We are dedicated to advocating policies that advance industry growth and development, facilitating international trade and investment in ICT products and services. On this basis, we are looking forward to becoming a partner with your Administration on policies that foster greater opportunity for families across all communities, in the United States as well abroad. From closing the digital divide to investing in research and development to a renewed collaboration with allies to achieve U.S. trade, economic, and national security objectives, our industry is committed to working constructively with yours to ensure that the United States adopts policies that support the well-being of all Americans as well as people around the world.

WITSA envisions itself as the leader in *Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital Age* for everyone. Your engagement with the wider world, including government and business leadership working together is indispensable to this effort. Such a comprehensive multi-stakeholder strategy will need to build upon America’s strengths in its innovation, entrepreneurship, know-how, educational system and world-class work force. It should seek to further leverage business to reinforce your global leadership and effectively engage with multilateral institutions for international rules that support business innovation and competitiveness. It should also insist that those institutions become more accountable to and inclusive of key global stakeholders, including the private sector, in pursuit of shared goals and values.



## PARTNER NEWS



### ITU Digital World '21 Seeks Speakers

From global crisis to great opportunities? Share your ideas on building a digital future.

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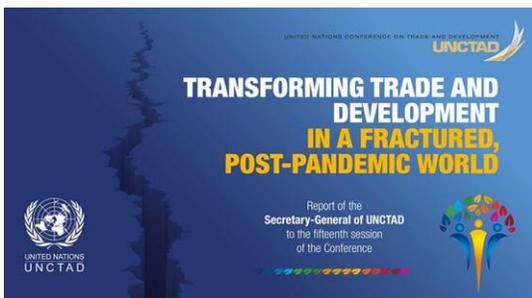


### Global Competitiveness Report Special Edition 2020: How Countries are Performing on the Road to Recovery

WEF: The Global Competitiveness Report series has since its first edition aimed to prompt policy-makers beyond short term growth and to aim for long-run prosperity. The 2020 special edition is dedicated to elaborating on the priorities for recovery and revival, and considering the building blocks of a transformation towards new economic systems that combine “productivity”, “people” and “planet” targets.

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### UNCTAD: Transforming Trade & Development in a Fractured Post-Pandemic World

UNCTAD Secretary-General, Mukhisa Kituyi, sets down roadmap for health, productivity, prosperity and fixing a fractured global economy scarred by the coronavirus pandemic ahead of UNCTAD's October 2021 quadrennial conference in Barbados.

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## GLOBAL NEWS



### Kenyan students awarded first prize in global ICT competition

Three Kenyan teams that excelled at the Huawei ICT Competition Global Finals have today been awarded at an event held at the Serena Hotel officiated by the Principal Secretary of the State Department for University Education and Research in the Ministry of Education, Amb. Simon Nabukwesi. In addition to the medals and certificates, the winners also received variety of Huawei products and Huawei exam voucher as rewards.

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## SECRETARIAT'S CORNER

### Save the Date: WITSA Spring Board Meeting

The WITSA Board of Directors will meet virtually on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, from 8am-11am EST. More details will be provided in the coming weeks.

### WITSA Secretariat & Chairman's Highlight Report

In the last edition of WITSA News, we explored WITSA's relationship with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). This edition, we take a look at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Globalization, including a phenomenal expansion of trade has helped lift millions out of poverty. But not nearly enough people have benefited and tremendous challenges remain. UNCTAD's mission is to support developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively.

WITSA has enjoyed a long relationship with this organization. WITSA Chairman (Santiago Gutierrez) signed an MOU with UNCTAD Secretary General Kituyi at the United Nations Geneva headquarters, Palais des Nations, in 2015. Since then, WITSA has been invited to organize workshops and speeches in Geneva during UNCTAD's annual eCommerce Week. In turn, the UNCTAD Secretary General has agreed to speak at WITSA events. WITSA has several very strong relationships within his organization.

You can read more about the UNCTAD/WITSA relationship on pages 13-14 of the report.

Read the Full Report

Here



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Vienna, Virginia, USA

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