*Draft.*

Commission for Social Development, 59th session, 8 to 17 February 2021

**Priority theme: Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all**

***Side-event: Social inclusion through digital inclusion in the context of sustainable development: trends and challenges.***

Concept note for downloading on the CSocD website and for the flyer.

Aimed at promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all members of society, the 2030 Agenda (target 10.2) emphasized the importance of social inclusion ”irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”. Overcoming digital disadvantages and exclusion is part and parcel of a broader social inclusion agenda, focused on promoting civic and cultural participation, employment and access to essential social services, including such services as training and lifelong learning. In this sense, strengthening the digital capacity of societies is widely recognized as a vital element of sustainable development.

The purpose of the present side-event organized by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) in cooperation with other partners is to explore the pre-requisites and core activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and are fully capable of improving the terms of their participation in society through wider opportunities and access to resources, including digital resources. The presenters will address the existing challenges, as well as good practices that contribute to shaping the most appropriate models of digitalization focused on social well-being and welfare promotion.

The ambitious goal of digital inclusion requires strong commitment of all stakeholders, such as government, business sector and civil society, but the multiple benefits of digitalization for society have been widely acknowledged in many countries and appreciated by all groups in society. The growing importance of the digital economy, including digital governance, has been vividly demonstrated on the ground in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It is expected that this side-event will provide an opportunity for ICSW members and its partners to compare past experiences and forward-looking national and international programs that demonstrate the cross-sectoral nature of the existing best practices, as well as highlight the strategies for improving the well-being of all segments of the population through new ICT technologies and digitalization processes.

***Some issues for discussion:***

What are the pros and cons of digitalization at the local level?

The nexus of digital and social development: overcoming disadvantages

How can the growing opportunities of digitalization be harnessed more effectively?

What are the implications of the ongoing digitalization for regulatory frameworks?

The digital response in the mobilization of financial and administrative resources for development: comparison of best practices.

Adequacy, operational feasibility and political acceptability of digitalization: lessons learned and obstacles encountered

Digitalization and social services delivery: what is the way forward?

Recommendations on priority actions

**Presenters:**

Dr. Suh San-Mok, President of Korea National Council on Social Welfare, President ICSW (pre-recorded)

Begoña Villacís, Deputy Mayor of Madrid (Spain) (online or pre-recorded)

Prof. Lynne Healy, Main Representative of IASSW to the United Nations (TBC)

Prof. Antonio López Peláez, Professor of Social Work and Social Services at the UNED (Spain), Executive Director ICSW

Prof. PK Shajahan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India, Vice-President of ICSW

Prof. Driss Guerraoui, President of the Competition Council of Morocco, President of the MENA Region, ICSW.

Dr. Sergei Zelenev, Special Representative of ICSW to the United Nations