



19 MAY 2021
12:00-13:30 (CEST)

OPENING HIGH LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE

INCLUSIVE DIGITALIZATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE OF SERVICE PROVISION

Background and objectives of the Policy Dialogue

The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear beyond any doubt that our rights, our human interactions, and our relationship with the built environment can be strongly affected by digitalization. Whether it be through increasing issues related to the right to privacy or data collection, through the effect of teleworking on our cities and territories, or through the effect of online tools for participatory democracy and governance, it is clear that digital rights are human rights and that the changes brought from the pandemic will have profound effects in all parts of the world, including those where the process of digitalization is still at an early phase.

Throughout the pandemic, local and regional governments have been at the frontline of protecting people and the planet via the delivery of local public service provision. As governments put in place important restrictions on the movement of people, the functioning of services, and rules on physical distancing, local and regional governments ensured that services could continue to function safely and sustainably as if unaffected by their surrounding environment.

Technology can act as a powerful tool to aid in ensuring that the local and regional governments on the frontline of the current crisis protect, promote and safeguard the health of people and their communities. It can also help ensure that the COVID-19 aftermath is one that is more accessible, that protects digital rights, and that promotes local democracy through easier access to information and easier channels to contact public administrations. It is essential to understand digitalization well beyond just the issue of technology.

UCLG is committed to the protection of digital rights and ensuring that the future of work and governance is one that preserves local democracy, human dignity, and sustainability. UCLG is a core partner of the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, a city led coalition founded by the cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York City, committed to promote digital rights-based policy-making through action, resolving common challenges and to working towards legal, ethical and operational frameworks to advance digital rights.

In this context, UCLG's governing bodies decided in 2020 to work towards a new social contract centred around the SDGs and the global agendas which would include the important lessons that are being learned from the pandemic: a Pact for the Future around people, planet, and government where care will be at the centre and where the role of local governments in health systems and beyond will need to be redefined. Digitalization will be a key cross cutting issue within the Pact.





Care at the heart of **local service** provision for an inclusive recovery

The policy dialogue on digitalization of the UCLG 2021 Executive Bureau will highlight the essential efforts that local and regional governments can undertake to ensure technology works for people and the planet during the COVID-19 aftermath. This session will bring together local and regional governments, technologists, policy makers from different sectors, and the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights to discuss the role that digital technologies can play in COVID-19 response and highlight examples of technology use that will transform the future of work for the better, strengthen local democracy and protect digital rights.

Guiding questions

- How do you see digital technology affecting the provision and delivery of basic services in the next decade?
- What digital services and technology do you envision being public services in the future (eg: internet, electronic devices)?
- How has our relationship with technology changed after COVID-19?
- What have been the main effects of digitalization on the future of work and education?
- What can digital technologies do to safeguard our health, our communities and promote human rights?
- How can digitalization strengthen governance and local democracy?

