

Managing Global Governance (MGG) Alumni Meeting Mexico 2018

A Digital Agenda for Sustainable Development -
Perspectives from Mexico
Report



Managing Global Governance (MGG) - Alumni Meeting Mexico 2018

“A Digital Agenda for Sustainable Development – Perspectives from Mexico”

25 July, 2018

Sala Panóptica, H. Congreso de la Unión, El Parque, 15960 Ciudad de México

Report by Juan Carlos Mendoza Reyes

Introduction

Digitalization as a concept hasn't yet led to a common reference on where its transformational potential could be easily identifiable. On one hand, digitalization may be understood as a group of technology and information-based processes that drive changes in the way decision making is made. On the other hand, and maybe more important, digitalization also implies a change in how societal changes are driven by introducing conceptual discussions on how technological changes provide new frameworks for information usage, interaction between global & local players of the development agenda and the way society perceives this transformation; the generation of a digital culture that opens the possibility to re-think development. Using this last notion of digitalization, it could be underlined that the digital transformation process implies a new and innovative way in thinking global governance, as it mainstreams technology, information and systemic approaches to the interactions of key players towards development processes.

Mexico has been leading a digital transformation process for at least the last 6 years. Many sectors have been evolving in the use of digital transformations to foster their potential co-benefits and opportunities for the Mexican society, such as education, health, domestic affairs, security, energy and climate change. Nevertheless, the adoption of digital agendas has had a differentiated impact in emerging economies due to complexity and development priorities. Mexico is not an exception. In addition to ensuring democracy, peace, social justice, security, governance and the state of law, fighting against corruption, inequality and poverty are just some of the key areas where digital transformation in Mexico has still a lot of work to do.

At the same time, Mexico has been working on opening the debates on how to potentiate the impacts of the global development agenda for the national development planning; this is the Agenda 2030 implementation process nationwide. Relevant questions of opportunities associated to the digital transformation for the widest possible impact on sustainable development should be integrated in this debate. For answering this open question, an initial assessment and a dialogue platform may be needed for all voices and perspectives to discuss such potentials.

Based on these needs and thoughts, the Mexican chapter of the MGG network decided to join a debate in other MGG partner countries in order to discuss, reflect and propose a set of key ideas and subsequently to identify potential transformational actions to enable the disruptive potential of digitalization for sustainable development in Mexico. Although being a global debate, the the agenda's implementation and appropriation richness lies in national and local discussions. The Mexican MGG network participants were eager to find common grounds to foster this discussion entering into a continued high-level debate with governmental institutions, academic institutions, civil society and organizations and even private sector partners. The 2018 Mexican MGG Alumni Conference aimed to generate this platform and to contribute to a national discussion about development, its sustainability and its need for innovating in digital governance schemes.

Linking the voices: an overall discussion platform

The MGG Alumni Conference in Mexico 2018 opened with a panel that gave relevant messages about the significance of digitalization to transform development processes. Mr. Juan Carlos Cervantes Gómez, Director of the Center for Law Studies and Parliamentary Research (CEDIP in Spanish), host institution of the event, commented that digital revolution is a contemporary topic relevant for almost all fields in the country's political life, and it allows the opportunity to develop key sectors. Seizing the opportunities of digital transformation is directly connected with the idea of a sustainable development, on which public policies and development visions are based, therefore making it relevant as a new framework for political decision making in Mexico and other emerging economies. For Adriana Plasencia, digitalization also means a new way of re-defining the public space and the governmental action, on which the sustainable development goals intend to find drivers for impact. Overall, as expressed by Wulf Reiners and Juan Carlos Mendoza, the linkages between digitalization and sustainable development rest on their transformative power, requiring new forms of global and local governance, and opening several opportunities for fostering digital solutions for integrated and multidimensional development challenges.



In this context, it became quite relevant to gain more knowledge on what is happening in Mexico regarding digital transformation. Representing the President's Office, Ms. Yolanda Martínez Mancilla, Coordinator of the National Digital Strategy commented on the advancement of a digital culture and access to information and technologies in Mexico, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, robotics and blockchain, among others. She underlined that for the first time in history, the current administration decided to include a high level office at the Executive power to coordinate a digital strategy in the country. As a result, internet became a constitutional right in Mexico, public services were improved by incorporating digital services (i.e. digital birth certificates and e-government new schemes), and artificial intelligence were used for improving social services such as healthcare and education. Digitalization allows

posing questions for development such as which is the role of digital tools for citizenship building from the state's perspective? and how to put citizens at the center of the public debate. A clear example of these last questions is the process of integrating citizenship in building an implementation strategy for the Agenda 2030 using electronic tools to foster participation and consultations. According to Ms. Mancilla, digitalization can therefore have democratizing effects and generate positive perceptions that, nevertheless, still need to define how to tackle their potential positive and negative impacts.

In a second intervention, Dr. Juan Carlos Tellez from INFOTEC stated that the implementation of a new development agenda may be also a condition for increased economic competitiveness and to close the social gaps remaining in development processes. For making these possibilities happen, a strong commitment or technology, science and innovation needs to be fostered from the government, but also from the participation of several stakeholders that take advantage of scientific advancements and research. Stronger knowledge bridges between scientific researches on digital advancements is therefore crucial for building a 21st century public policies able to respond for citizenship's demand for innovation under an advanced digital environment for development.



The complexity and differentiated impact of digital transformation processes was also amplified by Dr. Tellez' intervention, who introduced examples on how sectors such as health and agriculture have been benefited of specialized scientific innovation through digital means. These examples were the perfect door to open a discussion on which are the main challenges and lessons learned from different sectors in implementing a digital transformation agenda.



In a third segment of the dialogue, a multisectoral panel was conducted and moderated by Ms. Edna Martínez, Director of *Proactivo Sustentable A.C.* and MGG alumna. This panel gave very relevant insights on how digitalization opens windows of opportunity for development transformations. For instance, Mr. Alejandro Romero Gudiño, Head of the Control and Evaluation Unit at the Federal Superior Auditor, talked about the digital solutions for implementing and creating the Digital Anticorruption System Platform,

based on several subsystems where big data and algorithms have play a pivotal role in designing and intelligent system for such complex endeavor. From the civil society perspective and on also a very relevant topic for the Mexican public agenda, Juan Casanueva, Director of Social TIC talked about the debates that remain open regarding the protection of human rights and the deployment of digital solutions, underlining the need of not losing scope of social implications on such process, and advancing a digital agenda based on a human rights perspective, and trying to think on how to make new data users going beyond the status of data-consumers only. Dr. Liliana Meza from the National Institute for Geography and Statistics (INEGI) commented the relevance of data gathering and socio-economic indicators to open new analysis on how societal change is driven. In this regard, she used the labor market example to show the transaction costs of digital transformation and its potential impacts in social division of labor, competitiveness and even national GDP. Miguel Molina from INAI and also MGG alumni talked about some regulatory challenges for access to information and transparency, and commented that even with good efforts; more commitment to technology shifts and political will is needed to make digital transformations feasible and efficient. He exemplified this argument by commenting on the National Platform for Transparency and its remaining functionality challenges. Alberto Santiago from *El Colegio de México* also told the audience about its ambitious plan for digital humanities program, knowledge systematization and the process of rethinking the role of academic institutions using technology and innovation, and the way this could be an enabler of a contemporary digital culture based on knowledge.



As a special intervention, Dr. Ashraf Patel, MGG partner from South Africa and Digital Economy Associate, IGD, UNISA, presented several world experiences and challenges regarding digital interventions. He pointed to the need to close exclusion gaps when implementing digital transformations as one of the main challenges. An open ecosystem for digital equality is therefore a condition for preventing innovation becomes only the driver for potential economic opportunity and efficiency, but for human development and dignity. The gaps opened by digital transformation need therefore to foster access to technologies in a democratic basis to avoid a digital divide.

Hands into action: a participative discussion

The second half of the Alumni meeting's program was dedicated to invite the MGG alumni in Mexico and the participants in the meeting to join efforts into a collective deconstruction of the challenges of digital transformation and its main implications to development in the Mexican context. For this purpose, five discussion groups were created in order to discuss specific aspects of digitalization processes and implications for development, such as accountability and accessibility to information and technology, governance, open data, digital human rights, privacy, freedom of expression, equality and trust.

After the group's discussion, each team presented a mind map regarding the main ideas, and potential actions that could lead to further steps in order to promote the debate in Mexico about digitalization, and a potential contribution for global debate on the topic. Wulf Reiners wrapped up the discussion identifying a common challenge: digitalization offers opportunities but also potential contradictions as many of the problems that digital solutions try to face are not still being solved by current policies, generating an unvirtuous loop for development.

The MGG network has therefore the endeavor to identify potential actions for implementing solutions to contribute to the creation of a digital culture that does not leave human dignity and equality behind. For this purposes, a continued dialogue with other partnering countries and with Mexican institutions and organizations remain key for going deeper in the research and action agendas.

Annex 1

**“A Digital Agenda for Sustainable Development – Perspectives from Mexico”
Managing Global Governance (MGG) Conference
25 July, 2018 – Mexico City**

**Programme
25 July 2018**

Date	Event
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Wednesday, 25 July 2018

10.00 – 10.30 am

Welcome and Introduction

- Sadot Sánchez Carreño, Director General (Centro de Estudios de Derecho e Investigaciones Parlamentarias (CEDIP) de la Cámara de Diputados)
- Adriana Plasencia (Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, INAP)
- Wulf Reiners, Anna Schwachula (German Development Institute / MGG) and Juan Carlos Mendoza Reyes (GIZ Mexico / MGG Liaison Mexico)

10.30 – 11.15 am

Key Note Address

- Yolanda Martínez Mancilla (President’s Office)
- Juan Carlos Téllez Mosqueda (Infotec, Centre for Research and Innovation in Information and Communication Technologies)

11.15 - 11.30 am

Coffee break incl. completion of digitalisation questionnaire

11.30 am - 13.00 pm

Fishbowl Roundtable: *The Impact of Digital Transformation in Mexico*

moderated by Edna Martínez Quintanilla (Proactivo Sustentable)

Opening interventions:

- Juan M. Casanueva (SocialTIC)
- Alejandro Romero Gudino (Titular de la Unidad de Evaluación y Control de la Auditoría Superior de la Federación)
- Alberto Santiago Martínez (El Colegio del México, COLMEX)
- Liliana Meza (National Institute for Geography and Statistics, INEGI)
- Miguel Christophe Molina Alcantara (National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection, INAI)
- Ashraf Patel (Institute for Global Dialogue, IGD, Pretoria, South Africa)

13.00 - 14.00 pm	Lunch at "1857 Restaurant", Congress Complex
14.00 - 15.30 pm	Working Groups on <i>Opportunities and Risks of Digitalisation</i> Topics to be decided, e.g. "Digitalization and governance, transparency & democracy", "Digitalization and education & humanities", ...
15.30 - 16.00 pm	Coffee break
16.00 - 18.00 pm	Conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation of working groups' findings- Short Videos from MGG Conferences on Digitalization in India and South Africa- Production of video: "Conference Message from Mexico to MGG Network" Closing remarks

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