Programme

The Asian Digital Revolution: Transforming the Digital Divide into a Dividend through Universal Access

28-29 September 2018
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka
Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO
INTRODUCTION

To mark the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), the Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment of the Government of Sri Lanka and UNESCO will co-organize a flagship event in Colombo, Sri Lanka, as part of IDUAI commemorations that will be held around the world. The inaugural IDUAI was first celebrated in 2016, following the UNESCO General Conference Resolution 38 C/70 calling for an annual commemoration of IDUAI each year on 28 September.

The UNESCO international event from 28-29 September at the Hotel Mount Lavinia in Colombo will consist of international panels, expert workshops and other high-level events and commemorations.

The theme will be “The Asian Digital Revolution: Transforming the Digital Divide into a Dividend through Universal Access”. Four key areas will be addressed:

- The state of the digital divide in Asia: persisting challenges and barriers to universal access
- New technology opportunities and challenges in the service of Sustainable Development: including Artificial Intelligence, big data and the Internet of Things
- Advancing the dividends of “opening up”: open solutions for universal access
- “De-risking” Information Access: countering online challenges to individual rights and fundamental rights and freedoms

Four half-a-day workshop will also be organized on themes such as Open Scholarship and Access; Free and Open Source Software, Youth Mobile and Right to Information.
ABOUT UNESCO AND THE INTERNATIONAL DAY

Worldwide commemoration of 28 September (IDUAI) reinforces UNESCO’s mission to support its 195 Member States to build Knowledge Societies upon four pillars: universal access to information and knowledge; respect for cultural and linguistic diversity; freedom of expression; and quality education for all.

The concept of Knowledge Societies was developed from a conviction that universal access to information is a key to building peace and achieving sustainable development. Commemoration of IDUAI is a way for governments and all other stakeholders around the world to reinforce efforts and awareness toward building inclusive Knowledge Societies in the service of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In November 2015, UNESCO’s General Conference endorsed options to support Internet Universality proposed in the study: “Keystones to foster inclusive Knowledge Societies - Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy, and Ethics on a Global Internet”. Notably, the General Conference resolution endorsed a set of principles on Internet Universality, summarized in the acronym R.O.A.M. standing for an Internet that should be (i) Human Rights-based (ii) Open, (iii) Accessible to all, and (iv) Multi-stakeholder driven.

UNESCO promotes universal access to information and knowledge through its Information for All (IFAP) programme, which assists Member States in harnessing the new opportunities of the information and digital age.

UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme as well as UNESCO’s Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003) advocates for multilingualism and universal access to stand at the center of the digital development, and ensure that our world’s documentary heritage is safeguarded and belongs to and is available to all.

Concrete actions in favor of universal access to information are directly relevant to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG target 16.10 which calls for ensuring public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Universal access to information is central to successfully developing inclusive Knowledge Societies, as embraced in the UN’s World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Universal access to information addresses the Human Right to seek and receive information. These are an integral part of the right to Freedom of Expression, covered by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
ASIA AND THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a central role in economic and social development of Asian countries at all levels of development. Widening access to knowledge and information has demonstrated a power to transform national economies and positively influence innovation, achievement, social progress and the building of more inclusive societies around the world. Nationally-owned and implemented Knowledge Societies initiatives are a cornerstone for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The advances in digital technologies are disrupting the traditional ways of working across businesses, governments and in daily lives of people. Four key developments are at the heart of this transformation – the Internet of Things, cloud computing, big data analytics and artificial intelligence. The networked nature of these technologies demands that the social, legal, ethical and technical challenges imposed by their widespread adoption require a multi-stakeholder response. It is no longer feasible or possible for one country or organization to be able to address all challenges posed by the developments in the digital sphere. Knowledge Societies in the era of digital transformation require an even stronger focus on principles of inclusion, openness, universal access and multi-stakeholder participation.

UNESCO’s expertise in ICT for Development and universal access to information are applicable to development goals facing the host country Sri Lanka and the region. UNESCO works in such areas as Open Access to scientific information; Open Educational Resources; preservation of documentary heritage; libraries and archives; Media and Information Literacy, Internet Governance; linguistic diversity on the Internet; and access for persons with disabilities.
MESSAGE FROM MS AUDREY AZOULAY, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION 28 SEPTEMBER 2018

The technological revolution is radically transforming how we inform ourselves. In just a few years, sources of information have multiplied, taken on numerous formats and become globalized. It is now possible to obtain immediately a wealth of material on the most varied of topics.

These new circumstances provide tremendous opportunities for individual and societal development. However, such development can only take place if these opportunities are available to all. In a highly interconnected global society, a lack of equal access to information is a sure way to increase marginalization and rapid exclusion from the rest of the world. The purpose of this international day is to remind governments and all the stakeholders in civil society of the need to ensure truly universal access to information.

Fulfilment of this need is part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for action to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms”. Access to information is directly linked to the enjoyment of basic rights and freedoms and influences the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Being a well-informed citizen means being knowledgeable, having a critical mind, and being able to play an active part in community and national life. It means having access to knowledge essential to one’s health and well-being. It means having the educational resources that make it possible to enjoy lifelong learning and adapt to an ever-changing socioeconomic environment. It means unlocking one’s creative and innovative potential. It also means being aware of the major challenges facing humanity – such as climate change, for example – and knowing how to respond in order to mitigate their effects.

Making universal access to information a reality requires action on a variety of fronts. States must develop adequate legislation and ensure universal access to the Internet. They must encourage multilingualism online and offline so that all communities can access essential knowledge in their native languages. They must also act to close the digital divide, which tends to perpetuate social and gender inequalities. Through its various programmes and by working alongside governments, UNESCO helps to combat these inequalities.

Finally, access to information is, without a doubt, a matter that concerns freedom of the press and the safety of journalists. UNESCO works tirelessly to remove the obstacles to a pluralistic and free press so that all citizens can benefit from reliable, verified and quality information.

The knowledge and information society that is currently taking shape holds bright promise. On this International Day for Universal Access to Information, let us work together to ensure that this promise bears fruit for all.
PROGRAMME
28 September (Day 1)

09:00-10:00 | **Registration of IDUAI 2018 participants and Tea**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

10:00-11:00 | **IDUAI 2018: Opening Session**  
Venue: Empire Ballroom, Hotel Mount Lavinia

11:00-12:30 | **Panel 1: High Level Debate on Universal Access to Information - Ensuring Rights and Openness of Information**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

12:30-14:00 | Working lunch  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

14:00-15:30 | **Panel 2: Bridging Digital Divide - The way forward**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

15:30-16:00 | Tea  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

16:00-17:30 | **Panel 3: Cyber Vulnerability to Cyber Security - empowering people, protecting development**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

17:30-18:15 | Plenary  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

19:30-21:30 | Dinner  
Hosted by the Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment,

29 September (Day 2)

09:00-10:00 | **IDUAI 2018 Plenary on Adoption of Colombo Declaration**  
Venue: Empire Ballroom, Hotel Mount Lavinia

10:00-10:30 | High Tea  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

10:30-13:00 | **Workshop 1: Policies for Digital Scholarship (Issues with Open Access)**  
Venue: Regency Room, Hotel Mount Lavinia  
**Workshop 3: FOSS policy, Coding Education (YouthMobile)**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

13:00-14:30 | Lunch  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia

14:30-18:00 | **Workshop 2: OER and Disabilities**  
Venue: Regency Room, Hotel Mount Lavinia  
**Workshop 4: Right to Information**  
Venue: Hotel Mount Lavinia
IDUAI 2018: OPENING SESSION
VENUE: EMPIRE BALLROOM, HOTEL MOUNT LAVINIA | 10:00-11:00

Welcome Address: Mr. Eric Falt, Director, UNESCO Delhi Office
Why IDUAI 2018 in Sri Lanka: Dr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director, Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO
Inaugural Keynote: Hon. Ranil Wickramasinghe, Prime Minister, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Ministerial Statement 1: Hon. Harin Fernando, Minister of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Government of Sri Lanka
Vote of Thanks: Mr. Premalal Rathnaweera, Secretary-General, Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

PANEL 1: HIGH LEVEL DEBATE ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION - ENSURING RIGHTS AND OPENNESS OF INFORMATION
VENUE: HOTEL MOUNT LAVINIA | 11:00-12:30

Moderator: Prof. Rohan Samarajiva, Chairman, Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka

Panelists:
- Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Director (innovation) at Access to information program (A2I), Prime Minister’s Office, Bangladesh
- Mr. Kiran Kumar Pokharel, Information Commissioner, National Information Commission of Nepal
- Mr. Jigme Thinleye Namgyal, Director General Department of IT and Telecom, Ministry of Information and Communications, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Ms. Aminath Shiuna, President, Maldives Library Association (TBC)
- Mr. Frits Bussemaker, Chairman, Institute for Accountability in the Digital Age
- Dr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director, Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO

PANEL 2: BRIDGING DIGITAL DIVIDE: THE WAY FORWARD
VENUE: HOTEL MOUNT LAVINIA | 14:00-15:30

Moderator: Dr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO

Panelists:
- Mr. Chulananda Perera, Secretary of the Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Wasantha Deshapriya, former Secretary, Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Cyril Demitrius Pereira, Founder & Director, Social Pulse Monitor
- Dr. Aijaz Ilmi, National Media and Information Columnist
Mr. Mario Behling, Co-founder, FOSSASIA/Open Tech
Mr. Swarup Ghosh, Co-founder, Tomorrow’s Foundation
Mr. Isura Silva, Business Consultant - Strategic Management and Outreach, Sarvodaya-Fusion, Sri Lanka

**Panel 3: Cyber Vulnerability to Cyber Security: Empowering People, Protecting Development**

**Venue:** Hotel Mount Lavinia | 16:00-17:30

**Moderator:** Dr. Andrew Taussig, Former Trustee of The International Institute of Communications and of Voice of the Listener & Viewer UK, and Former Director of Foreign Language Services in the BBC World Service

**Panelists:**
- Mr. Pavan Duggal, Cyber Law Expert, Pavan Duggal Associates
- Mr. Raman Jit Singh Chima, Policy Director, Access Now
- Mr. Jayantha Fernando, Acting Chairman Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT|CC) and Legal Advisor Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA)
- Ms. Sagarika Wickramasekera, Internet Society (I-SOC), Sri Lanka Chapter
- Mr. Nalaka Gunawardhana, Consultant, International Media Support Sri Lanka
- Dr. Harinda Vidanage, Director, Bandaranaike Center for International Studies (BCIS), Sri Lanka

**Plenary**

**Venue:** Hotel Mount Lavinia | 17:30-18:15

**IDUAi 2018 Plenary on Adoption of Colombo Declaration**

**Venue:** Empire Ballroom, Hotel Mount Lavinia | 09:00-10:00

**Workshop 1: Policies for Digital Scholarship (Issues with Open Access)**

**Venue:** Regency Room, Hotel Mount Lavinia | 10:30-13:00

The rise of democracies have emphasized Universal Franchise and Universal Education for better societies. In order to create an Informed Knowledge Society, Universal Access to Information, whether governmental or scientific is a prerequisite. As the world moves towards Open Science, Open Research, Open Data, the first step toward achieving these goals is to establish an overarching policy on Open Access. Although each country in the South Asian region has made some efforts in promoting Open Access, very few efforts have been made to a collective and concerted effort to operationalize Open Access. There is a need to adopt a two pronged approach to achieve Open Access to Information – Establishing and publishing in Open Access Repositories and Open Access Journals. The modality, although is perceived as simple, requires a coordinated
two-pronged approach – Top Down. i.e. Governments or funding agencies to make a national policy mandating OA, and Bottom Up i.e. institutional/organizational efforts at grass root level. The session will reexamine policy steps required to provide unrestricted access to information resources, propose a common platform for accessing to information in an user-friendly environment, suggest strategies to achieve interoperability between existing legacy databases and repositories, and firm up strategy to develop a need based information services based upon the open content in the region.

**Moderator:** Dr. ARD Prasad, Professor and Head, Indian Statistical Institute

**Participants:**
- Dr. Sridhar Gutam, Convener, Open Access India
- Ms. Aminath Shiuna, President, Maldives Library Association
- Dr. AQM Shafiul Azam, Chief DLP Division, BANBEIS, Bangladesh
- Mr. Indra Prasad Adhikari, Chairman, Nepal Library and Information Consortium
- Mr. Manuja Karunaratne, Head, National Science Library & Resource Centre, Sri Lanka
- Prof. Sirimali Fernando, Chairperson, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka (TBC)
- Ms. Sunethra Perera, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Namali Suraweera, Lecturer in Library & Information Science, Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Bhanu Neupane, Programme Specialist, UNESCO

**Workshop 2: OER and Disability**

**Venue:** Regency Room, Hotel Mount Lavinia | 14:30-18:00

**Moderator:** Mr. Joe Hironaka, Programme Specialist, UNESCO

**Participants:**
- Dr. Saima Wazed Hossain, Chairperson, Shuchona Foundation, Bangladesh
- Dr. Blancoflor Pitagan Ferdinand, Director Academic Support for Instructional Services and Technology Chair, De La Salle University, The Philippines
- Dr. Christopher M. Lee, Chief Learning Officer and G3ict Chair, IAAP Higher Education Community of Practice, USA
- Ms. Naeema El Zarif, Communication Consultant, The Fifth Corp, Turkey
- Dr. Fong Soon Fook, Professor in Multimedia Education & New Media, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia
- Ms. Sophie Touzé, President of the Board, Open Education Consortium, French Ministry of Higher Education and Innovation, France
- Mr. Maheeshwara Kivindigoda, Secretary, Internet Society (I-SOC), Sri Lanka Chapter
- Mr. T. N. Hettiarachchi, Director, National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Razia Pendse, WHO Country Representative for Sri Lanka/Representative, WHO, Colombo Office, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Shriyananda Ratnayake, Programme Manager, Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka
UNESCO launched in 2014 an initiative to introduce youth to learn technology through coding. In 2017, Sri Lanka’s ICTA launched the “All Children Coding Initiative” pursuing similar objectives ([https://www.facebook.com/ICTACoding](https://www.facebook.com/ICTACoding)). The workshop aims at contributing to the work that UNESCO is currently undertaking on “coding education”, aiming at producing tools for Member States wishing to initiate similar initiatives as scholar or extra scholar activities. In particular, the workshop would bring ICTA representatives, and possibly teachers and students to share this experience with other relevant parties from other countries.

The discussion will then lead to second part of the discussion, which will focus on the presence and activities by FOSS communities in Sri Lanka, India and other countries. Although some progress has been made in some countries to design and implement national or state FOSS policies, their sustainability and implementation faces several obstacles. The workshop would be an opportunity to share experience in managing and mobilizing FOSS communities, particularly around specific topics and applications. Solutions for people with disabilities and FOSS for libraries could be two among the themes that could trigger international cooperation on this theme.

**Moderator:** Mr. Davide Storti, Programme Specialist, UNESCO

**Participants:**
- Mr. Sunil Hettiarachchi, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Ruwan Weerasinghe, Dean Informatics Institute of Technology, University of Colombo - School of Computing (UCSC)
- Dr. Sanjiva Weerawarana, CEO and Co-founder, WSO2
- Mr. Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Senior Assistant Secretary (ICT for Development), Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Arun Madhavan, Programme Head, ICFOSS
- Ms. Hong Phuc Dang, Founder, FOSSASIA
- Mr. Nayana Adassuriya, C++ Code Artist, FOSS Enthusiast
- Ms. Gayathree Maheshika Wanniarachchi
- Mr. Padmal Padushanka
- Mr. Khalil Al-Maawali, Project Executive, Open Source Initiative
- Mr. Yasas Thalagala, Coordinator Citra Innovation Lab, UNDP
- Mr. Md. Afzal Hossain Sarwar, Policy Specialist (Educational Innovation), a2i - Access to Information, Bangladesh
- Mrs. Lakmali De Zoysa, Consultant/Lecturer, National Institute of Business Management (NIBM), Sri Lanka
- Mr. Thisara Weerasinghe, Consultant/Lecturer, National Institute of Business Management (NIBM), Sri Lanka
- Dr. Jayanthi Gunasekara, Director General, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
- Mr. G. M. Niel Gunadasa, Director of Education, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
- Mrs. Vasana Edirisuriya, Deputy Director (ICT) Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
- Mrs. H. P. Rukmalee, Assistant Director (ICT), Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
Right to Information is an integral part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression, as recognized by Resolution 59 of the UN General Assembly adopted in 1946, as well as by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states that the fundamental right of freedom of expression encompasses the freedom to “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

Remarkable progress has been achieved in South Asia towards enacting legislation to guarantee the right to information. Right to Information laws have been enacted in many countries of South Asia, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Workshop 4 will be an opportunity to share expert and national experiences on the current state of the digital divide in Asia and how the opportunities and challenges provided by new and emerging technologies can be harnessed to improve citizen’s right to information for the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Moderator: Ms. Thilaka Jayasundara, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Mass Media, Sri Lanka

Participants:
- Mr. Kiran Kumar Pokharel, Information Commissioner, National Information Commission of Nepal
- Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam, Head, Tanjib Alam & Associates, Bangladesh
- Mr. Chanuka Wattegama, Academic and Public Policy Researcher, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Waruna Karunatilake, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Wijayananda Jayaweera, Former Director, Communication Development Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
- Ms. Nandini Sahai, Director, Media Information and Communication Centre of India
- Dr. Pradeep N’ Weerasinghe, Chairman, National Secretariat for Media Reforms, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Shriyananda Ratnayake, Programme Manager, Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka
- Mr. Nalaka Gunawardhana, Consultant, International Media Support (Sri Lanka)
- Mr. Asoka Obeysekara, Executive Director, Transparency International (Sri Lanka)
- Representative, Right to Information (RTI) Commission, Sri Lanka (TBC)
- Representative, Department of Government Information, Sri Lanka (TBC)
28-29 September 2018
Colombo, Sri Lanka

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