



# SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE | EDUCATION | e-GOVERNANCE | HEALTH

## The 5th IFIP World IT Forum

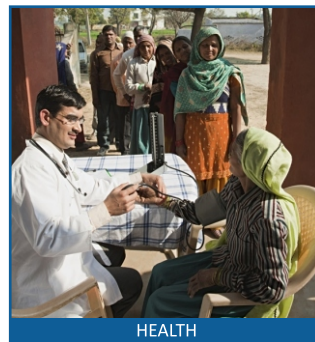
The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), in partnership with the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Government of India, is organising the 5th World IT Forum (WITFOR) in New Delhi on April 16th-18th, 2012.

WITFOR has emerged as a unique global platform to bring together different stakeholders involved in the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for sustainable development. After Lithuania, Botswana, Ethiopia and Vietnam, WITFOR now moves to India, one of the world's fastest growing economies and a crucible for several ICT initiatives in development. As the venue for the 5th WITFOR, India seeks to add unique value to the dialogue – as a country with a distinctive combination of enormous developmental challenges and globally proven ICT capabilities to address them. Like its previous editions, the goal of WITFOR 2012 is to highlight the successful application of ICT for development, with a focus on replicable projects that combine research, policy and practice, as well as successful 'resourcing' of the same. The growing use of ICT, especially its role in providing sustainable development, continues to throw up newer questions and challenges every day – for policymakers, innovators and ordinary users alike. Some of these are often specific to a country, society or community, but many of these issues cut across geographies and require a wider debate between different stakeholders. Under the overall theme of 'sustainable human development', WITFOR 2012 seeks to bring together 'problem solvers' from across the globe to discuss and debate the potential use, impact and challenges of the use of ICT in four key areas: health, education, agriculture and e-governance. The conference will bring together political leaders, policymakers, government officials, International Organisations, NGOs and private companies working in the field of IT for development.

At the heart of the conference are basic questions like: does ICT have a significant impact on development? Can isolated models of success provide affordable and accessible solutions that can change the lives of ordinary people? What distinguishes successful models of innovation and implementation from those that have failed? How can these be scaled up and replicated to provide better, cheaper and more inclusive solutions



across the board? What, if any, are the real 'business outcomes' of the use of ICT for development? These, and other questions will be addressed under the four themes: Health, Education, Agriculture and E-governance.



**Health:** Despite the allocation of a large amount of funds each year, most countries are struggling to scale up the delivery of quality health services to make healthcare both accessible and affordable, while looking for ways to train primary health workers,

especially in remote areas. ICT can help in the creation of viable public health management systems, as well as fill in crucial gaps in managing both health information and human resources. Timely flow of information and the use of ICT for disease surveillance and evidence-based decision-making can have a positive impact on health outcomes. Government interventions in primary healthcare and advances in telemedicine and health informatics are also areas where the use of innovative technologies can help make a visible difference.

**Education:** ICT is increasingly being used as a tool in the field of education to diversify teaching methods, integrate classrooms, improve learning, train teachers and impart vocational skills to children in an attempt to make quality education accessible to all. Some of the most visible examples of the use of new technologies are in the digitisation of content, the vocationalisation of secondary-level education, improved evaluation and assessment techniques, provision of open



and distance learning for a well-blended curriculum and for much-needed capacity building. India is not alone in its attempts to harness the power of a young population by adapting new and innovative educational tools in its quest to build a quality workforce to power its future.

**Agriculture:** Even as there is a marked shift in the balance of power between the services and agriculture sectors, large parts of the global population are still primarily dependent on agriculture. They are often at the mercy of weather conditions, poor quality of information and threats of climate change. The use of ICT in agriculture offers hope in the areas of food security and public distribution, knowledge transfer, improving both productivity levels and farmers' quality of life and for agrarian entrepreneurship. Better weather forecasting, soil mapping, management of land records and surveys can offer integrated and inclusive solutions to local problems, especially with the increasing proliferation of low-cost mobile technology in remote, rural areas.



**E-Governance:** With an increasing focus on transparency, efficiency, accessibility and the promise of



time-bound services, governments around the world are trying to bridge the distance between the State and its citizens. From e-procurement to open government, capacity building to fighting corruption and financial inclusion to biometric authentication frameworks for the disbursement of social security benefits, ICT is powering the State's agenda of delivering 'anytime, anywhere' services to its citizens across the globe. While some countries are encouraging citizens to step up and participate in a new form of open governance that is powered by innovation and the increasing availability of information, others are using high-powered networks and low-cost devices to bring government services to their doorsteps.

**WITFOR will feature plenary sessions on the following topics of importance:**

**Open Innovation/ Open Government:** The rapid growth and use of ICT and the need for greater public oversight has led to the blurring of virtual boundaries between exclusive domains. It is not just businesses that are moving toward inclusivity, but also governments around the world that are inviting participation from various stakeholders while throwing their doors open for innovation and ideas. Public participation and open data are the new mantras for collaboration, even as new global partnerships are being forged that are multiplying both information and the resource tools available to people and governments worldwide.

**ICT for Saving Lives:** While prevention of natural or man-made disasters or health epidemics is not entirely possible, ICT can help mitigate their destructive impact and prevent them from becoming full-blown disasters that compromise sustainable development. At the same time, it can facilitate quick response. Be it early warning systems, abnormal weather phenomenon, natural disaster management, disease mapping or emergency response to epidemics; or even something as basic as tele-consultation for minor illnesses or an integrated emergency response to a road accident, innovations in ICT are being used not just to save lives but also to provide better quality of living.

**Social Media for Citizen Empowerment:** Not only does ICT play a vital role in development, it also provides simple tools to transform the citizen-State interface, leading to a new form of transparent, participatory governance. Not only does social media help engage citizens in processes of policy-making and reform, but it also empowers them to demand more and better services. While in recent times, social media has emerged as a potent medium of dissent, it provides an important sounding-board for diverse opinions and grievances that – if channelised well by policymakers – can emerge as a powerful tool of constructive transformation.

#### For enquiries and registration

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