WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Session 406
Academic Perspectives on WSIS and SDGS

Tim Unwin

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in ICT for Development
Royal Holloway, University of London

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

The World Summit on the Information Society

Geneva 2003

and

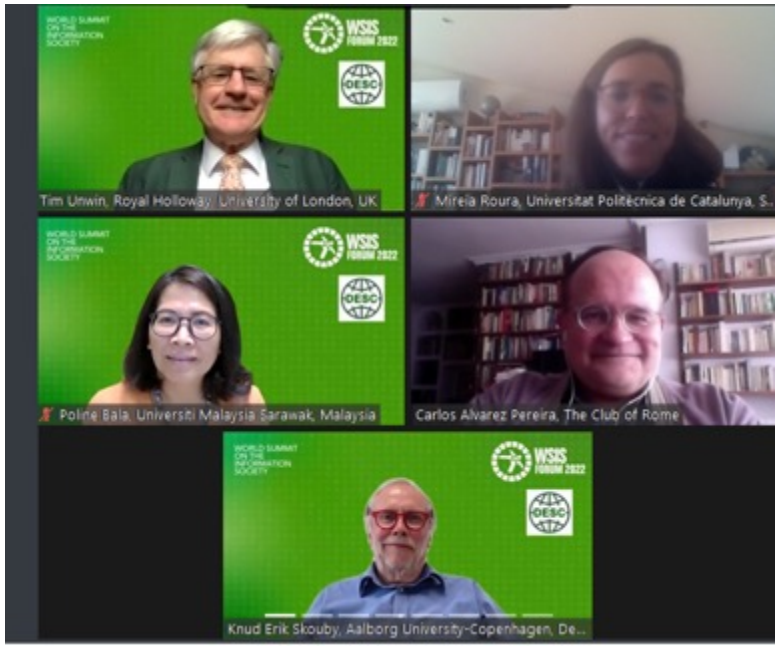
Tunis 2005

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

And the WSIS Annual Forums subsequently

From WSIS to MISS, 2019

and

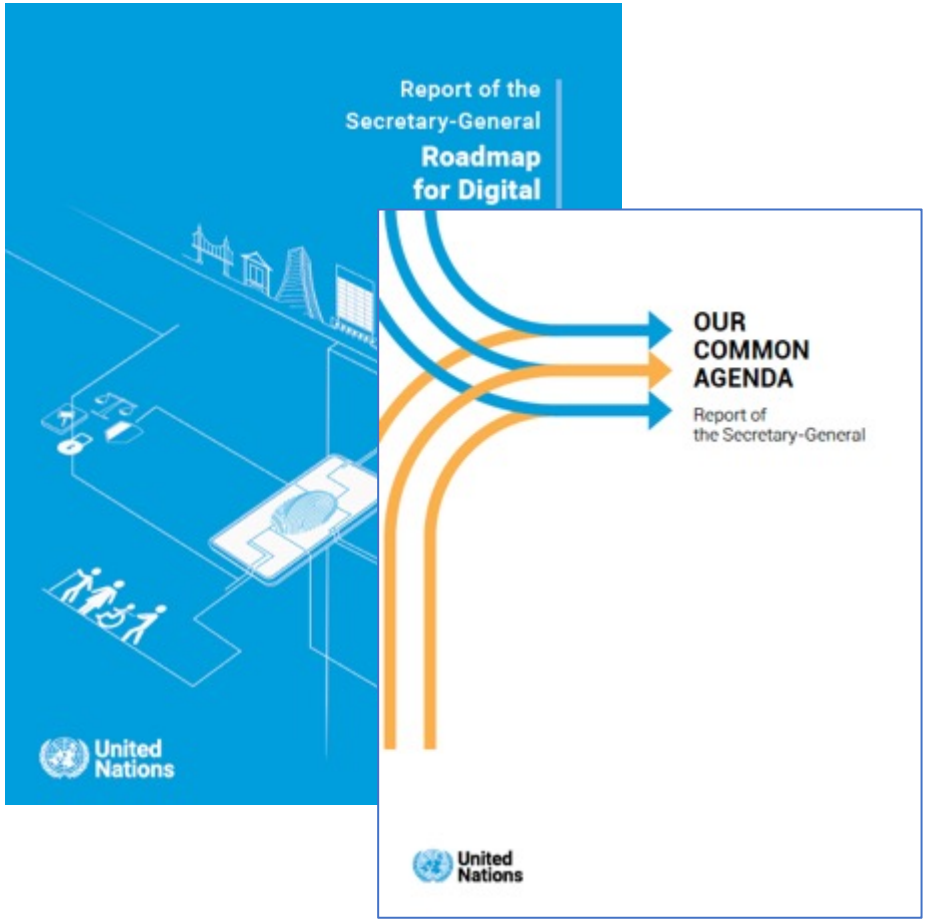


Virtually in recent years

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Reflections on WSIS, the UN system and the SDGS

- WSIS has played a key role in bringing UN agencies and other stakeholders together to share new developments in ICT4D
- But how many times do the UN SG's *Roadmap for digital cooperation* or *Our Common Agenda* mention WSIS?
- Proliferation of other platforms and processes
  - Duplication, overlap, reinventing the wheel…
  - Need for substantial change within the UN system



WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Only 8 years to 2030

- Now is the time to start planning for post-Agenda 2030 and beyond the SDGs
- Being realistic, most SDGs targets are not going to be delivered
- What structure do we want and how will progress be measured?
  - WSIS could play a role in shaping this
- We need a new agenda for the UN
  - Focusing more on reducing inequalities than on growth
  - And delivering a new approach to the environment

Funchal, 2022

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

The Value of the WSIS process for academics

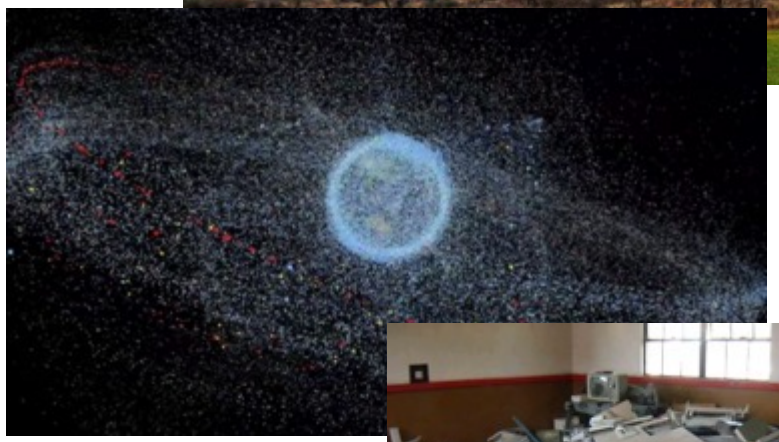
- An opportunity to learn about new developments in the field
- Chance to showcase applied relevance of their research
- Contributing to policy discussions and impact
- Building multi-sector networks
- Linking to other ITU activities (such as Study Groups, Telecom World, Kaleidoscope) and wider UN system
    - But need to avoid duplication

WSIS, 2011

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

SDGs: Interface between digital and the environment is the most crucial challenge

- Most research and practice focuses on climate change and the use of digital tech to reduce carbon emissions
- Yet digital tech also has hugely damaging impacts on the environment
  - Energy requirements
  - Environmental impact on space
  - Anti-sustainable business models
  - Environmental destruction and e-waste
  - Cultural landscape destruction
- We must change our ways of thinking



WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

The Digital-Environment System Coalition (DESC)

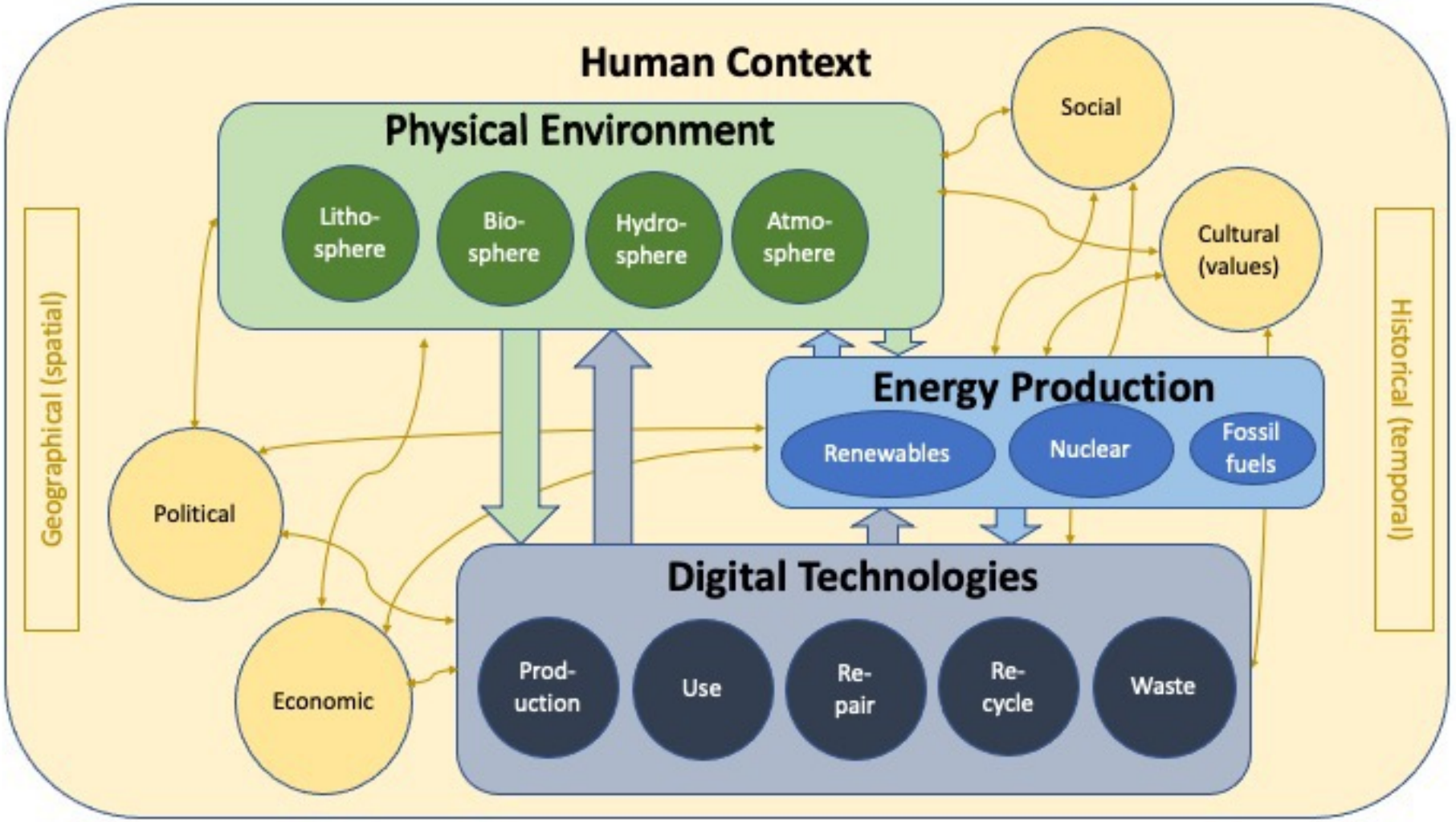
- Aim: to develop a more holistic understanding of the interactions between digital tech and the physical environment
- Need to create new models to address the balance between positive and harmful environmental impact of digital tech
- Academic research shaping global policy and practice

DESC

Https://ict4d.org.uk/desc

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Initial DESC conceptual framework: research and practice



WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Academic research in practice

- Producing knowledge reviews, new research and policy statements
  - Developing toolkit for UN Partner2Connect to evaluate environmental impact of its work
- Multi-sector based on real partnerships
  - Academia, Private Sector, Civil Society, Governments and UN Agencies
  - Members and Associate Members
- Working Groups: research, practice and policy
- Strong governance framework and ethical guidelines

DESC

WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

Join us – before it is too late!

- Find out more by joining our final Session at WSIS on 2nd June – ***Open Space Session 448 12.00-12.45***
- Explore DESC at https://ict4d.org.uk/desc or http://desc.global
- Contribute by becoming a member or partner https://ict4d.org.uk/contact/
- We must mitigate the harms to ensure the benefits are experienced by all

DESC