Moderator

Mr. Ayman El-Sherbiny | Chief of ICT Policies and Digital Development, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA)

Ayman El-Sherbiny has more than 30 years of experience in the Telecom and IT domain; a senior International Development Strategist in the United Nations, and a former senior executive in several major multinational Technology companies, as well as in the Telecom and Internet Sector in Egypt and the Arab Region during the nineties till 2002. By the mid-nineties, he became a serial entrepreneur. He co-founded and led, as President & CEO, several renowned ICT companies, including establishing two of the five licensed Internet Operators, and acquired more than 40% of internet market share in a record time, in addition to one of the leading systems integrators and one of the pioneering e-commerce companies as well as the first WAP partner to the main GSM operator by then. In 1999, he participated in co-drafting the first Telecom Law of Egypt that triggered the liberalization of the sector, instigated the National TRA of Egypt, and fueled competition in the sector. By late 2002, he joined the United Nations, and participated in establishing the ICT Division of ESCWA, spearheading Arab efforts pertaining to the WSIS in 2003 and 2005. By 2011, and till now, he assumed the leadership role for information society, digital economy and digital development as the Chief of Information and Communication Technology Policies at the UN – ESCWA. During 18 years of tenure in the UN, he authored tens of publications on the Information Society issues including on Advancing ICT Infrastructure, Broadband for Development, Internet Governance, Competitiveness of the ICT Sector, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Investment and Venture Capital in ICTs, e-Government Strategy, and on Digital Economy; and has co-founded the Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF) and the Arab High-Level Forum on WSIS and 2030 Agenda.

He led several international and regional initiatives including Arabic Names across several geographical groups. He is a regular speaker at international conferences on digital oriented issues. His current work focuses on global and regional Digital Cooperation and Development, Fintech, and e-Commerce post-COVID-19; and on the establishment of a Unified Arab Digital Agenda and Strategy for the Arab region jointly with League of Arab States, and on National Digital Development Reviews and Agendas for several Arab countries, with close nexus to the SDGs and to the 2030 Agenda.

Ms. Witada Anukoonwattaka | Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy & Facilitation Section, UN ESCAP

Witada Anukoonwattaka is senior Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Policy and Facilitation Section of the Trade and Investment Division in United Nations ESCAP. She is a core researcher for the division, in particular the Trade Policy and Facilitation Section. Her research areas cover economic impacts of trade and investment policies as well as contemporary trade issues of Asia-Pacific countries including trade tensions, global value chains, regional integration, services and digital-trade policies, and trade policies to support sustainable development. She has been leading ESCAP teams working on research and capacity building on regional integration and digital trade integration for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. She has also run and served as a resource person for capacity-building programmes, particularly those related to evidence-based policymaking and research. Before joining ESCAP, she was a lecturer of the Faculty of Economics at Thammasat University, Thailand, and also worked in the advisory team of Thailand's minister of industry, foreign affairs, and commissioner of Thailand's National Telecommunications Commission. She holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Melbourne

Speakers

Mr. Saoud Humaid AL Shoaili | DG- Policies & Governance, Head- National Space Program, Ministry of Transport & ICT, Oman

Saoud is a renowned national executive leader with professional experience of over 21 years in the ICT (ICT, Post, and Space) sectors. He is a professional management consultant & Advisor to the ministry on the ICT, Post & Space fields. His professional experience includes sector legislation and regulations, policy, strategic planning and execution, governance, and compliance. He represents the sector at various regional and international events. Dr. Saoud has led various legislative, policy and strategic initiatives that have impacted the sectors including ICT law, Personal data law, national ICT strategy, National Cloud 1st Policy, Postal Sector Strategy, Space Policy/Strategy beside others. He has been invited as a Guest of Honour and keynote speaker in various forums.

Dr. Saoud is a board member in various local and international BoDs including the UPU, ArabSAt Co, Oman ICT Holding CO, and Oman Post CO. Dr. Saoud holds PhD/MSc in Public Policies for Science, Technology & Innovation, besides MEng/BEng in Electrical & Computer Engineering. He is a graduate among the first cohort of the National Leadership & Competitiveness Program (Diwan Royal Court/University of Oxford).

Mr. Sungjoo Son | Director, Digital Government Cooperation Division, Digital Government Bureau, Ministry of the Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea

Sungjoo Son has worked in the field of digital government since he joined the civil service in 2007. He has diverse experience including, but not limited to digital transformation strategy, data policy, cloud computing, application development, and government data center. Currently he is in charge of international cooperation regarding digital government. Before joining the government, he worked as a senior researcher at a Korean software company, SOMANSA Co, Ltd. Sungjoo Son holds a BSc in computer science and engineering from the Seoul National University and a Master of Information Management and Systems (MIMS) from the University of California, Berkeley.

Ms. Wang Wei | Director-General, Institute of Market Economy, Development Research Center of the State Council

Dr. Wei Wang is the General Director of the Institute of Market Economy and a senior research fellow at the Development Research Center (DRC) of the State Council of China, which is the policy analysis agency of China's central government. Dr. Wang joined the DRC in September 1996. The research interests of Dr. Wang are on policy and regulation of the service sector, market system and mechanisms, logistics and distribution, urbanization and consumption policy. She has made significant contributions to China's policies, regulations, and reform to those areas since 1998. Dr. Wang had conducted and contributed to more than 50 projects sponsored by Chinese government. She had published 10 books in China and more than 80 academic papers on Chinese periodicals.

Dr. Wang has had many international research experiences such as working at the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) in 2001. She had conducted and contributed to a dozen international projects collaborated with the World Bank on SME policy in 2005 and on housing policy in 2008, Asian Development Bank on service policy during 2012 to 2015, the Rand Corporation on transportation and logistics in 2013. She, and again, with OECD on China's service in the high-quality development stage during 2018 to 2019.

Dr. Wang has a Ph.D. in Economics from Remin University of China, and has received a number of research awards, to include the Distinguished Contribution Scholar Award of the State Council of China in 2008, the top award issued by the State Council. She is also professor of the University of International Business and Economy (UIBE) since 2010, advisor in distribution and e-commerce for the Ministry of Commerce, deputy director of China's Logistics and Supply Chain Academy, deputy director of China's Service Research Think Tank since 2017.

Ms. Alaa Abdul Aal | VP of Strategy and Governance, Digital Cooperation Organization

Alaa Abdulaal has been the vice president of strategy and governance at the Digital Cooperation Organization since September 2021.

The organization, a global multilateral entity that aims at increasing social prosperity through accelerating the growth of the digital economy, was established by a group of countries that share an interest in collaborating to realize their collective digital potential. These countries are Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Oman, and Pakistan.

Prior to joining the organization, Abdulaal had served for more than a year as the director of IT strategy and governance at the Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services. For over nine years, beginning in 2011, she worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a database unit leader, technical operation strategist, and a strategic planning and development manager.

In the latter role she established key performance metrics, designed reporting solutions, and promoted the use of structured information to drive enhanced business performance. She also led critical communication development and business reporting.

In 2015, she spent eight months as a research intern at Riva Modeling Systems in Toronto, where she demonstrated a strong interest and aptitude for user experience.

Before that, she worked for more than four years as a database administrator at the Saudi Exchange Market. There, she helped enhance the database's performance and security. Her job responsibilities also included evaluating the proposed auditing systems and developing the availability process from scratch with the IT service management project consultants. Moreover, she created availability dashboards for Tadawul production services.

Abdulaal received a bachelor's degree in computer science in 2006 from King Saud University, where she graduated with first class honors. In 2014, she obtained a master's degree, majoring in applied computing, with the highest GPA result.

She is a certified strategic business planner and a professional business process manager.

Mr. Yongwang Liu | Research Engineer, China Academy of Information Communications Technology (CAICT), Ministry of Industry and Information Technology

Yongwang Liu, as a research engineer of CAICT, is responsible for ICT consulting and policy-making research. He has 9 years ` experience in the ICT sector, including international communication and policy-making support. He worked for UN ESCAP as a consultant from 2017 to 2019.

Mr. Ahmed El-Sobky | Founder and Managing Director, ACACIA Integration

The Managing Director of ACACIA Integration GmbH, the retired VP of the Information Technology Industry Development Agency, the founding Chairman of Silicon Waha and the general trustee of the Supreme Council for Cyber Security in Egypt. Working in the fields related to ICT since 1985. Worked as the Director of Strategic Projects at the Ministry of Investment and participated in managing a number of e-gov. projects implemented under the umbrella of the Ministry of State for Administrative Development. Participated in developing the e-learning strategy for both Nile Basin and COMESA Countries as an Egyptian expert who participated in implementing the 1st. e-learning master's degree in the Middle East in collaboration with Middlesex University in UK and in establishing the Egyptian node for the GDL Network of the World Bank. As a member of the Arab Workforce Group preparing the WSIS 1st. phase, he participated in formulating the document "Towards a Pan Arab Information Society - A Joint Action Plan".

Mr. Aadil Nakhoda | Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Karachi

Aadil Nakhoda is an assistant professor at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi. He is an employee at IBA Karachi since July 2014. He graduated with a PhD in International Economics from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He specializes in the field of international trade, international finance, development economic, business strategies and industrial economics. He has published in international journals as well as in books on international trade.

He is a frequent writer for national newspapers and magazines. He writes regularly for the Express Tribune newspaper and South Asia magazine. His articles have focused on topics related to international trade, including export competitiveness. He has also provided consultation services to multilateral agencies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations ESCAP, World Bank, The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and USAID.

He teaches international trade, development economics, macroeconomics, international political economy, among other courses at IBA. He believes in providing a well-rounded education to the students, which not only involves theoretical discussions, but also real-world applications of the theories learned in class.

He is currently a member of the Economic Advisory Group (EAG), an independent group formed by PRIME Institute to deliberate on Pakistan's economic policies. It aims to inform public debate on critical economic and developmental issues related to Pakistan and provide recommendations to the federal government on a more effective resource allocation framework.

Prior to joining IBA, Dr. Aadil Nakhoda was a Zahid Hussain Memorial research fellow at the State Bank of Pakistan from March 2013 to March 2014. This prestigious fellowship provided him an opportunity to work with the best researchers at the State Bank of Pakistan and gain a hands-on experience on several macroeconomic and trade-related issues faced by Pakistan. One of his major projects at IBA is the Business Confidence Survey in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan.

Mr. Torbjorn Fredriksson | Head, e-commerce, and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD

Torbjörn Fredriksson heads the E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Branch's work covers the Digital Economy Report, the eTrade for all initiative, eTrade for Women, the E-commerce Week, various capacity-building activities, and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy. Mr. Fredriksson joined the UN in 2000. Before joining UNCTAD, he held positions at the Invest in Sweden Agency and the Swedish Ministry of Industry and Commerce. He has an MSc in International Economics from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Mr. Askar Tazhiyev | Consultant, ESCAP, Former Ambassador to Norway and at large of Kazakhstan

Askar Tazhiyev is a Kazakhstan diplomat with rich background and expertise in telecommunications and international relations. He has more than 30 years of professional experience in senior positions at the national, regional, and international/multilateral level related to economic, political and development issues including those covered by the UN system.

Has demonstrated success in various fields ranging from ICT and green economy to technology transfer, investments, and resources mobilization for least developed and developing countries as well as human rights. In the 1990s, he initiated the MFA's proposals for developing the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA, 1998). As Ambassador at Large, he made a major contribution to the establishment of U.S.-Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership Dialogue as well as coordinated the inter-agency negotiations with counter-partners to conclude agreements on transit corridors to Afghanistan. He was instrumental in advancing Green Bridge Partnership Programme internationally (Rio+20 Final Document). In 2012, Mr. Tazhiyev received Prime Minister's Commendation for lead an interagency group in Paris to promote Astana's bid to host EXPO 2017 "Future Energy" through multifaceted negotiations with the delegates from developing countries.

He had assignments in the United States/ Canada, Norway, and Morocco (ISESC).

Mr Tazhiyev obtained bachelor's degrees in St. Petersburg (engineer of telecommunications) and Almaty (teacher of English).

Mr. Ted Chen | Co-founder of EverComm, and Science-Policy Interface Focal Point for the United Nations Major Group for Children & YouthEverComm (Asia and Pacific)

Ted is the Co-founder and CEO of Evercomm Singapore– one of Asia Pacific's fastest growing energy AI startup in the cleantech sector and Accredited by the Singapore government.

Youngest to receive the prestigious Singapore Energy Award and recognized as one of the digital pioneers by the Singapore Committee on the Future Economy (CFE), Ted works closely with the United Nations Major Group for Children & Youth (UN MGCY) as the Science-Policy Interface Focal Point, with the mission of advancing the role of children and youth in contributing to the sustainable development. He is also an expert technical partner for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) City2City Network and a Barclays Unreasonable Impact Fellow.

Ted has notably received the Nanyang Outstanding Young Alumni Award from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and made it to World Cities Summit Young Leader and Forbes' inaugural 30 Under 30 Asia list.