



HUMAN CAPITAL MINISTERIAL CONCLAVE
2024 SPRING MEETINGS

Realizing the Potential of Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence for Health and Beyond

On April 18, 2024, 38 countries joined the Spring Meetings Human Capital Ministerial Conclave to discuss how to **harness AI and other technologies to empower people and economies and invest in foundations for digitally equipped people.**

Ministers of Finance, Budget, and Planning from Morocco, Kenya, Cabo Verde, and Armenia shared their country experiences during the discussions. Leading voices in digital technology and AI also joined: Jeff Maggioncalda, CEO, Coursera; Nandan Nilekani, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board, Infosys; Neal Khosla, Co-Founder and CEO, Curai Health; and Kate Kallot, Founder and CEO, Amini AI. World Bank Senior Managing Director for Development Policy and Partnerships, Axel van Trotsenburg, participated in the first session, and Vice President of Human Development, Mamta Murthi, opened and closed the event.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Digital technologies can revolutionize how countries build, use, and protect their human capital.

- **Governments** can launch initiatives to use digital technology for stronger service delivery in health, education, and social protection, while creating frameworks to protect data, promote good governance, and engage citizens.
- **The World Bank Group** can share knowledge and expand partnerships to scale effective investments in digital technology for human capital.

The foundations for transforming human capital with technology are infrastructure and skills starting with the building blocks of basic literacy and math.

- **Governments** can prioritize reliable and affordable electricity and internet access, digital public infrastructure, and investments in skills from basic education to reskilling and upskilling for the digital economy.
- **The World Bank Group** can support programs to close the digital divide, expand quality basic education, and equip people with the skills to drive and adapt to digital transformation.



WELCOME REMARKS

Vice President Mamta Murthi opened the event by celebrating the Human Capital Network’s milestone of 95 member countries, with Argentina, Equatorial Guinea, and Spain the newest members. She highlighted the World Bank’s evolution to embrace digital technology that includes a new Digital Vice Presidency. In the face of continuing human capital challenges, digitalization can expand access, quality, and speed of public services, as well as improve governance, transparency, and citizen engagement. She noted, however, that reaping technology’s benefits requires infrastructure and skilled people. She finished by introducing the Conclave’s new format of short discussions with outside experts followed by questions and reflections from the floor.

FIRST SESSION: DIGITAL INNOVATIONS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL

Nandan Nilekani drew on his experience with the IT company [Infosys](#) and the [Ekstep Foundation](#) to identify in-demand skills in the digital global economy such as collaboration and mentorship.



“Digital technology has the potential to expand **access, reach, quality,** and **transparency** of public services.

But it needs to build on some solid foundations... reliable and affordable infrastructure services...”

————— MAMTA MURTHI



“We have to make sure that people can keep upgrading their skills. I believe that **the only friction to learning should be motivation**. Everything else should be available to you at your fingertips.”

————— **NANDAN NILEKANI**

In addition, he emphasized continuous learning and the need to address basic literacy, pointing to [AI-assisted language learning in India](#) as one solution. He also spoke about working with the Indian government on digital public infrastructure such as its national digital ID system, [Aadhar](#); a learning platform, [DIKSHA](#), and digital payments. These tools to boost financial inclusion and resilience enabled millions of people to receive emergency cash transfers during the pandemic. Initiatives such as the [Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure](#) aim to replicate an affordable model for people to use their data to get better health, education, and financial services. Finally, he called digital transformation a commitment problem rather than a money problem and advocated for countries to have overall strategies for digitization.

Jeff Maggioncalda shared how his company [Coursera](#) works with businesses to upskill and reskill employees; universities to supplement their curricula with job-relevant training and micro-credentials; governments and non-profits from more than 100 countries on workforce development program and public sector upskilling; and individuals to extend access to formal education. Coursera is using generative AI to address the digital divide with courses in more languages and personalized tutoring. He also said that investments in skills, electricity, and broadband bring a double dividend of learning and economic opportunity, pointing to Coursera’s partnerships with governments such as Guyana and Kazakhstan. People no longer need to learn or work close to where they live, expanding opportunities across countries and increasing resilience during natural disasters and conflict.



“A virtue of digitization is you can now **learn anytime, anywhere...** So long as you have connectivity and foundational knowledge, you can avail yourselves of the best education no matter where you live.”

————— **JEFF MAGGIONCALDA**

Senior Managing Director Axel van Trotsenburg underscored the World Bank's role as a learning institution that can scale both knowledge and financing. COVID and other shocks demonstrated the need for new response mechanisms that include digital tools. We must reduce the digital divide and ensure that the digital revolution does not contribute to further inequalities. The World Bank will [partner with the African Development Bank Group to connect 300 million people to electricity by 2030](#) and sees huge opportunities in digital technology and AI to tackle learning poverty and other challenges in education, health, and social protection. He emphasized that digital economies require both commitment and resources by governments, and he recognized the need for respect for privacy and flexible but comprehensive AI governance structures.

Minister Fettah, current Chair of the Human Capital Network, reflected with some of **Morocco's** human capital reforms that have been aided by digital technology such as enrolling



“The digital revolution is impacting the whole world, and there is a huge concern that there is a digital divide... This is not only about scaling financing. It is **scaling knowledge, private sector solutions, and our whole engagement.**”

————— **AXEL VAN TROTSENBURG**



22 million people into a universal healthcare program, reaching over 60% percent of the total population with the National Population Registry, and boosting revenues for women artisans. She also raised the question of how to protect personal data given increased digitization in many countries.

Cabinet Secretary Ndung'u from **Kenya** highlighted the importance of human capital development, markets, domestic resource mobilization, and digitalization to recovery from recent crises. Digitalization provides efficiency and scalability for government investments and can support institutions. New digital tools can strengthen education systems at all levels, including technical and vocational education and training and other areas of tertiary education.



SECOND SESSION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO BOOST HUMAN CAPITAL

Neal Khosla explained that [Curai Health](#) is scaling access to high-quality medical expertise with a virtual clinic powered by AI and other

technologies to help draft care plans for doctors and improve patient outreach and monitoring. He suggested a nuanced approach to addressing potential bias in AI systems and assessing what AI can do for people. Successful AI projects require clear metrics for success, pilots that generate data for scaling decisions, and optimism and commitment to learn from challenges and refine tools. On the country level, he pointed out that internet access can leverage access to quality education, healthcare, financial services and digital identity, and basic skills and reskilling can help keep up with technological change.



“There’s four billion people who can’t access healthcare at all... the only solution is **scaling access to high-quality medical expertise** with technology. And that’s where AI comes into the picture.”

NEAL KHOSLA

Kate Kallot spoke about the journey of her company, [Amini](#), to address the environmental data gap for African countries and build data infrastructure that developers can use to reduce the digital divide globally. The company hopes to support actors along the entire value-chain with



“Brilliant young people are there in all countries, just waiting to help... transition into digital transformation. But it has to come from **government setting up the right frameworks and ecosystems** so that all can use, develop, and contribute to that transformation.”

————— KATE KALLOT

trustworthy data to unlock microfinance and better insurance for farmers, stronger climate resilience and food security for governments, and improved reporting for private sector companies shipping commodities. She also recognized the growing number of young Africans building AI solutions and using non-traditional pathway institutions for learning. Countries can take advantage of skilled people by providing the right frameworks and ecosystems, drawing on South-South learning and the opportunity to leapfrog generations to modern infrastructure.

Minister Correia brought in the experience of **Cabo Verde**. He stressed the importance of digital development for countries in the region to connect people, improve learning, and take advantage of a broad range of opportunities. People cannot realize digital’s potential, however, if they lack access to electricity and basic technologies, making the internet an essential service like water, energy, or sanitation. Ensuring that Africa does not miss out on the digital transformation through more inclusive digital access will require new sources of financing and projects.



Minister Hovhannisyan from **Armenia** emphasized the country’s investments in technological education. Initiatives include international expansion of an Armenian technology education program for teens, [TUMO](#); the Academic City project to create a knowledge-based STEM talent pipeline and R&D ecosystem by transforming Armenian schools and universities; and the



Generation AI project to nurture talent from high school and beyond. Armenia is also investing in infrastructure through additional cloud computing and a [supercomputer for Yerevan State University](#).



CLOSING SUMMARY

Vice President Mamta Murthi concluded the event by calling for strategic country use of technology to meet large needs in access to public services, such as the 4.5 billion people globally without healthcare and the 70% of youth that struggle with basic literacy. Realizing this potential requires governments to invest in universal electricity access and digital architecture. With support from the Conclave and larger Human Capital Project to document and share good practices, countries can build on existing strong examples of digital technology for social benefit transfers; reskilling, upskilling, and higher education; and telemedicine programs. Scaling and replicating digital tools for basic education requires more research and likely continued investment in in-person interaction, but basic education also remains the foundation for the fundamental skills central to all digital transformation. She concluded by asking for feedback on the Conclave's new format and thanking the speakers.