

# Preface



Digitalization continues to move at warp speed, transforming lives and livelihoods. At the same time, unregulated digitalization risks leaving people behind and exacerbating environmental and climate challenges.

The *Digital Economy Report 2024* highlights the direct environmental impact of our increased reliance on digital tools – from raw material depletion, water and energy use, air quality, pollution, and waste generation. These are accentuated by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of things.

A just and sustainable digital economy requires just and sustainable policies.

Yet many developing countries continue to face obstacles in accessing digital technologies for their development needs, while bearing the brunt of environmental depletion, waste and climate change.

We cannot address digitalization and environmental sustainability in silos. This report calls for more comprehensive data on the environmental impact of digitalization, and digital policy frameworks that advance the Sustainable Development Goals and honour climate commitments.

As we prepare for the Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact, the United Nations offers a natural platform to bring together stakeholders from the digital and environmental communities.

Together, we can harness the benefits of digitalization while closing the digital divide and protecting our planet. This report is an important resource as we strive to build a just and sustainable digital future for all.

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