

NOTE

THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE GLOBAL DIGITALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Abstract

Nowadays, the establishment of peaceful co-operation between nations depends on the development of digital economy and its regulation. To a certain extent, this new reality challenges the basic principles of the old world and defines some new rules to which humankind is supposed to adapt. On May 13 during his visit to Moscow, Russia, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres was welcomed at MGIMO-University and conferred an Honorary Doctor degree. Following the ceremony, as is tradition, the Secretary-General delivered a doctoral lecture to students and faculty. The



Secretary-General touched on the subject of the consequences of digitalization, its impact on human rights protection and the role of the international community in the era of digital revolution.

Keywords

digital cooperation, the United Nations, human rights, digital revolution, right to disconnect

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ЗАМЕТКА

ГЕНЕРАЛЬНЫЙ СЕКРЕТАРЬ ООН О ВСЕМИРНОЙ ЦИФРОВИЗАЦИИ И МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВЕ

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Аннотация

В настоящее время установление мирного сотрудничества между странами зависит от развития цифровой экономики и ее регулирования. В определенной степени новая цифровая реальность бросает вызов основополагающим принципам мироустройства и определяет некоторые новые правила, к которым человечество должно адаптироваться. 13 мая во время визита в Москву Генерального секретаря ООН Антониу Гутерриша в МГИМО-Университете состоялась торжественная церемония присвоения высокому гостю звания Почетного доктора МГИМО. После церемонии Генеральный секретарь по традиции выступил с докторской лекцией перед студентами и преподавателями. В своем выступлении Генеральный секретарь коснулся последствий цифровизации, ее влияния на защиту прав человека и роли международного сообщества в эпоху цифровой революции.

Ключевые слова

цифровое сотрудничество, Организация Объединенных Организаций, права человека, цифровая революция, право на отключение

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— As it is known, science and innovation are particularly important for the realization of sustainable development goals. This has become extremely important during the Covid-pandemic and has been exacerbated by the situation. But at the same time, digital revolution often comes at the expense of increased unemployment as well as withdrawal of labor force. What can the United Nations do to ensure the full respect for human rights in the context of digital revolution?

— Well, thank you very much for your question, that is central. It is not only human rights. I mean, digital revolution is affecting every aspect of our life. We have launched a high-level panel of digital cooperation with representatives of governments, representatives of business and scientific community.¹ Based on that, on the conclusions and recommendations, we have launched a road map on digital cooperation and this is not very central of our concerns.² In different aspects there is an inter-governmental process and we believe that some changes in law will might require new conventions that require an inter-governmental process. There is an open-ended working group that recently came to the consensus on the first integration to communication and digital activities.

But we see a number of concerns of different kinds. First, our privacy. One of the key rights is the right to be disconnected, and that right does not exist. There was a very interesting case in court about someone saying, “I just want to be disconnected”. It was a very difficult question. And not only about our privacy. But now, if one looks at what companies like Google, Facebook and others have, is not only the capacity to gather all data produced by us during different interactions on the apps and platforms that exists and to use and to sell these data to advertising companies, to a certain extent using our behavior, selling our behavior as a commercial good; and worst, now having a capacity to influence our behavior. And also this creates the possibility for some governments to have a mechanism of control over their citizens. That, of course, cannot be acceptable. I recommend you reading the book that was recently published by a professor in Harvard called *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. It explains the mechanism in which we convey to them the possibility to totally influence our behavior according to some commercial interests of different entities.

On the other hand, we have all the problem of cybersecurity that requires international cooperation. We have all the problem of artificial intelligence and of what artificial intelligence is generating. For instance, the risk of autonomous weapons — weapons that nobody controls. That is the question of responsibility. So, there is a number of issues that require, in my opinion, for countries to be able to come together. And in some areas, to introduce new laws based on intergovernmental processes. In other areas, to establish the platforms of dialog and of soft approaches in relation to different aspects related to the Internet, for example, with the businesses, with the scientific community, with the civil society in order to make sure that there is an effective cooperation to reduce risks, to exchange best practices and to be able to improve the way the digital cooperation is used.

There is one thing which is the digital divide. Out of the world population is not connected. This creates a new source of inequality, a dramatic source of inequality making development very difficult in some countries that have not got this capacity. So, one of our objectives in this road map is to establish a world program to get connectivity to everybody in 2030. By the way, the population of the Russian Federation is one of the populations of the world with a high impact in Internet connection.

¹ United Nations. *Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation*. <https://www.un.org/en/sg-digital-cooperation-panel>

² United Nations Secretary-General. *Road map for digital cooperation: Implementation of the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/821)*. United Nations. <https://undocs.org/A/74/821>

And so, I believe that all of you know exactly what it is not to be possible to have a connection with the Internet. That happens today with a world population. So, this is a very important objective, too. Human rights dimension is not only the question of privacy. Human rights dimension is also the question of development, the question of bad capacity of people to take use of the technologies in order to promote their own development.

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