The Internet has grown and diffused rapidly across the globe, bringing significant benefits to economies and societies. Enhancing access and participation in the digital economy requires collaboration amongst all stakeholders and for governments to find new approaches to policy development.

On 21-23 June 2016, Ministers will gather in Cancún, Mexico, for the OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy, to continue the dialogue and keep our nations moving forward, together, in this digital era.
How is today’s digital world affecting us and how can we continue to support innovation, growth and social prosperity?

Addressing the economic and social benefits of Internet openness and the policies that support its development

Thanks to the Internet, now more than ever, the world is doing business globally and information is flowing within, and across, borders at an unprecedented pace.

These data flows are important to trade, innovation, entrepreneurship, growth and social prosperity. Promoting the open, distributed and interconnected nature of the Internet and encouraging multi-stakeholder co-operation will be key to keeping us on a positive path.

An effective way to further develop and address social and economic goals, such as productivity growth, the needs of ageing societies and inclusiveness, is through demand-side policies that stimulate digital innovation. We have a lot to learn from each other – sharing expertise and building on one another’s experiences will allow countries to make better, stronger policies for the digital economy, benefitting their citizens and future economic prosperity.

Taking advantage of the economic and social benefits from convergence to the Internet of Things

We live in a world where change is the only constant. Business models that were built respectively on fixed, wireless and broadcasting infrastructure have converged, services provided over different networks are now offered over a single pathway – the Internet, devices can interact with one another without human intervention and consumers are more empowered than ever before.

How can we make sure our economies and societies are prepared, businesses - particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - can adapt, and governments better utilise new technologies in areas such as health, transport and energy?

As the next 50 billion devices come online, policymakers will need to strive for technology neutrality, innovation and the promotion of new business models. Governments will have to work more horizontally across their organisations and between levels particularly on matters related to privacy and security. Flexibility, transparency, equity, and, to the extent possible, far-sightedness will be important to the development of the Internet of Things.
On 21-23 June 2016, Ministers and stakeholders from OECD countries and partner economies, international organisations, business, labour, civil society and the Internet technical community will meet. Discussions will cover four important themes:

**Enabling greater co-operation to protect consumers and manage privacy and security risks**

With increasing interconnectedness, a dynamic and innovative e-commerce marketplace has developed, consumers have been playing a more active role and an economy of sharing has emerged. The sharing economy can bring important benefits such as making efficient use of finite resources and developing new economic opportunities both to those doing the sharing and the platforms that connect them.

But as these online marketplaces grow and the landscape for consumers becomes more complex, regulatory and consumer protection challenges are emerging. The provision of well-tailored consumer protections can foster trust and provide the opportunity for the online marketplace, including the sharing economy, to prosper.

In light of the increased networked interdependence of our societies, privacy and security concerns are more prevalent than ever and will become a competitive differentiator. There are economic and social opportunities to taking a risk-based approach to managing these concerns at the highest level of leadership. Governments and business can set the conditions for greater co-operation in developing and implementing privacy and security risk management frameworks that are aligned with the economic and social strategic vision for the digital economy.

**Benefitting from the new, ever-evolving labour markets**

As technology has made our lives easier, it has made the job market more complex. Some full-time, long-term jobs are being turned into an uneven flow of “on-demand” ones. The skills needed today are not necessarily going to be those in demand tomorrow. While some jobs are no longer required, new jobs and job functions are being created all the time. Appropriate policy measures are needed to favour the transfer of resources – labour, investment, firms – from declining to growing sectors.

How can we train the workforce of the future? What will be the skills mix required – technical, managerial, communications? How can we ensure that the lower-skilled and older workers are prepared and can adapt? New approaches to education, training and re-skilling to meet the fast-changing demand for new skills, as well as fostering employment creation in new economic activities will be key to the advancement of the digital economy.
Few aspects of our lives remain untouched by the transformations of the digital economy. This is a complex and dynamic interconnected environment, in which the flow of data has a significant impact on innovation, global value chains and the world economy. Increased mobility, new ways of connecting and interdependence are enabling new services and business models. In order for society to benefit from these changes, the right protections and measures must be in place and people must have the right skills not to be left behind.

**Working together, we will:**

» Join forces to maximise the contribution of the digital economy to growth and well-being by promoting the open, distributed and interconnected nature of the Internet and continue to encourage multi-stakeholder co-operation.

» Stimulate the use of digital technologies by creating the right investment and policy frameworks to support innovation and growth, particularly amongst SMEs, as well as social prosperity while minimising the impacts on employment.

» Chart the road ahead to attain an environment of security, trust and resiliency for networks and users, in order to foster consumer trust and confidence in the global digital economy.