

**ADDRESS
GIVEN BY THE
ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL OF CURACAO (SER) ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF
THE AICESIS INTERNATIONAL SESSIONS ON THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019**

His excellency mr. Eugene Rhuggenaath, Prime Minister of Curaçao
Mr. Baciú, President of AICESIS,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues
and guests.

Good morning.

On behalf of the Economic and Social Council of Curaçao, the SER, I greet you all this morning, hoping that you got some rest these last couple of days and/or hours after quite a long trip to Curaçao. As the Prime Minister already stated in his introductory address, for us it is quite an honor to welcome delegates from practically all over the globe to our much-loved Caribbean island.

Since the foundation of AICESIS in 1999, the SER of Curaçao was actively involved in the activities of AICESIS. Therefore SER Curacao can witness that, since its very beginning, AICESIS has put 'Sustainable Development' as point of departure in all its activities.

AICESIS has always given recognition to the fact that economic, social and environmental dimensions should be addressed together and is committed to the idea that the concept of development should be approached in such a way that it acknowledges that the needs of the present are to be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their nneeds. A life of dignity for all within the planet's limits that reconciles economic prosperity and efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion and environmental responsibility is at the essence of sustainable development.

Today, our societies face many challenges, from youth unemployment to ageing populations, pollution, migration, and climate change. There is an urgent need to make a shift to renewable energy and towards a sustainable economy. We must tackle current challenges and prepare for the future, responding to the pace and complexity of global change and the demands of an increasing global population. To preserve social cohesion, it is essential to heavily invest in our young people, foster inclusive and sustainable growth, tackle inequalities and manage migration. Pursuing responsible fiscal policies and adapting social security systems to today's and future needs, will strengthen the sustainability of our healthcare and pension systems. To preserve our natural capital, which is of utmost importance for a small island economy like Curacao, it is crucial to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient, resource efficient and circular economy. For these challenges to become opportunities for new businesses and new jobs, a strong engagement in research and innovation is needed; which leads me to the main theme of our sessions here in Curaçao: *'Digitalization and its impact on the future of mankind'*.

Digital technologies can play a key role to accelerate access to knowledge and job creation, equality and participation of different groups, institutions accountability, efficiency of science, and new opportunities for innovation in any societal sector. Digital technologies can also contribute to the fulfillment of most Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, because they provide a critical cross-sectoral and cross-cutting underlying infrastructure or technology for practically all sectors involved.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals represents a commitment to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 worldwide, ensuring that no one is left behind. Truth of the matter is, that it is not an easy task to deal with digitalization in a way that all layers of the society reap an equal benefit. Precisely therefore we, as AICESIS, should discuss the need of and elaborate further on the concept of 'digital justice'.

Our motto for these sessions should be that we want that no one is left behind in the digital revolution.

Dignitaries,
Mr. President of AICESIS,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to leave you with that last statement in mind and let's together find a way, a common ground to achieve that objective of 'digital justice'.

Again, thank you very much for being here, and I wish you fruitful discussions these coming two days.

Thank you, masha danki.