COMMITTEE GUIDE

UNCSTD

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TEACHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Contents

Presidents' Letter

Honourable Delegates,

Welcome to this year's CCBMUN and to UNCSTD! Our names are Natalia Malagón and Catalina Borrero, and we are both 12th graders at Colegio Colombo Britanico. It is a great pleasure for us to be your presidents this year. Both of us have been eager participants in the MUN, and this year we both have the opportunity to be presidents of a committee for the second time. As we take on the challenge of presiding over UNCSTD, we will be using the experience and knowledge acquired during the last few years to make this model a remarkable experience for you.

This committee debates current issues regarding science and technology. Taking into account that science and technology have made enormous contributions in all aspects of the world, we should be cautious and responsible with their use. Technology is available to almost all of us, and this makes some people take advantage of that and use it for negative and/or uncontrollable actions. Delegates need to be aware that this committee includes the involvement of political, economic, social, and ethical characteristics that should be taken into account during the debate.

Our goal as presidents is to make sure delegates enjoy the experience of the MUN, especially this committee, as much possible. We want to help you learn about the important current issues of the world and debate upon them to share amazing ideas on how to solve them. Do not be afraid of asking us any questions you may have about the topics or procedures, especially if you are rookies. The presidents are not only the chair but are also your friends and support. If you have any doubts or questions, or simply need some advice, please do not hesitate to contact us through our committee email: uncstd@ccbcali.edu.co.

We look forward to seeing you at CCBMUN!

Yours sincerely,

Catalina and Natalia
UNCSTD Presidents

Simulation Topic: *Global Disparities arising from Investment in Space Technology*

I. History/Context

Human space exploration was initially born out of fear in the face of a new catastrophic threat during the Cold War, which led to The Space Race. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth. One month later, the Soviets launched Sputnik ll, the first satellite to carry a living creature, Laika, the dog. As a prevention measure, in 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was consolidated. President John F. Kennedy had an ambitious goal for the United States: landing the first man on the moon. Since then, there has been rapid development over the past decades in the exploration and use of outer space, not only for military purposes, but also for resource management, environmental monitoring, among others.

Over the last few years, the use of space technology has been considered crucial to the development of countries, especially developing nations, as they are used to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, in Nigeria, the U.K space agency Inmarsat launched a project that centred on healthcare systems, focusing on SDG 3: Good health and well-being, where they are using satellite technology to enhance communication and data collection, as well as disease surveillance and video-based training for the hospital's staff. The following source focuses on showing how satellite technology has boosted food security in developing nations: https://unctad.org/news/satellite-technology-gives-developing-nations-food-security-boost

For most of the 20th century and early 21st century, only governments could afford highly costly space exploration programmes, which became indispensable for sustaining all space economies. Governments played a key role in space exploration as investors, operators, regulators, and consumers for much of the space infrastructure. However, there is an ongoing worry that developed states will have a chokehold on the rest of the world regarding the development of outer space technologies due to their superior economic and technological power.

This theory is known as astropolitik, essentially the theory of realpolitik applied to outer space. The concept suggests that powerful states will ultimately dominate Earth due to their competitive sovereignty, producing a gap and leaving developing countries behind (Bormann & Sheehan, 43).

To avoid this occurrence, the United Nations established the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) in 1958. Signed in 1967, The Outer Space Treaty remains as "the constitution" for outer space, as it has been signed and made official by 105 countries throughout the last decades. The most significant parts of this treaty are articles I, VI, and X. Article I states:

"The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind. Outer space shall be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and there shall be free access to all areas of celestial bodies." (UNOOSA. (n.d).)

The treaty has long formed the basis for international law concerning outer space affairs and continues to be a critical backbone of outer space governance. It has enabled and promoted the creation of new guidelines that offer international framework cooperation, including the creation of the UN's Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS). There has been an initial set of policies emerging from the multi-year working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space. Still, there are emerging questions and ongoing uncertainties about future international cooperation that avoid global disparities in space technology between nations.

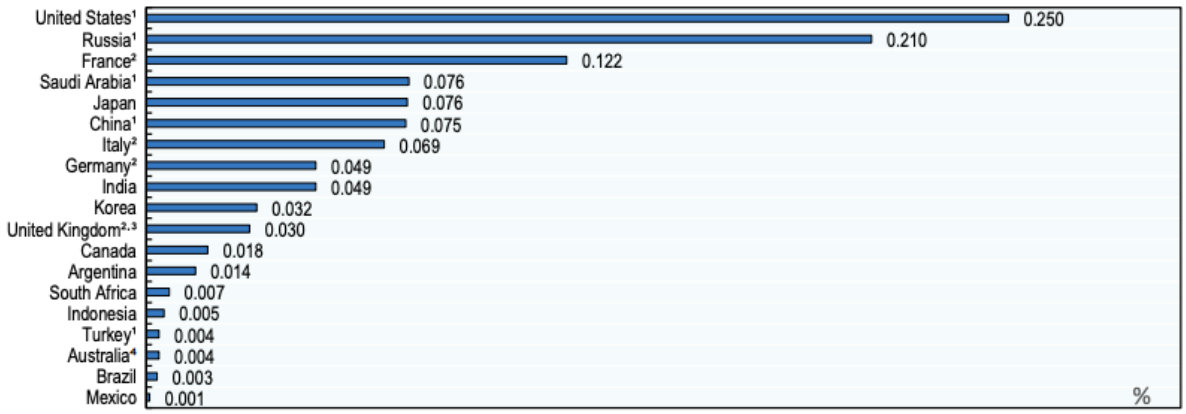
II. Current Situation

During the past few years, the space economy has grown at an unimaginably fast rate. According to the Space Foundation, the global space economy grew US$469 billion in 2021, the fastest annual rate since 2014. Governments have played a critical role in space

technology by funding and investing in space science, research and development (R&D), and manufacturing. (OECD, 2020). When measuring the intensity of space funding, the most useful indicator is the ratio of space budgets to the GDP of each country. In 2020, the median value of space budgets as a shared GDP for G20 economies amounted to 0.05%, France with more than 0.1%, while the United States of America and the Russian Federation invested more than 0.2% of their GDP. Figure 1 shows the government space budget estimates for G20 countries (OECD, 2007).

Figure 1. G20 government space budgets (2020)

As a share of GDP

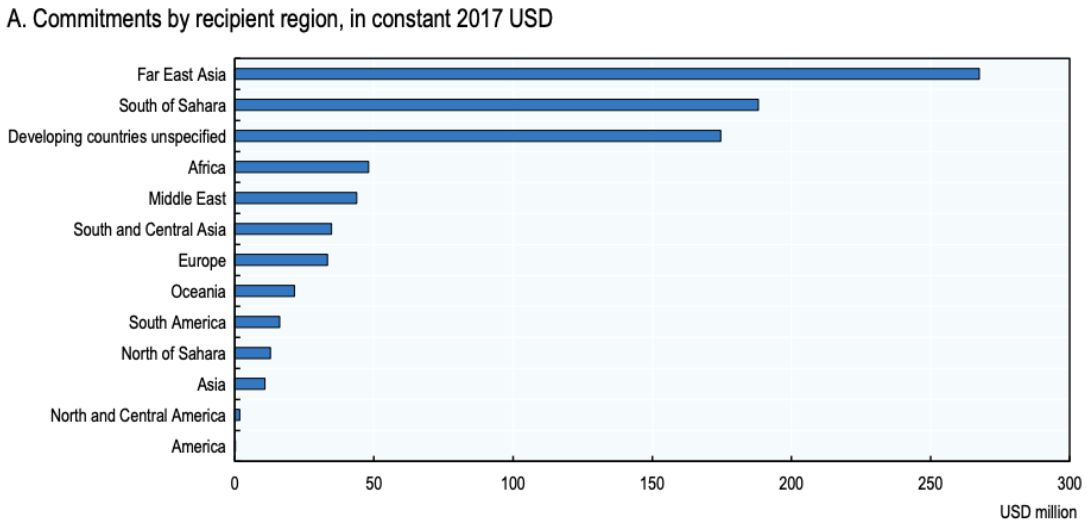


(Image retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/innovation/inno/space-forum/space-economy-for-people-planet-and-prosperity.pdf)

The United States continues to be the biggest spender and investor, having a total of $US60 billion space budget. Nevertheless, India has increased its space spending by almost 30% the past few years. As a rapidly developing state, India is also one of the leading nations in space research and development. In 2017, the Indian Space Agency launched one hundred and four satellites on one rocket, making India one of the most influential space faring states of the century. Additionally, compared to other nations' expenses, India's costs were minimal, launching a satellite for US$74 million, while that same year the United States launched a satellite for US$671 million. The cost difference between both nations is due to the pay differences for the scientists involved, however, it has become a highly successful strategy for providing developing nations access to space technology.

On the other hand, Sub-Saharan nations have decided to rely on foreign investment and support from big space investors in order to close the space gap. For example, China and Nigeria are working towards the development of a Nigerian owned satellite (McGregor, 2020). This partnership will have as an outcome the Nigerian Communications Satellite as a provider for economic communication capabilities for the Sub-Saharan region in Africa. Economically, it will be a tremendous boost for the African continent since many nations in the region cannot afford these technologies. The satellite will be used for gathering data on weather, water, evaluating images from forest fires, among other natural phenomena. Nigerian - Chinese trade relations show that through the investment in satellite technology and interconnecting space, disparities can be alleviated.

The G20 countries have committed about US$650 million to space related Official Development Assistance (ODA) for benefiting developing countries over a period of eighteen years since the year 2000. Space ODA projects focused on a range of different objectives, from monitoring natural resources, to improving food safety and developing economic infrastructures. (Figure 2). For instance, the SERVIR initiative is a partnership between NASA and the USAID for Earth monitoring management in over 30 developing countries, in order to address forestry and agriculture issues in the Lower Mekong River basin; this project was discussed by The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) due to agricultural challenges the region was facing.



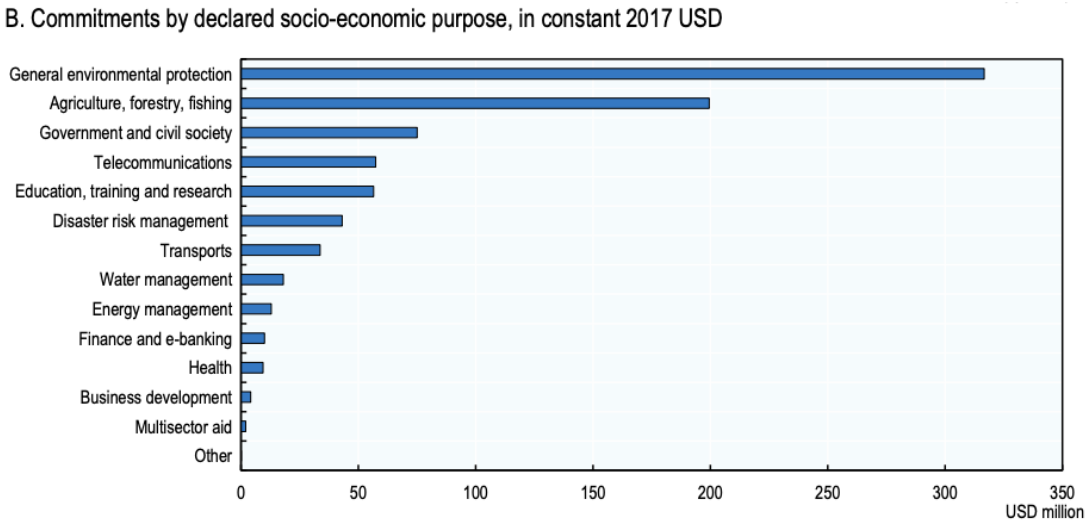


Figure 2. (Images retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/innovation/inno/space-forum/space-economy-for-people-planet-and-prosperity.pdf)

Partnerships between G20 economies and developing nations have proved to be successful throughout the last years, significantly for the Sub Saharan and South Asian countries who lack the space budget, but urgently require the services satellites provide. The African Space Industry has grown these last years, currently being worth seven billion USD, and it has been projected a significant growth of 40% in the next five years. The interconnectivity among nations and friendly partnerships also continues to build the right path to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals projected, which continue to be a top priority to achieve. It is crucial to propose new space policies that continue to enhance partnerships involving G20 economies with the aim of reducing the space gap.

III. Key points of the debate

- Promoting international research and a space cooperation framework
- Maintaining outer space for free exploration and use
- Developing proper economic infrastructures for space economy
- Use of space technology for achieving Sustainable Development Goals
- Alleviating the global space gap

- Encouraging the development of satellites for socio-economic purposes in developing nations

IV. Guiding questions

- Does your country have space exploration programmes? If so, please describe them.
- If not, what is your country's position on space exploration programmes? Does it intend to develop one?
- Does your country have established policies/projects or initiatives aimed to promote international research and collaboration? If so, was it successful?
- What are some challenges your country has confronted when implementing these types of projects and partnerships?
- What are some of the main obstacles developing countries face when investing in space programmes?

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Topic 1: *Implications of Decentralised Finance in Developing Countries*

I. History/Context

When civilizations initially began to develop, trade mechanisms between various people consisted of the exchange of goods. For example, if one group produced grain and another potato, they could organise a mutual exchange of those two goods. This method of trade started to cause issues because the good that one community was willing to trade wasn't what another group needed, or because an individual might have needed a good at a particular time but couldn't trade it for anything. In order to avoid this, the rulers of ancient civilizations began to use rare metal as a central currency to solve this, which first solved the problem of exchange.

For many communities, using gold and coins as a currency became unreliable. As a result, banks created the first paper bills of exchange which were essentially pieces of paper that, at the time, represented the value of a specific amount of gold. Nevertheless, the gold standard was only used until 1914. Today, central banks are in charge of settling on monetary policy, regulating currency flow, and establishing a baseline for interest rates. These objectives seek to preserve low inflation rates, price stability in the value of money, a stable real economy with high employment and economic growth, and financial stability with an effective payment system and the avoidance of financial crises. They are the backbone of a nation’s banking system.

It is crucial to understand how these financial institutions primarily manage the flow of money between people and businesses, making it a highly regulated industry. These financial institutions earn a percentage of every financial and banking transaction made. To access anything from car loans to trading stocks and bonds, regular consumers must deal with several financial intermediaries, meaning there are extremely few paths for consumers to access capital directly without using banks. Throughout the past few years, traditional centralised finance has become unreliable for countries, mainly because of the period needed for transactions to be carried out. This issue affects developing countries the most, as it makes

it physically impossible for its citizens to access a bank. For instance, in East Asia, 290 million people do not have a bank account, and only 18% have access to credit.

In 2009, the first cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, was introduced into circulation. In many ways, it was the very first DeFi application. Decentralised Finance, also known as DeFi, is an emerging financial technology (FinTech) that uses cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology to manage financial transactions between two people, removing intermediaries such as banks (Sharma, 2022). What makes DeFi a game changer in the financial sector is that it allows any individual to have control and visibility of their money, and it opens financial services to anyone regardless of their socioeconomic background, ethnicity, gender, etc. Any person with an internet connection who wants to get involved in the markets can do so without relying on centralised authorities, who may block payments or deny access to anything, making it an approachable, accessible, and fast method. See figure 1 to understand the difference between centralised and decentralised financial systems.

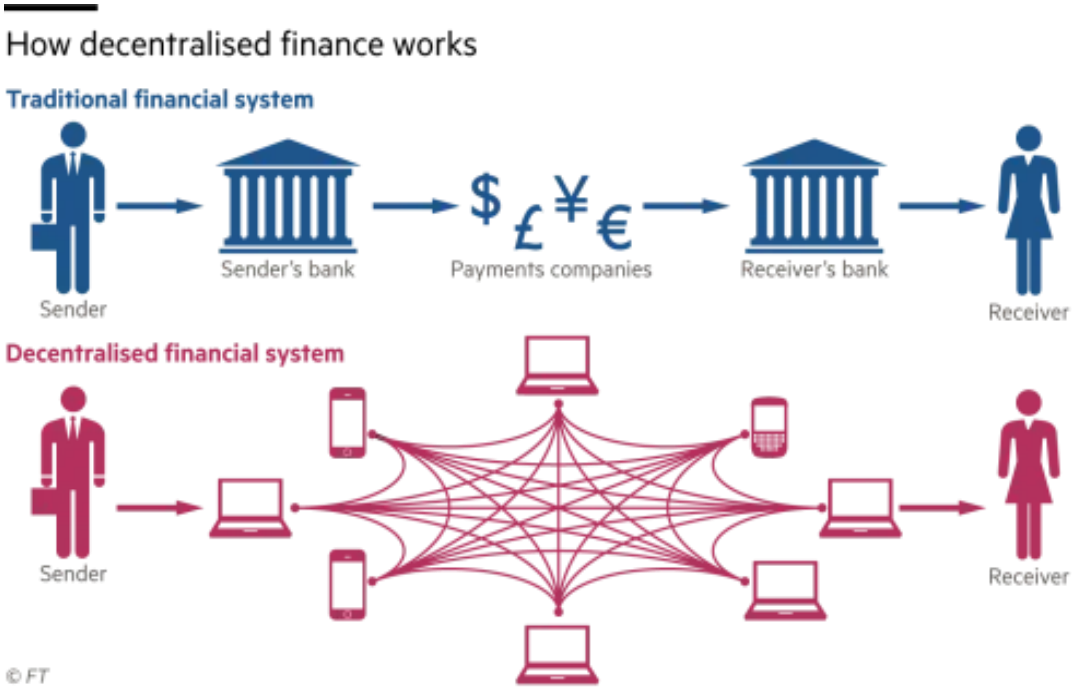

Figure 1. Retrieved from https://davidgerard.co.uk/blockchain/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ft-defi.png

As mentioned before, DeFi works with blockchain technology. In blockchain technology, transactions are recorded in blocks and then verified by other users, so the system is not controlled by a central group, but rather controlled by everyone who owns it. With these

verifiers, the block is closed and encrypted, and then another block is created that contains information about the previous block within it. These blocks are “chained” together through the information in each proceeding block. Information in previous blocks cannot be changed without affecting the following blocks, so there is no way to alter a blockchain. It is an unhackable system. This concept, along with other security protocols, provides the secure nature of this technology. Blockchains guarantee the fidelity and security of a record of data and generate trust without the need for a third party.

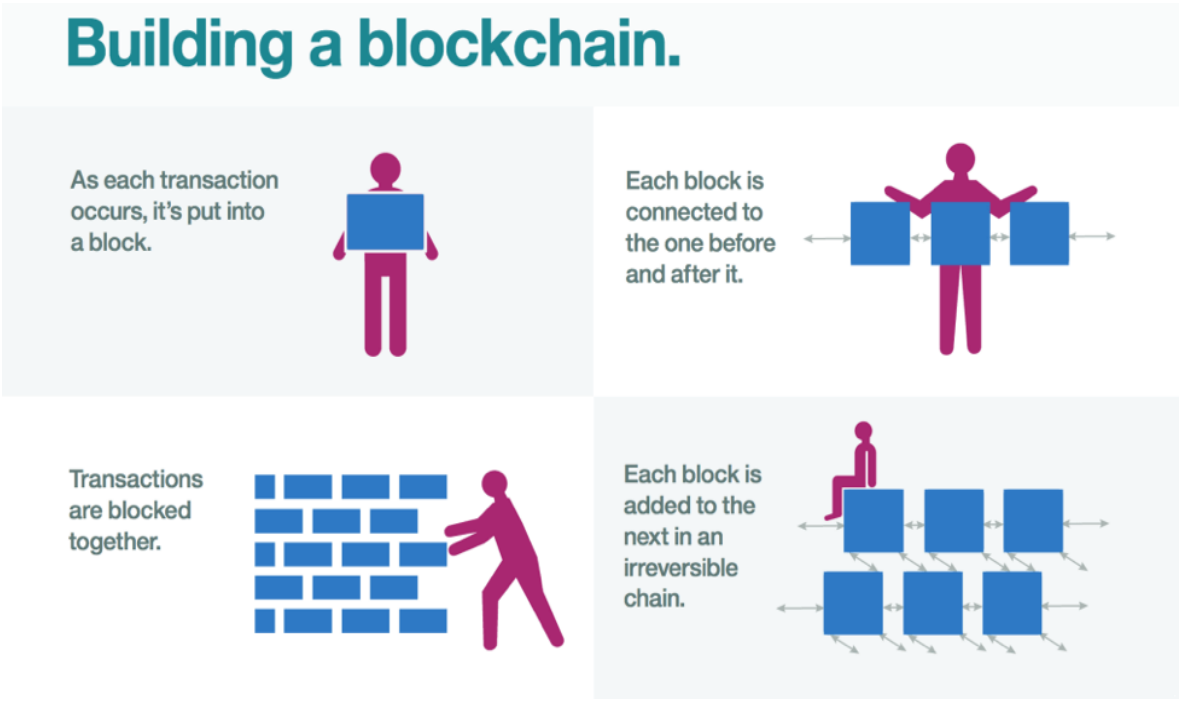

Figure 2. Block chain technology. https://s-pro.io/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/blockchain-build.png

The following links are some useful sources about decentralised finance (DeFi) and blockchain technology for a better understanding of the mechanism:

- https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain.asp
- https://www.investopedia.com/decentralized-finance-defi-5113835#:~:text=What%20Is%20Decentralized%20Finance%20
- https://ethereum.org/en/defi/#what-is-defi

II. Current Situation

According to a 2017 report from The World Bank, over 1.7 billion people do not have access to an account with a bank or mobile money provider in the World (World Bank, 2017). The largest percentage of this statistic is shared between China, where 225 million people do not have a bank account, and India, where 190 million do not have a bank account. Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, and Bangladesh follow the list of countries. The primary cause of this issue is the absence of a banking infrastructure in these nations, which is frequently a result of difficulties with the profitability of its citizens, who are typically people with lower incomes and often come from rural communities. *Figure 3* shows that the most affected regions are South and Southeast Asia, Central Africa, and partly Latin America.

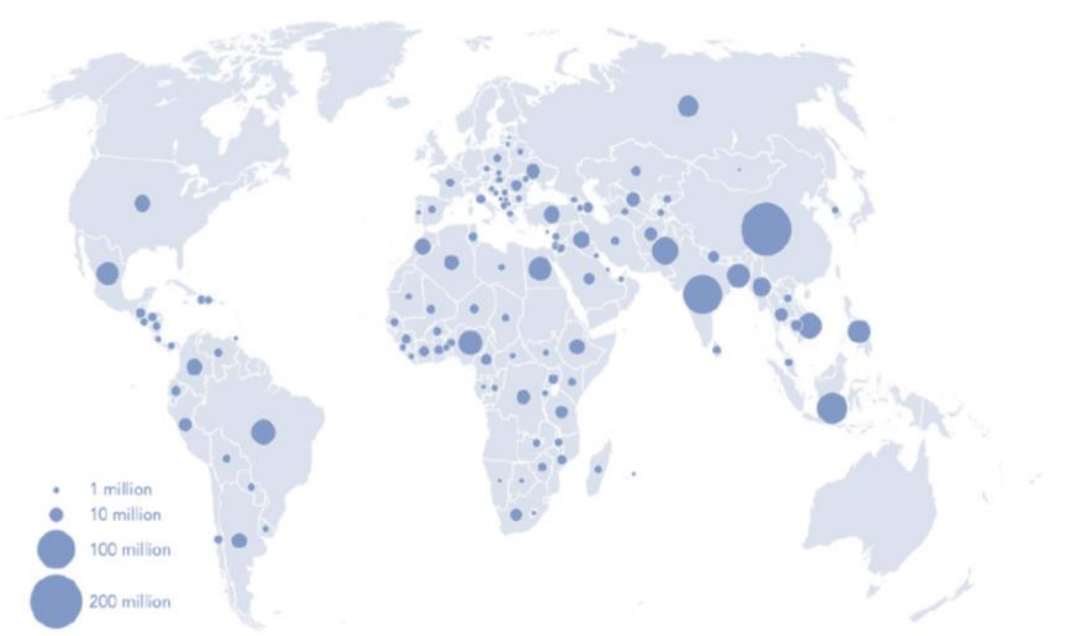

Figure 3. Demirgüç-Kunt et al. (2018). https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/image-5.png

Decentralised Finance has been getting a lot of attention lately as it is considered a potential solution for the current flaws of the traditional financial systems. The advancements in blockchain technology, digital assets, and FinTech that the world is seeing today have made it possible to include more people in the financial system than ever before, especially in developing countries where banking options are limited. In comparison to developed countries who account for 30% of FinTech, developing nations are in less advanced stages by

only using 10%. However, as decentralised finance uses stablecoins (cryptocurrencies whose price is pegged to an external asset, such as gold) it has the potential to offer lower-cost services to excluded communities and drive greater financial inclusion worldwide. With DeFi, the unbanked would start interacting through a network of decentralised platforms and participate more in global and local finance creation opportunities.

In Venezuela, people started to use decentralised finance using the Dash cryptocurrency (not Venezuelan bolivars) as alternative payment method due to the hyperinflation the country is experiencing. The country's economy relies heavily on Dash transfers to function and provide basic necessities to their population. On the other hand, KBank, one of the most important and developed banks in Thailand seeks to expand its presence in Southeast Asia. It has 16 million users on its app and is accountable for 40% of the nation's digital banking transactions. Developing proper decentralised financial institutions in these regions is critical, as they are known for their emerging markets. The Economy Southeast Asia Report 2021, found that the usage of all major digital financial services have increased with an annual growth rate from 9% to 48%.

Even though Africa could be the continent that is the most behind regarding the development of these technologies, there have been countless initiatives. For example, Kenya's Safaricom with Mpesa and Ghana's MoMo are among the leaders in the financial revolution of the continent. Many people in the continent are banking with the Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation, which work on trust and lack of extensive documentation that is required for traditional financial institutions. These institutions provide quick access to monetary resources, although they charge high-interest rates. As a result, the lending process ends up slowing down and lacking accountability, while decentralised finance offers access to microlending and crowdfunding.

Taking into account that most developing countries still lack access to telecommunications digital infrastructures in rural communities, FinTech must play a role in digital transformation, policymakers must provide digital and financial literacy, as well as access to digital infrastructure. Figure 2 demonstrates that connection to the internet is already common at a global level and that the percentage change in internet access has been rising globally (Figure

4). However, there are still continents with low percentages. These figures show that development interventions focusing on FinTech can be beneficial because there is a technology that supports adoption, and the intervention can work on expansion and advancing Internet access. For example, the EU recently launched its main infrastructure project, which promises to improve interconnectivity and provide a huge opportunity for investing in digital infrastructure.

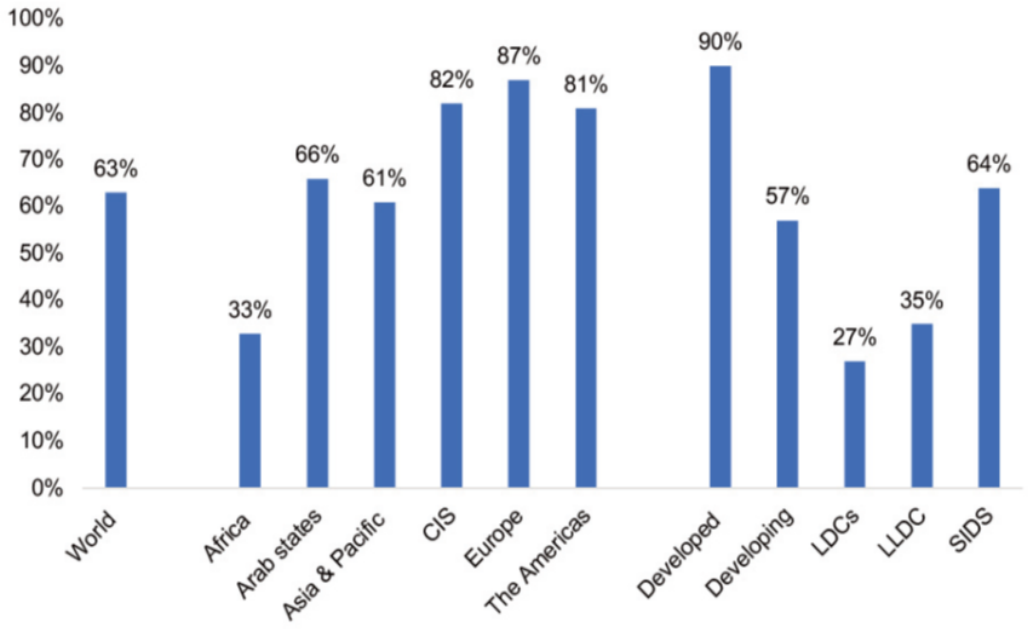

Figure 4. Retrieved from: https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/image-6.png

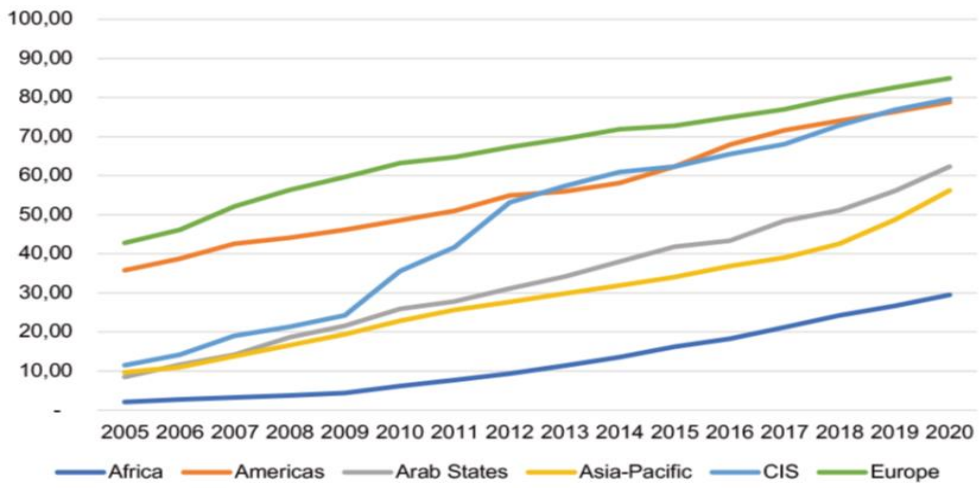

Figure : Retrieved from: https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/image-7.png

Increasing access to cryptocurrency asset markets with decentralised finance will result in greater financial inclusion for developing countries. It is noteworthy to emphasise that one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is to provide access to digital financial services, and DeFi is at the forefront of this frontier. The U.N. notes that inclusion is a vital part of other sustainable development goals, such as reducing inequality, eradicating poverty, ending hunger, and economically empowering women. Thus, DeFi, with its zero-marginal-cost and internet-native services, can assist vulnerable people by allowing access to financial services which can help to achieve the SDG goals if used effectively.

III. Key points of the debate

- Creation of economic infrastructures in developing countries
- Governmental intervention in DeFi
- DeFi's repercussions in International Commerce
- Socioeconomic effects DeFi has on rural communities
- International and regional cooperation for and between developing nations

IV. Guiding questions

1. What is your country's stance on decentralised finance?
2. Is your country currently using decentralised finance? If so, please describe how
3. Has your country adopted fintech?
4. If not, does your country use other technological financial systems?
5. What is the current status of your country's economic infrastructure?
6. Does your country financially aid developing countries to evolve their economic infrastructure?
7. Does your country believe governments should intervene when regulating DeFi in order to protect consumers and small businesses?

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Topic 2: *Neo-colonialism as a Result of the Digital Era*

I. History/Context

Neo-colonialism is "the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies" (Halperin, n.d). Neo-colonialism takes the form of economic imperialism, globalisation, cultural imperialism, and conditional aid to influence or control a developing country instead of the previous colonial methods of direct military control or indirect political control (hegemony). It takes advantage of cultural imperialism, mercantilism, and comparative globalisation, to have control over specific

territories. Developing countries that are neo-colonized do not possess full liberty of the direct influence imposed on the practices of the coloniser country. The following figure shows how European nations distributed the African continent in the form of colonies before World War I.

(Image retrieved from: https://images.twinkl.co.uk/tr/image/upload/t_illustration/illustation/African-Colonies-in-1914---Countries-Europe-First-World-War-History-Secondary.png)

Neo-colonialism does not have defined history, however, there is a clear idea of where it comes from since it matches the clear principles that define colonialism. In 1965, Kwame Nkrumah, who became Ghana's first president, coined the word neo-colonialism to the

influence of the former imperial nations on the ex-colonies in the area of economy, language, culture, and political philosophy. Neo-colonialism was first used to describe the continued reliance of former colonies on other nations after World War II, but its definition quickly expanded to include all situations where the power of developed nations was used to create exploitation similar to colonialism, such as in Latin America. Neo-colonialism has the effect of using foreign wealth for exploitation as opposed to the development of the world's less developed regions. Under neo-colonialism, investment widens rather than narrows the gap between wealthy and developing nations.

(Image retrieved from: https://cemeri.org/art/la-globalizacion-del-neocolonialismo/)

Now, the Information Age—also referred to as the Computer Age, Digital Age, Silicon Age, or New Media Age—is a historical era that started in the middle of the 20th Century and is distinguished by a quick transition from the traditional industry established by the Industrial Revolution to an economy predominantly based on information technology. Different things were gradually invented, but the main period of technology and invention occurred in the 18th Century with the beginning of the industrial revolution, the invention of machines, and the beginning of new forms of development and production.

In recent years, the concepts of ‘digital colonialism’ and ‘data colonialism’ have gained considerable currency, opening new and exciting lines of inquiry into the processes of extraction, processing, commodification and/or exploitation of our digital selves. We recognize that emerging scholarship has not yet stabilised, and that concurrent conceptions of digital colonialism coexist. More specifically, we identify two strands of the literature that

offer different conceptualizations of digital colonisation. A first one compares the ‘digital kingdom’ with a new continent, a new frontier waiting to be explored and exploited, while tech companies could be viewed as modern caravels. As Couldry and Mejias (2019a, p. 337) put it, ‘Data colonialism combines the exploitative practices of historical colonialism with the abstract quantification methods of computing. In other words, as our daily lives and our very bodies increasingly become intertwined with the digital, they become subject to practices of commodification. In this, they draw to a small extent, but explicitly, on Habermas’s (1989) notion of the colonisation of the lifeworld, which they admit ‘is not developed as a theory of colonialism’ (Couldry & Mejias, 2019a, p. 227)

II. Current Situation

Nowadays, capitalism has helped create multinational corporations, which can often be more powerful than some nations’ governments. This new form of neo-colonialism is happening because of globalisation. Due to globalisation and its propagation of technology, a new era of Silicon Valley corporations is starting to take over the digital economy. A clear example of this is South Africa, where Google and Facebook seem to be currently dominating the online advertising industry and are considered to be an existential threat to local media. Uber has captured so much of the traditional taxi industry that drivers have been petrol bombed in the “South Africa taxi Wars”. Similar battles have broken out in Kenya.

Thus, tech companies are expanding their products across the globe, extracting data and profit from users all around the world whilst concentrating power and resources in one country - the US (with China as a big competitor). Low-income nations are overwhelmed by readily available services and technology, but they cannot develop their own industries and products to compete with Western corporations. They are also unable to protect their people or economy from exploitation by large multinationals.

China is working hard to establish itself as a "cyber superpower." Beijing's promotion of the idea of "internet sovereignty," or China's absolute authority to rule the internet within its borders and maintain strict control, is a crucial component of this campaign. In order to

increase China's influence and advance its internet governance model, Chinese enterprises closely cooperate with Chinese state officials to transfer technology to Africa. This contribution argues that the rapid expansion across Africa of Chinese technology companies and their products warrants vigilance. The "China model" of digital governance may by default become the norm in Africa if African governments fail to push their own principles and interests, such as freedom of expression, free enterprise, and the rule of law.

Other African regimes have also commanded internet shutdowns as well as the blocking of websites and social media platforms ahead of crucial democratic occasions like elections and protests, taking a page from China's digital control playbook. There have been reports of social media and internet shutdowns in Chad (2016), Togo (2017), and Cameroon (2018). According to The Financial Times, at least six African governments cut off internet access in the first half of 2019. In Sudan, the internet was cut off in June 2019 as government paramilitary soldiers went on a killing spree in the capital Khartoum, preventing protesters from recording the violence on social media.

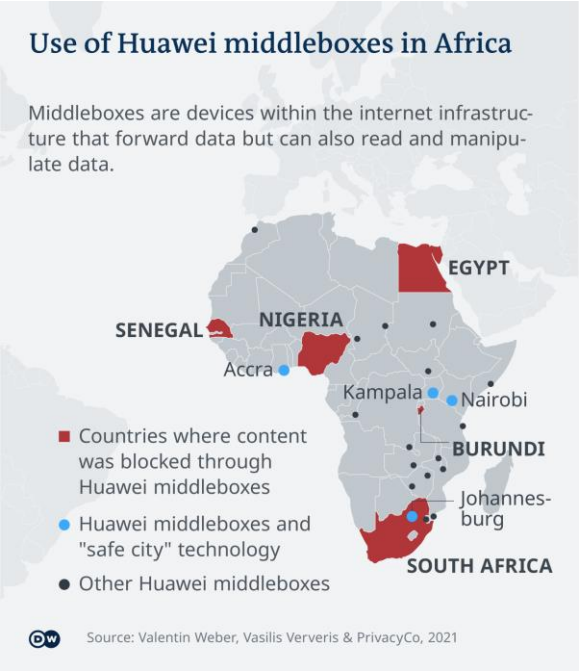

Image retrieved from: https://static.dw.com/image/60664722_7.png

A specialised technical committee on communication and information technology met in October 2019. During the 2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration from the African Union summit held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, acknowledged that achieving digital transformation in Africa requires political commitment at the highest level to align policies and sector regulation as well as involve a massive scaling-up of investment and dedication of resources. The specialised technical committee noted that the harmonisation of legal and regulatory frameworks is a prerequisite for the creation of a common digital single market and that the internet and digital infrastructure are essential components in the development of Africa's digital ecosystem.

III. Key points of the debate

- The power of private digital technology industries in the world
- Violation of sovereignty due to digital neo-colonialism and how that affects each country
- The effect of neo-colonialism on emerging economies
- The effects of censorship technologies on citizens' rights
- Regulation of big tech companies in the world

IV. Guiding questions

1. Does your country have a digital industry?
2. Does your country have any censorship of certain technologies or tech companies (Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc)? If so, why?
3. How has the economy of your country changed with emerging technologies?
4. Have the citizens of your country been affected by foreign technologies or tech companies? If so, how?
5. Has your country's local media been threatened or affected by any tech companies? If so, how?

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