

Pegaso International
Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability: The Role of Technology and Political
Dialogue
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Hon Clifton Grima
Excellencies
Prof Luigia Melillo
Members of the Academia

It is with pleasure that I join you today to address the Pegaso International Conference 2023.

I must commend Rector Prof. Luigia Melillo for her tireless passion in the development of Pegaso International, and in providing the opportunity for students registered with the University.

What seemed like a casual encounter with Prof. Melillo quite some years ago, has developed into a strong collaboration with Pegaso International. We have not only built a meaningful friendship, but now I am so proud that Pegaso International is well-established in Malta and expanding beyond our shores.

Indeed, Pegaso International has realised Malta's potential as a bridge between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean, and beyond.

I commend Pegaso International for creating a global platform for education without borders, where every person may choose to broaden their horizons, and follow their aspirations through online learning, transcending countries, cultures, faith and so many other human-made barriers.

I appreciate the transformative potential of online education and the significant impact it can have on individuals and society.

I consider online education as a key driver of lifelong learning, which is essential for sustainable development. Undoubtedly, it enables people to acquire new skills and knowledge, regardless of their age or geographic location.

Yet, we must ensure that there is equitable access to technological tools and resources, that can effectively make online learning possible.

We know that the existing unfortunate gap between individuals, communities, and countries in terms of access to, and use, of digital technologies, does not only hinder the quality of life of an individual, but also risks the developmental growth of communities and whole societies.

We must ensure that we effectively address the digital divide, which encompasses disparities in infrastructure, in affordability, in digital literacy, and in the availability of relevant content.

As a global community, we must take the necessary steps to address the digital divide globally. We must ensure that:

Governments and organisations invest in building and expanding internet infrastructure, particularly in poorer underserved areas. This includes improving connectivity, increasing broadband penetration, and deploying mobile networks.

We must reduce the cost of internet access and digital devices. Strategies may involve promoting competition among internet service providers, subsidising connectivity for low-income individuals, and encouraging the production of affordable devices.

We must provide training programs and resources to enhance digital literacy and skills. This is the only way to empower individuals to use digital technologies, access online information and education, and engage in online activities effectively and confidently.

It is time for international collaboration between governments, NGOs, private sector entities, and international organizations to help leverage resources, share best practices, and coordinate efforts to bridge the digital divide on a global scale.

This concerning issue of the digital divide and poverty, is after all a violation of children's human right to education.

Governments are responsible to develop policies and regulations that promote digital inclusion, protect consumer rights, and encourage investment in digital infrastructure.

Sustainable efforts must be undertaken with a focus on equitable access, inclusion, and long-term solutions to ensure that the benefits of digital technologies are universally accessible to all.

I am convinced that by creating synergy between technology and innovation, quality education may truly become accessible to all, regardless of people's background or circumstances.

Only then can learning opportunities and education be inclusive, leaving no one behind.

In conclusion, I believe that online education has a crucial role to play in sustaining economic growth, social wellbeing, and environmental friendly communities.

I would like to thank Pegaso International for their contribution to this field of learning, and I encourage us all to continue striving to ensure that everyone has access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

I wish you all a successful conference.