Press Release

New Digital Technologies Like Internet of Things Can Help India Meet SDG Goals Faster

People and community empowerment possible only if right information is accessible

New Delhi, December 16, 2016: The final day of the fifth edition of the **International Conference on Digital Libraries (ICDL)** organised here by **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** focused on the development of sustainable communities and the role of technologies such as the 'Internet of Things' in ensuring that India meets its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It placed the focus on addressing the challenge of providing communities access to an increasingly large volume of information available online today. People who have access to this information must learn to use it effectively as well and here knowledge centres such as libraries can help ensure communities are able to prepare themselves better.

Dr Ajay Mathur, Director-General, TERI, underlining the importance of establishing digital libraries, said, "Digital libraries sit on a knowledge backbone and can spur efforts to create better livelihoods. This is true especially in India, where broadband connectivity and curated guidance is limited. Accelerated learning to access the digital world, accompanied by strong digital capabilities in our libraries, is now an essential task."

In the context of the SDGs, this community involvement puts the people at the centre of the development agenda and empowers them to shape their own future. To this end, READIndia has partnered with rural communities in eight states across India to conduct training, skill development and educational libraries, where the communities are seen as equal partners in the management of these centres.

Ms Geeta Malhotra, Country Director, READIndia, speaking during a plenary session titled, '*Role of Information in meeting SDGs'*, said**,** "The correct information can help in building capacities of a community, and in bridging the gap between skills and employability. Only through information can we have social and economic inclusion."

Ms Amarjeet Kaur, Former Director, National Library Board, Singapore, who spoke at length about how libraries could help bridge the digital divide and provide equal opportunities for learning, said, "Libraries can be safe places to expand knowledge and achieve ambitions. Access to digital information will allow communities to reach out to the world at large and help to improve their lives."

The day's other important session centred on how a future of networked and interconnected devices could help us move towards a sustainable reality. With the proliferation of internet connectivity, predictive analysis and artificial intelligence, a huge volume of raw data is being generated by the various devices we use. Smart devices make it easier to manage scarce resources such as water or gas, where sensors would alert to leaks. The need for businesses to keep IOT as the centre of their strategy is clear in an outcome-driven economy, especially seeing how mobility can shrink the gap between occurrence of problems and solutions.

Mr Kiran Karnik, Chair, Oxfam, India; Chairman, Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology – Delhi; and President, India Habitat Centre; highlighted the fact that information and data was the biggest natural resource of this century which will help create wealth for nations.

Mr Ajay Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, delivering the valedictory address, said, "Technology is enabling digital transformation and the co-creation of new knowledge. It can cut out the overheads and minimise the time delays in delivering last mile services to even the most impoverished person and welcome them to the digital fold."

Notable speakers and participants included **Mr Michael Seadle**, Professor, University of Berlin, German; **Mr Ashok Chawla**, Chairman, TERI; **Mr Gobinda Chowdhury**, Professor, Northumbria University, UK; **Mr Al Amin Yusuf**, Advisor, UNESCO India; **Mr Yashvir Singh**, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India; **Ms Neena Pahuja**, Director-General, ERNET; **Mr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman**, Research Director, IBM Reseach; **Mr Rajat Kathuria**, Director, ICRIER; **Mr Lovneesh Chanana**, Vice President, Government Relations, SAP India, among others.

A total of 120 speakers from 22 countries has participated in more than 30 sessions during the summit.
The conference saw a vibrant mix of academic papers, practitioner presentations, seminars, keynotes, discussions, workshops, and exhibitions by national and international conference delegates on a range of themes and subjects like innovation and knowledge management, social media and analytics, Big Data, analytics and artificial intelligence, new digital technologies like cloud computing and the Internet of Things, among others.

About ICDL
The journey of ICDL began in 2004 with financial and intellectual support from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Several Digital Library (DL) luminaries came forward and joined hands with TERI to make this event a grand success. The first conference was inaugurated by late Hon'ble Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the then President of India. Seeing overwhelming responses from all corners — government, librarians, and publishers - ICDL was repeated in 2006, 2010 and 2013.
Download the ICDL mobile app from Play Store to remain updated on the conference details. [ICDL2016 app](#)

About TERI
The Energy and Resources Institute is an independent, not-for-profit, research institute focused on energy, environment, and sustainable development and devoted to efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. Since its inception in 1974, TERI has emerged as an institution of excellence for its path-breaking research, and is a global brand widely respected by political leaders, policy makers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

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