Concept Note
THE COMMON GOOD IN THE DIGITAL AGE
Vatican City State
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Recent developments in the area of digital technologies, especially concerning artificial intelligence have generated a wide debate about the social, ethical and political implications of these changes. Many international organizations, professional groups and governments are promoting reflection on these changes with a view to ensuring that they serve the good of all human beings.

Acknowledging the importance of these issues, and based on Pope Francis' encouragement to find new ways of dialoguing about how we are shaping the future of our planet (*Laudato Si'*, 14), the *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development* (DPIHD) and the *Pontifical Council for Culture* (PCC) will organise a seminar of experts to foster an in-depth debate on the topic of the common good in the digital age.

"Humanity has entered a new era in which our technical prowess has brought us to a crossroads" (*Laudato Si'*, 102). On the one hand, "we are beneficiaries of two centuries of enormous waves of change", the outcome of which has triggered a new digital era which has countless benefits for humanity (*Laudato Si'*, 102). On the other hand, however, the power of technology is often associated with financial and economic powers. Those who hold this increasing and overwhelming power over humanity and nature are not necessarily "trained to use power well" (*Laudato Si'*, 105).

In general, the "immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility [and] values", nor by the development of human conscience on anthropological freedom and limits (*Laudato Si'*, 105). Moreover, "humanity has taken up technology and its development according to an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm" (*Laudato Si'*, 106): one that exalts the individual and his/her freedom disconnected from the social and natural relations that constitutes the subject, and one that responds to the myth of unlimited progress. This "technological paradigm has become so dominant" that it tends to "absorb everything into it", conditioning and shaping our lifestyles (*Laudato Si'*, 108).

In order to address these concerns and to discern how to best promote the common good in the current digital age, the seminar will be held in the light of the "culture of encounter" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 220). Concretely, it will do so by bringing together experts from a variety of backgrounds – science, technology, government and regulation, economics, philosophy and theology, social science – to share their insights and enter into dialogue with each other with a view to developing a truly comprehensive inclusive understanding of the implications of technological developments. Given the globalised nature of the research and the involvement of actors coming from very different ethical and cultural traditions, a priority of the seminar will be to explore if it is possible to establish some levels of consensus and to identify some criteria which might orientate a shared response to the key social and ethical challenges.