

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025

October 28-30, 2025
Clermont-Ferrand, France

AGENDA BOOKLET

INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

SOCIAL IMPACTS AND
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

In partnership with



GDC 2025 presents

6

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14

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KEYNOTES

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CULTURAL
ACTIVITIES

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This booklet includes the schedule, session topics, workshops, award ceremonies, cultural activities, and networking opportunities. Registered participants can use the Cvent app to view the agenda and register for workshops and parallel sessions. Virtual participants can access all sessions (except workshops) through Cvent.

For those who have not registered, all sessions apart from workshops will be streamed on GDN's YouTube Channel.

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CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Venue: Hall 32 Clermont-Ferrand unless otherwise specified

All timings are in Central European Time (CET)

08:30 - 09:00

Registration

09:00 - 09:30

Welcome Session

Includes Video Message by Nandan Nilekani: Founding Chairman, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

09:30 - 11:00

Plenary Session 1

Hosted by ADB

Beyond Connectivity: Building Inclusive and Sustainable Digital Economies

11:00 - 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 - 13:00

Plenary Session 2

The Twin Transitions: Aligning Digitalisation with Green Agendas for Sustainable Development

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch

14:00 - 15:30

Workshops and GDAC ORD Finals (Slot 1)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Global Development Awards Competition Finals** - Japanese Awards for Outstanding Research on Development
- **Workshop by GlobalDev** - Storytelling
- **Workshop by IHEDD-FERDI and IMF** - Foresight Thinking on The Use of AI in Public Administrations - Part 1 (Participants must also attend Part 2 on Day 3)
- **Workshop by Impact Dragonfly** - Bridging the Digital Divide: Systems Thinking for Equity and Governance
- **Workshop by Yuliya Morenets** - Skills and Mindsets Driving Youth Access to Global Digital Leadership

15:30 - 16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:30

Workshops and Parallel Sessions (Slot 2)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Workshop by GlobalDev** - Communiquer plus efficacement sa recherche - Écrire pour les décideurs
- **Workshop by Impact Dragonfly** - Generative AI for Development Professionals: Critical Literacy and Practical Applications
- **Workshop Telep Network** - Centering Community Power in Digital Development: A Feminist Philanthropy Approach
- **Workshop by Australian Catholic University** - Building Digital Bridges through Inclusive Co-creation
- **Parallel Session by FERDI and CERDI** - Fiscal Policy for the Digital and Telecoms Sector in Developing Nations: Driving Innovation and Revenue

18:00 - 18:30

Keynote: Torbjorn Fredriksson

Head E-commerce and Digital Economy Branch, UNCTAD

18:30 - 19:30

Theatrical Performance by Le cri des Ogres

Comedy about the digital transition, the use of AI in art and culture, and particularly in theatre. Small bites and soft drinks will be provided.

09:00 - 09:30

Introductory Session

Recap of Day 1 by GDN President followed by
Scaling Innovation through Evidence - UNICEF's Innovation MEL Toolbox

09:30 - 11:00

Plenary Session 3

Artificial Intelligence and the State: Shaping Governance and Development in LMICs

11:00 - 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 - 13:00

Plenary Session 4

Digital Finance for All? Innovations, Risks, and Regulation in LMICs

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch

14:00 - 15:30

Parallel Sessions, Workshops and GDAC MIDP Finals (Slot 1)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Global Development Awards Competition Finals** - Japanese Awards for Most Innovative Development Project
- **Parallel Session by UNICEF** - From Pilot to Scale: Proving What Works, Improving What Matters
- **Workshop by IMF** - Cryptos - Opportunities, Risks, and Policy Responses
- **Workshop by 60 million girls Foundation** - Digital Offline Learning for Remote Communities - 10 Years of Field Experience Unplugged!
- **Workshop by University of Applied Science Ludwigsburg (DE)** - The Use of Social Media in the Recruitment and Preparation of Migrant Workers

15:30 - 16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:30

Workshops and Parallel Sessions (Slot 2)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Workshop by OECD** - Mission-Oriented Innovation to Close Digital Divides
- **Workshop by GlobalDev** - How to Write an Article
- **Parallel Session by GDN** - Research Systems Strengthening and Digitalisation
- **Parallel Session by FERDI** - DPI for the Poor: Opportunities and Challenges
- **CFP Session Supported by ADB** - The Digital Economy: Transforming Firms, Trade, and Labour

18:00 - 18:30

Keynote: Margus Magi

Digital Governance Expert,
Knowledge Hub Digital

20:00 - 21:30

Short Film Screening at Salle Conchon*

In partnership with La Jetée

Exploring the impacts of digital technology on societies (human/robot relationships, use of AI, digital footprint in daily life, and the pitfalls of internet use)
Small bites and soft drinks will be provided.

* Registration required | Limited spots available

09:15 - 09:30

Introduction and Recap

Recap of Day 2 by GDN President

09:30 - 11:00

Plenary Session 5

Digital Sovereignty or Digital Imperialism? Power and Control in Our Digital Future

11:00 - 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 - 13:00

Plenary Session 6

Beyond Access: Achieving True Digital Equity and Inclusion for All
Video-Message from Dima Al-Khatib, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch

14:00 - 15:30

Workshops and GDAC MIDP Finals (Slot 1)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Workshop by IDS** - Digital Public Infrastructure and Inclusive State Capacity: Tax as a Use Case
- **Workshop by GDN** - Impact of Digitalisation for Transforming Research systems
- **Parallel Session by ESMT Berlin GmbH** - Alternative Data for Credit Scoring: Unlocking SME Financing in the Digital Age
- **Parallel Session by Druk Gyalpo's Institute** - Staying Human in a Digital Age: Technology, Ethics, and the Future of Learning
- **CFP Session Supported by ADB** - Digital Governance for Inclusive Development

15:30 - 16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:30

Workshops and Parallel Sessions (Slot 2)

These sessions will run in parallel, and participants can select the session they wish to join beforehand.

- **Workshop by GlobalDev** - Creating Infographics and Data Visualisation
- **Workshop by IHEDD-FERDI and IMF** - Foresight Thinking on The Use of AI in Public Administrations - Culmination and Presentations - Part 2 (Participants must also attend Part 1 on Day 1)
- **Parallel Session by GDN and SANEM** - Digital Transformation and Financial Inclusion in the Developing South
- **Parallel Session by ERF, AFD and GDN** - Rethinking Research for Development in MENA: Toward Open, Networked, and Equitable Innovation
- **CFP Session Supported by ADB** - Technology, Finance, and Resilience in Key Sectors

18:00 - 18:30

Keynote: Nenna Nwakanma (video)

Nenna Nwakanma, Global AI Ambassador, Health AI

18:30 - 19:00

Award Ceremony

19:00 - 19:30

Closing Ceremony at Clermont-Ferrand City Hall

Plenary Sessions

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

PLENARY SESSION 1 (HOSTED BY ADB)

9:30 – 11:00

BEYOND CONNECTIVITY: BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL ECONOMIES

Hosted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this opening plenary sets the stage for the conference by moving the conversation beyond connectivity to focus on the quality and equity of economic participation in the digital age. The session will critically assess whether the new digital economy is fostering sustainable local entrepreneurship and decent work, or creating new forms of dependency, precarious labor, and market concentration, while also considering the ethical implications and dangers of data exploitation.

Panelists

- Moderator: Jean Louis Arcand – President, GDN
- Albert Park – Chief Spokesperson, ADB
- Arifah Sharifuddin – Director, Tech for Good Institute
- Christopher Hoffman – Founder and CEO, Humanity Link
- Johannes Jutting – Executive Head, PARIS21 Secretariat, OECD and Honorary Professor, University of Passau

PLENARY SESSION 2

11:30 – 13:00

THE TWIN TRANSITIONS: ALIGNING DIGITALISATION WITH GREEN AGENDAS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This plenary explores the critical nexus between digital transformation and environmental sustainability. It will move beyond a simple "tech for good" narrative to confront the trade-offs and policy coherence required to ensure that digitalisation accelerates, rather than undermines, environmental goals, particularly in the context of achieving a just transition.

Panelists

- Moderator: Jean Clarisse Carlos – Project Development Officer, Philippine Institute for Development Studies
- Akkanut Wantanasombut – Head, Research Group in Innovation for Social Solidarity and Inclusive Economy, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University Thailand
- Cristina Stefan – Head of Advisory, Center for Disaster Protection
- Johanna Choumert Nkolo – Independent Consultant | Research Fellow at CERDI
- Murali Krishna Gumma – Cluster Leader – Geospatial and Big Data Sciences and Principal Scientist, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

PLENARY SESSION 3

9:30 – 11:00

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE STATE: SHAPING GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN LMICS

This plenary explores how AI adoption is reshaping governance and development in low- and middle-income countries, from service delivery and tax collection to cybersecurity. It will debate the tensions between efficiency, equity, security, and rights, and examine the safeguards and capacities needed for a fair, effective, and less dependent “algorithmic state”.

Panelists

- Moderator: Tim Unwin – Professor, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Ashley Siagian – Fellow, APEC Policy Support Unit
- Johannes Jutting – Executive Head, PARIS21 Secretariat, OECD and Honorary Professor, University of Passau
- Lucie Chateau – Inclusive AI Lab
- RENTALA Chandrashekhar – Centre for the Digital Future, Former President NASSCOM
- Tiago C. Peixoto – Digital Government/GovTech Coordinator for the Western Balkans and the EU, World Bank

PLENARY SESSION 4

11:30 – 13:00

DIGITAL FINANCE FOR ALL? INNOVATIONS, RISKS, AND REGULATION IN LMICS

This plenary examines the evolution of digital financial services in developing countries, from mobile money to AI-driven credit scoring, digital insurance, remittances, and DeFi. Moving beyond access to focus on true financial health, it will question whether easy digital loans equate to progress and how vulnerable consumers can be protected in complex markets. Central bankers, regulators, fintech innovators, banks, and consumer advocates will debate how to balance innovation with systemic risk and user well-being.

Panelists

- Moderator: Simone Bertoli – Director, CERDI
- Esselina Macome – CEO, Financial Sector Deepening Mozambique
- Friederike Rühmann – Senior Financial Sector Specialist, The World Bank
- Hideyuki Shiozawa – Director of the Division of Island Nations, Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- Jean Clarisse Carlos – Project Development Officer, Philippine Institute for Development Studies
- Xavier Lavayssiere – Digital Finance Expert, IMF

DAY 3: Thursday, October 30, 2025

PLENARY SESSION 5

9:30 – 11:00

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY OR DIGITAL IMPERIALISM? POWER AND CONTROL IN OUR DIGITAL FUTURE

This plenary explores power in the digital age—who controls infrastructure and data, from submarine cables to cloud systems, geopolitics, and platform dominance. It will debate whether developing nations are gaining digital sovereignty or facing new dependencies, with insights from trade negotiators, policy experts, Big Tech, and decentralisation advocates.

Panelists

- Moderator: Michael Best – Executive Director, Institute for People and Technology
- Devon Dublin – Research Fellow of the Division of Island Nations, Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- Htaike Htaike Aung – Myanmar Internet Project
- Mathieu Ouimet – General Director, International Francophone Network for Scientific Advice
- Mauro Santaniello – Associate Professor, Political Science, University of Salerno
- Nenna Nwakanma – Global AI Ambassador, HealthAI

PLENARY SESSION 6

11:30 – 13:00

BEYOND ACCESS: ACHIEVING TRUE DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION FOR ALL

This closing plenary will bring together key discussions to focus on genuine digital equity. Moving beyond internet access, it will address meaningful use, literacy, affordability, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the challenges faced by women, girls, and rural communities. With activists, ministers, disability advocates, and researchers, the session will set a forward-looking agenda to keep the human dimension at the heart of digital transformation. This session includes a video message by Dima Al-Khatib – Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Panelists

- Moderator: Francesco Obino, Director, Research and Programmes, GDN
- Emin Mustafayev – Head of the Foreign Economic Relations Department, Economic Scientific Research Institute (ESRI)
- Helga Cuellar-Marchelli – Director, FUSADES (la Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social)
- Michael Onyango – Agenda Setter, 4gotten Bottomillions (4BM)
- Njideka Harry – Founder, Youth for Technology Foundation Global VP/Leadership Group, Ashoka)

Parallel Sessions

Multiple sessions and workshops take place simultaneously in each slot. Please register in advance.

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Slot 1 (14:00 - 15:30)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS COMPETITION (GDAC) OUTSTANDING RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENT (ORD) FINALS

The GDAC Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development supports impactful research in low- and middle-income countries. Three finalists will pitch to a high-level jury for grants of US\$30,000, US\$20,000, and US\$10,000, along with mentorship from a leading academic. This year's finalists are Anthonio Oladimeji Gabriel (Nigeria) on women's nutritional health equity, Asogwa Chisom Nneoma (Nigeria) on interpretable machine learning for stroke prediction, and Nissily Mushani (Malawi) on climate-resilient mHealth systems for antenatal care.

Moderator: Francesco Obino - Director of Research and Programmes, GDN

Jury:

- Yoichi Mine - Executive Director, JICA Ogata Sakako Research Institute for Peace and Development
- Kiran Raj Pandey - Executive Director, Health AI for All Network (HAINet)
- Jean-Louis Arcand - President, GDN
- Johanna Choumert Nkolo - Independent Consultant | Research Fellow, CERDI

Finalists:

- Anthonio Oladimeji Gabriel - Machine Learning and AI Expert, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Asogwa Chisom Nneoma - Assistant Lecturer, Enugu State Polytechnic, Nigeria
- Nissily Mushani - PhD Candidate, Maseno University, Kenya

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

FERDI AND CERDI - DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILISATION AND DIGITALISATION

This session examines how to optimally tax digital and telecom innovation in developing countries, balancing revenue needs with technology adoption. Building on recent research in Africa, it will consider the level, type (ad valorem vs. ad quantum, direct vs. indirect), and timing of taxation. The discussion will highlight the equity challenges for low-income countries in raising fair revenue from a concentrated, profitable sector, bringing together researchers, policymakers, NGOs, and international organisations.

Moderator: Grégoire Rota-Graziosi – Professor in Economics, CERDI-UCA-CNRS and FERDI

Mario Mansour – Division Chief, Tax Policy, IMF, Fiscal Affairs Department

Alou Adessé Dama – Research Officer, CERDI

Abdel-Malek Riad – International Development, Ascoria

DAY 2: Wednesday, October 29, 2025

INTRODUCTORY SESSION BEFORE PLENARY 3

9:00 – 9:30

SCALING INNOVATION THROUGH EVIDENCE - UNICEF'S INNOVATION MEL TOOLBOX

Many innovations work in pilots but fail to scale due to a lack of tools to track what matters and when. UNICEF's Innovation MEL Toolbox offers resources, cheat sheets, and a tool repository to help prove and improve solutions from ideation to scale. This session provides a sneak peek ahead of the official launch, giving participants practical guidance to generate evidence and scale innovations for global impact. Facilitated by –

- Luna Kim – Innovation Manager, UNICEF
- Shenshen Hu – Innovation Monitoring & Evaluation Consultant, UNICEF

Slot 1 (14:00 – 15:30)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS COMPETITION (GDAC) MOST INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (MIDP) FINALS

The GDAC Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project honours NGOs and CSOs driving impact for marginalised communities. Finalists will compete for US\$125,000 in grants and Technical Advisor support. They are Dreamlopmments Foundation, Thailand with The Migrant Fund for migrant health, Greenstar Social Marketing, Pakistan with a digital platform for reproductive self-care, and Instituto de Inteligência Artificial na Saúde, Brazil with NoHarm.ai for patient safety.

Moderator: Francesco Obino – Director, Research and Programmes, GDN

Jury:

- Julie Biau – Operations Officer, World Bank
- Jean-Louis Arcand – President, GDN
- Kiran Raj Pandey – Executive Director, Health AI for All Network (HAINet)
- Hideyuki Shiozawa – Director, Division of Island Nations, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Finalists

- Henrique Dias – Data Scientist, NoHarm.ai, Brazil
- Sana Durvesh – Deputy General Manager, Program, Greenstar Social Marketing Pakistan Guarantee Limited
- Nicolas Durier – Founder and President, Dreamlopmments Foundation, Thailand

UNICEF - FROM PILOT TO SCALE: PROVING WHAT WORKS, IMPROVING WHAT MATTERS

This interactive session launches UNICEF's Innovation MEL Toolbox, guiding innovators on measuring and improving solutions from pilot to scale. Using UNICEF's 5D Innovation Framework, participants will explore challenges, opportunities, and the role of evidence in scaling impactful solutions, with practical takeaways.

- Moderator: Luna Kim – Innovation Manager, UNICEF
- Shenshen Hu – Innovation Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, UNICEF
- Christopher Hoffman – Founder and CEO, Humanity Link
- Francesco Obino – Director, Research and Programmes, GDN

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

GDN - RESEARCH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING AND DIGITALISATION

This panel examines how digitalisation is transforming research systems and their role in policy-making. Building on GDN's Doing Research studies, researchers, intermediaries and donors will discuss three key questions: How are research practices changing? How should priorities and frameworks adapt to digital-driven social transformations? And how do these shifts reshape the research-policy relationship?

- Moderator: Anna Niang – Programme Manager, Savoirs Sahel, GDN
- Moderator: Daniele Cantini – Fellow, Knowledge Systems, GDN
- Rodrigue Castro Gbedomon (virtual) – Director of Research, ACED Africa
- Helga Cuellar Marchelli – Director, Research Department, FUSADES
- Ei Shwe Sin Phy – Research Fellow, Center for Arakan Studies
- Abdelwahab Benhafaiedh (Virtual) – Founding Director, Applied Social Science Forum

FERDI - DPI FOR THE POOR: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

This panel explores how Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) can expand access to essential services and foster economic, social, financial, and political inclusion, while addressing the risks of poorly designed systems that may worsen inequalities. Drawing on experiences with P2G, B2G, and B2P digitalisation, it will discuss how DPI can be effectively built and governed to ensure genuine digital inclusion.

- Moderator: Joël Cariolle – Research Officer, FERDI
- Jenny Aker (Virtual) – Professor of Development Economics, Cornell University
- Naledi Magowe – Co-Founder and CMO, Brastorne
- Mélanie Keita – Co-Founder and CEO, Melanin Kapital
- Elodie Gauthier – Researcher, Orange Innov
- David Manser – Senior Coordinator, United Nations ITU

CFP SESSION (SUPPORTED BY ADB)

THE DIGITAL ECONOMY: TRANSFORMING FIRMS, TRADE, AND LABOR

Dive into the engine room of digital transformation. This session features research selected from the call for papers, exploring how digitalization is reshaping economies—from firm evolution and global trade shifts to labor market impacts like the gig economy and new skill demands. Presenters will spark a debate on harnessing this transformation for inclusive growth, grounded in evidence from the Global South.

Moderator: Pierre Biscaye – Chaire de Professeur Junior, CERDI

Authors:

- Hailu Adugna Ayano – Assistant Professor, Addis Ababa University, Department of Economics
- Jayati Chatterjee – PhD Research Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology Madras
- Yannick Djoumessi – Agriculture Economist, World Bank
- Yasser Boina – PhD Student, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal
- Sayan Chakravarty – UGC-NET Junior Research Fellow, Jadavpur University

DAY 3: Thursday, October 30, 2025

Slot 1 (14:00 - 15:30)

ESMT BERLIN GMBH - ALTERNATIVE DATA FOR CREDIT SCORING: UNLOCKING SME FINANCING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

SMEs in developing economies often struggle to access credit due to limited financial histories. This session explores how digital services generate alternative data that, combined with machine learning, can improve credit assessments and enable more inclusive financing. Practitioners, policymakers, and researchers will discuss real-world applications, regulatory and ethical considerations, and the potential for responsible innovation to support SDGs on reducing inequality and boosting economic resilience.

- Moderator: Christophe Angely – Special Advisor, FERDI
- Florian Léon – Research Officer, FERDI
- Esselina Macome – CEO, Financial Sector Deepening Moçambique
- Bernardo Aparicio (Virtual) – CEO, Standard Bank Mozambique
- Catalina Stefanescu-Cuntze – Professor, ESMT Berlin

DRUK GYALPO'S INSTITUTE - STAYING HUMAN IN A DIGITAL AGE: TECHNOLOGY, ETHICS, AND THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

This session explores how education can harness technology while preserving what makes us human. Using Bhutan's Baccalaureate as a model, which nurtures development across five

- Moderator: Yangchen Dolkar – Researcher, Druk Gyalpo's Institute
- Tsheltrim Lhamo – Professor, Druk Gyalpo's Institute
- Jigme Thinley Namgyel – Student, Druk Gyalpo's Institute
- Thinlay Phuntsho – Student, Druk Gyalpo's Institute

CFP SESSION (SUPPORTED BY ADB)

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

How can we build a digital state that is both efficient and equitable? This session, featuring research from our global Call for Papers, tackles the challenges of modern governance. Discussions will cover the promise and risks of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the future of public service delivery, and the need for data rights and accountability in government systems. A dynamic exchange for anyone interested in shaping inclusive, citizen-focused development.

- Moderator: Jordan Loper – Associate Professor of Economics, Université Clermont Auvergne, CERDI
- Altantsetseg Batchuluun – CEO, National Research and Consulting Center
- Cheikh Jellani Mané – Dr., Institut Charte des Mandé
- Md Khalid Hossain – Research Fellow, Monash University
- Pradeep Kumar Choudhury – Assistant Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

GDN AND SANEM - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN THE DEVELOPING SOUTH

This panel explores how digital technologies and financial services are driving inclusion in the Developing South. It examines business models reaching underserved populations, while addressing challenges like the digital divide, low literacy, regulatory gaps, and cybersecurity. Experts will discuss socio-economic impacts, from empowerment and SME support to climate and health applications, highlighting strategies for inclusive digital financial ecosystems.

- Moderator: Jean-Louis Arcand – President, GDN
- Selim Raihan – Executive Director, SANEM
- Ganga Tilakaratna – Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka
- Ashley Siagian – Fellow, APEC Policy Support Unit (PSU)
- Philip Mader – Research Fellow, International Centre for Tax and Development, Institute of Development Studies

ERF, AFD AND GDN - RETHINKING RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MENA: TOWARD OPEN, NETWORKED, AND EQUITABLE INNOVATION

This session explores how inclusive digital transformation and open science can foster a more collaborative and equitable research-for-development ecosystem in Africa and the Middle East. Experts will share insights from the Global Africa project, Grenier de Savoirs, and forthcoming research on Sub-Saharan Africa, alongside ERF initiatives in North Africa and the Middle East. The panel will discuss how Open Science can support ethical, impactful research that advances shared prosperity and social change across the Global South.

- Etienne Charriere – Deputy Head of Publications, Agence française de développement
- Ragui Assaad – Professor, University of Minnesota
- Mame-Penda Ba
- Gilbert Babena – Researcher | Secretary-General, University of Maroua | Le Grenier des savoirs
- Sherine Farouk Ghoneim – Director of Communications and Policy Outreach, Economic Research Forum (ERF)
- Abdelwahab Benhafaiedh (Virtual) – Founding Director, Applied Social Science Forum

CFP SESSION (SUPPORTED BY ADB)

TECHNOLOGY, FINANCE, AND RESILIENCE IN KEY SECTORS

From FinTech to HealthTech, how is technology building resilience in critical sectors? This session presents applied research on innovative solutions to development challenges, exploring digital finance for the unbanked, tech in healthcare, and tools for adapting to climate and economic shocks. Join this forward-looking discussion to see what works, what doesn't, and what's next.

- Moderator: Sayantan Mandal – Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Michael Coffie – PhD Candidate, University of Cape Coast
- Muhammad Abdur Rahaman – Director, Center for People and Environment
- Kuamvi Sodji – Economist, University of Lomé
- Boladji Morrisson Gouthon – Postdoctoral Researcher, Laboratory for Research on Innovation for Agricultural Development (LRIDA), University of Para

All plenary sessions and parallel sessions will be streamed live on [GDN's YouTube channel](#).

Workshops

Multiple sessions and workshops take place simultaneously in each slot. Please register in advance.

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Slot 1 (14:00 - 15:30)

GLOBALDEV - STORYTELLING

In this interactive workshop, participants will explore the core principles of communications and delve into some storytelling techniques to enhance how you communicate your research. Through exercises, you will learn how to turn complex concepts into narratives that resonate with different audiences. By the end of this session, you will be equipped to craft clear, impactful stories that make your research more accessible, memorable, and engaging for diverse audiences.

Facilitated by Stephania Cajero Callejas – Associate Editor, GlobalDev, GDN

IHEDD-FERDI AND IMF - FORESIGHT THINKING ON THE USE OF AI IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (PART 1)

This interactive workshop explores the future of AI in revenue administrations, focusing on organisational change, governance, and human-machine collaboration. Participants will engage in a 10-year foresight exercise, envisioning scenarios for AI adoption, its risks and opportunities, and implications for structures and roles up to 2035. *Part 2 on Day 3 is required. Facilitated by:

- Thomas Cantens – Technical Assistance Advisor, Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF
- Celine de Quatrebarbes – Director of Innovation and Development, IHEDD, FERDI

IMPACT DRAGONFLY - BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: SYSTEMS THINKING FOR EQUITY AND GOVERNANCE

Digital access is essential, yet millions remain excluded. This immersive workshop uses an interactive simulation to highlight the challenges of limited connectivity, outdated devices, and complex systems. Grounded in systems thinking, it explores the causes and impacts of digital inequity on education, health, work, and community wellbeing, offering participants practical insights and strategies to advance digital inclusion and equity in policies and practice.

Facilitated by Sarah Woolmington – Founder, Impact Dragonfly

YULIYA MORENETS - SKILLS AND MINDSETS DRIVING YOUTH ACCESS TO GLOBAL DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

This interactive workshop explores what it takes for youth to lead in global digital governance. Through group discussions and engagement with senior digital policy leaders, participants will examine four key domains: artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital governance, and data and power. The session encourages cross-generational dialogue, helping young changemakers clarify leadership pathways, connect local experiences to global trends, and gain insights and confidence to shape the digital future.

Facilitated by Yuliya Morenets – Founder, Youth Internet Governance Forum (Youth IGF)

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

IMPACT DRAGONFLY - GENERATIVE AI FOR DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS: CRITICAL LITERACY AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Artificial Intelligence is transforming how we work, learn, and interact. This session introduces generative AI for development professionals, covering ethical risks, bias, and emerging regulations. Participants will gain practical skills, explore a Theory of Change Prompt Model, and learn tools for prompt design, critical literacy, and responsible AI adoption to enhance productivity, creativity, and impact in development work.

Facilitated by Sarah Woolmington – Founder, Impact Dragonfly

TELEP NETWORK - CENTERING COMMUNITY POWER IN DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT: A FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY APPROACH

This interactive workshop rethinks digital development through a feminist philanthropy lens, exploring how donor actions can affect trust, sustainability, and equity. Participants will use tools like the Donor-Ready Story Audit and Exit Vision Mapping Canvas to uncover power dynamics and design ethical, community-centered transitions. The session offers practical insights for funders, NGOs, and digital strategists to build empowering programmes.

Facilitated by Arlette Ngo Badjeck – Founder, Telep Network

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY - BUILDING DIGITAL BRIDGES THROUGH INCLUSIVE CO-CREATION

This interactive workshop reimagines digital development through co-creation and design thinking. Using hands-on exercises and case studies, participants will explore human-centered approaches, inclusive design methods, and strategies to embed underrepresented perspectives into digital innovation, supporting SDGs 9, 10, and 16. Facilitated by

- Anne Pickering – Teaching and Research Scholar, Australian Catholic University
- Joanna Vogeley – Lecturer, Peter Faber Business School, Australian Catholic University

GLOBALDEV - COMMUNIQUER PLUS EFFICACEMENT SA RECHERCHE - ÉCRIRE POUR LES DÉCIDEURS

Ce module initie les jeunes chercheurs aux principes et pratiques de la communication de la recherche appliquée à des fins politiques. Les participants apprendront à identifier les publics, choisir les formats adaptés et concevoir des outils tels que notes d'orientation et articles d'opinion. Des exercices interactifs permettront de présenter les résultats de manière claire, convaincante et pertinente pour maximiser l'impact dans les débats publics et les décisions politiques. Facilitated by:

- Etienne Charriere – Deputy Head of Publications, Agence française de développement
- Irina Vauday – Publishing Editor, Agence française de développement

DAY 2: Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Slot 1 (14:00 - 15:30)

IMF - CRYPTOS: OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS, AND POLICY RESPONSES

This workshop provides a policy-focused overview of crypto-assets, including blockchain technologies and Central Bank Digital Currencies. Participants will examine economic and political opportunities and risks for governments and non-state actors, and explore policy responses, regulatory frameworks, and enforcement challenges. The session offers a critical perspective on crypto governance rather than technical training or investment guidance.

Facilitated by:

- Thomas Cantens – Technical Assistance Advisor, Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF
- Xavier Lavayssiere – Digital Finance Expert, IMF

60 MILLION GIRLS FOUNDATION - DIGITAL OFFLINE LEARNING FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES: 10 YEARS OF FIELD EXPERIENCE UNPLUGGED!

The Mobile Learning Lab (MLL) is a low-cost, plug-and-play model delivering offline interactive content to children without internet access. Reaching 700,000+ children in 20+ countries, it includes a RACHEL server, up to 30 devices, and solar panels. Content is locally curated for language, culture, and context. This workshop introduces MLL and AI Unplugged as tools to support learning in low-resource settings, promoting equity and accessibility.

Facilitated by:

- Wanda Bedard – President and Founder, 60 Million Girls Foundation
- Ariane Émond – 60 Million Girls Foundation
- Lorraine Swift – Executive Director, Change for Children
- Diego Matos – Professor, Universidade Federal de Alagoas

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE LUDWIGSBURG (DE) - THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE RECRUITMENT AND PREPARATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS CASE STUDY: INDONESIAN NURSES' MOBILITY IN THE GERMAN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

This interactive workshop explores how social media shapes the recruitment and intercultural preparation of Indonesian nurses for Germany. Co-facilitated by migration experts, it combines research and nurse perspectives to examine online representation, recruitment messaging, and ethical digital practices, while co-developing policy recommendations to strengthen migration governance and promote digital literacy. Facilitated by:

- Alexander Loch – Professor, Ludwigsburg University of Public Administration and Finance
- Retno Widyastuti – Professor, Ludwigsburg University of Public Administration and Finance

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

OECD - MISSION-ORIENTED INNOVATION TO CLOSE DIGITAL DIVIDES

This workshop, led by OECD Mission Action Lab experts, explores mission-oriented innovation to address digital divides using case studies and practical exercises. Participants will share experiences and learn to apply the Mission Litmus Test, assess context readiness with the Mission Readiness Framework, and draw lessons from real-life examples to design, coordinate, and scale missions. The session is aimed at policy-makers, public officials, and development practitioners focused on practical applications rather than theory.

Facilitated by Benjamin Kumpf – Head of OECD Innovation for Development Facility, OECD

GLOBALDEV - HOW TO WRITE AN ARTICLE

Want your research to reach beyond academia? This training module equips you with the skills to translate complex ideas into clear, compelling writing for a broader audience. You will learn practical tools and techniques to craft engaging articles, sharpen your writing and capture readers' attention. We will also guide you through creating concise, impactful policy briefs tailored for decision-makers, and provide you with an exclusive blogging guide to help you publish with confidence. By the end of this training, you will have the skillset to make your research resonate with policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

Facilitated by Etienne Charriere – Deputy Head of Publications, Agence française de développement

DAY 3: Thursday, October 30, 2025

Slot 1 (14:00 - 15:30)

INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IDS) - DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND STATE CAPACITY: TAX AS A USE CASE

This interactive session explores how Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and taxation can promote inclusive governance. Participants will examine opportunities, challenges, and risks, and work in groups to assess experiences and identify best practices for using DPI to drive inclusive fiscal and public service outcomes. Facilitated by:

- Philip Mader – Research Fellow, International Centre for Tax and Development, IDS
- Daisy Ogembo – Research Fellow, International Centre for Tax and Development, IDS

GDN - IMPACT OF DIGITALISATION FOR TRANSFORMING RESEARCH SYSTEMS

This interactive workshop explores themes in Research Systems Strengthening and Digitalisation, including digital infrastructure, workflows, data governance, evaluation, careers, inclusion, AI, science communication, and policy. Participants will engage through discussions, hackathons, and live surveys. Facilitated by:

- Sanchari Mukhopadhyay – Fellow, Knowledge Systems, GDN
- Daniele Cantini – Fellow, Knowledge Systems, GDN

Slot 2 (16:00 - 17:30)

GLOBALDEV - CREATING INFOGRAPHICS AND DATA VISUALISATION

This workshop teaches participants to turn data into clear, engaging infographics using design principles and Canva. Hands-on activities guide you in creating visuals that highlight research findings, support storytelling, and enhance presentations. Bring a laptop to design infographics that make your work accessible and memorable. Facilitated by:

- Stephania Cajero Callejas – Associate Editor, Global Development Network
- Ilhem Satouri – Research Communications Specialist, Global Development Network

IHEDD-FERDI AND IMF - FORESIGHT THINKING ON THE USE OF AI IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (PART 2)

In the second session, participants will explore how two major technological and political disruptions could shape 2035 administrations, examining risks and opportunities for governance, trust, work design, and administrative roles. Part 1 on Day 1 is required. Facilitated by:

- Thomas Cantens – Technical Assistance Advisor, Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF
- Celine de Quatrebarbes – Director of Innovation and Development, IHEDD, FERDI

Keynotes

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

WELCOME NOTE (VIDEO MESSAGE)

9:00 – 9:30

**NANDAN NILEKANI, FOUNDING CHAIRMAN, UNIQUE
IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA (UIDAI)**



KEYNOTE SESSION 1

18:00 – 18:30

**TORBJORN FREDRIKSSON, HEAD E-COMMERCE AND DIGITAL
ECONOMY BRANCH, UNCTAD**

How inclusive is the digital economy? Where we are and where
to go from here



DAY 2: Wednesday, October 29, 2025

KEYNOTE SESSION 2

18:00 – 18:30

**MARGUS MAGI, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE EXPERT,
KNOWLEDGE HUB DIGITAL**

Trust as Infrastructure: How Values and People Shape
Successful Digital Societies



DAY 3: Thursday, October 30, 2025

KEYNOTE SESSION 3 (VIDEO MESSAGE)

18:00 – 18:30

NENNA NWAKANMA, GLOBAL AI AMBASSADOR, HEALTH AI



Contests and Awards

DAY 3: Thursday, October 30, 2025 | 19:00-19:30

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS COMPETITION (GDAC) 2025 AWARD CEREMONY



The Global Development Awards Competition (GDAC) is GDN's flagship programme, connecting researchers and development practitioners. The theme for the 2025 edition was **Digital Transformation for Universal Health Coverage**. After presenting their projects to a jury during the first two days of the conference, winners will be awarded grants (\$10k-\$50k) and mentoring support to advance their research and initiatives.

GDC 2025 CONTESTS - AWARD CEREMONY



As part of GDC 2025, two contests showcased the next generation of ideas driving inclusive digital transformation. Following competitive selection processes, the winners of both contests will be celebrated and awarded during this session.

The **Future Solutions Pitch Challenge** invited young researchers and early-career professionals to present innovative projects on topics ranging from bridging the digital divide and ethical AI to technology for social good, youth digital activism, and inclusive policy frameworks.

The **Global Voices Essay Challenge** invited undergraduate, master's, and PhD students to share original insights on what inclusive digital transformation means for sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries, drawing on local examples and emerging trends.

Cultural Activities

The **IHEDD**, a professional training institute within the Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (**FERDI**), invites you, as part of the Global Development Conference 2025, to a cultural programme dedicated to the imaginaries, impacts, and pitfalls associated with the rise of digital technology in our societies.

Through various artistic forms—considered here as an alternative medium for openness and reflection, capable of sparking a shift in perspective—several cultural events will be offered. The goal is to provide a complementary perspective on digital transformation, one that is more sensitive and less analytical.

These gatherings will conclude each day of the conference and will feature a play and a short film screening. Only the short film screening requires prior registration and will not take place at the conference venue, but rather at the Salle Conchon, right in the heart of Clermont-Ferrand.

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 | 19:00 - 19:30

THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE



Comedy about the **digital transition**, the **use of AI in art and culture**, and particularly in **theatre**

The company ***Le cri des Ogres***, represented by Iris Calipel and Nicolas Amatulli

Comprising five actors (Nicolas Amatulli, Hugo Anguenot, Iris Calipel, Romane Karr, and Solal Viala), *Le cri des Ogres* is a local theatre company based in Clermont-Ferrand. Its work focuses primarily on the craft of acting, constantly seeking to redefine the actor's place on stage through the exploration of different performance styles. This pursuit best serves the company's desire to tell both intimate and extraordinary stories through a language that is simple, poetic, and epic.

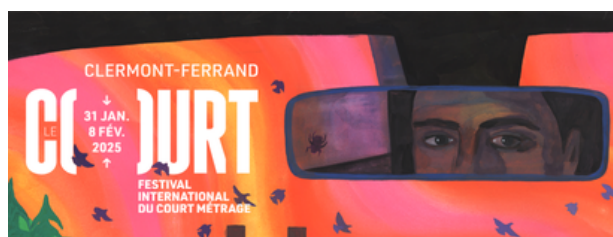
Le cri des Ogres believes in the power of the collective, in creative freedom, and in theatre that is physical, political, and entertaining. The company's various productions are human narratives, infused with themes of community living, social struggles, failure, outrage at the rise of fascism, and the urgency of ecological issues.

DAY 2: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 | 20:00 - 21:30

SHORT FILM SCREENING at Salle Georges Conchon

Short film screening exploring the impacts of digital technology on societies (human/robot relationships, use of AI, digital footprint in daily life, and the pitfalls of internet use).

Programme carefully selected with our partners at La Jetée, the official documentation center of the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.



The Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival is the world's largest festival dedicated to short films. Established in 1979, it gathers thousands of spectators and industry professionals from around the globe every February. The festival features three competitions (national, international, and experimental) and hosts a very active film market. It is a must-attend event for short cinema.

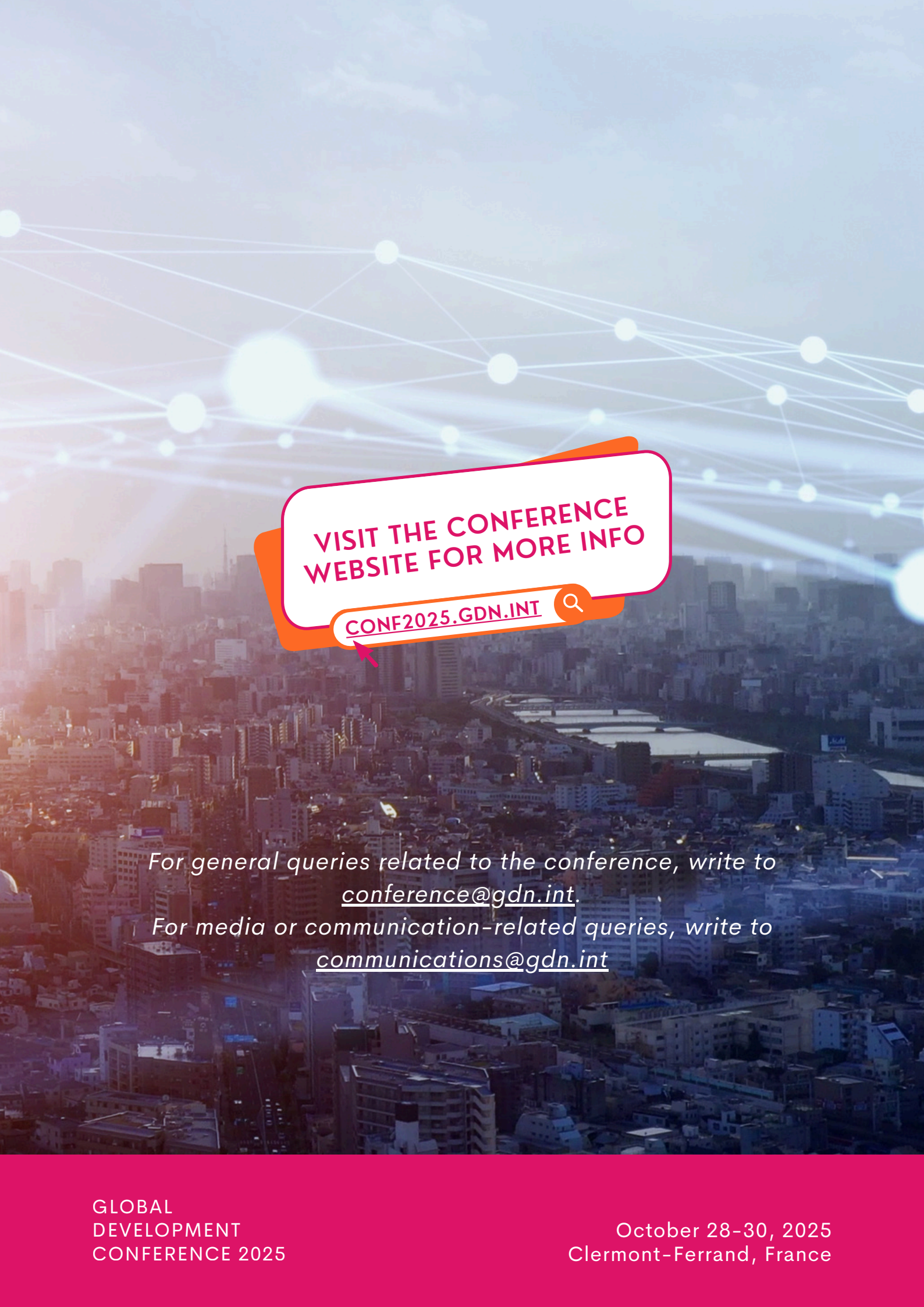
Registrations open during the conference

Venue:

Salle **Georges Conchon**, rue Léo Lagrange,
Clermont-Ferrand

Take tram line A at the **Stade Marcel-Michelin** stop (direction La Pardieu Gare) and get off at the **Maison de la Culture** stop, then walk 2 minutes.





VISIT THE CONFERENCE
WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO

CONF2025.GDN.INT



*For general queries related to the conference, write to
conference@gdn.int.*

*For media or communication-related queries, write to
communications@gdn.int*