

# OVERHEARD AT THE ROUNDTABLE

## GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY



**GARGEES GHOSH** | DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND FINANCE  
BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

"Lack of internet adoption implies that even when we get most of the supply side basics right there's another step where people, either governments or individuals at the household level are not making it a priority to get on the Internet and spend whatever is the marginal cost to bring that into their lives."



**ROSS LAJEUNESSE** | GLOBAL HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
GOOGLE

"Broadband infrastructure is just part of the problem. We also need reliable power to provide access. We need local content that's relevant. We need people to understand that there is value in going online and in connecting."



**ANN MEI CHANG** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT LAB  
USAID

"We really need to also address that our core education systems have not evolved with the digital economy. We're still teaching 20th century skills in a 21st century economy. We need to modernize our educational curriculum across the world to focus on the digital skills that are required for this economy."



**CHRIS LOCKE** | FOUNDER  
CARIBOU DIGITAL

"This wonderfully interconnected web of things that was the World Wide Web starts to end up being inside a relatively small set of calcifying ecosystems that don't actually connect up and link up well together. And the power structures within those ecosystems are sometimes quite severe."



**NISHA BISWAL** | ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

"Digital connectivity is values neutral. You have virtual networks that everyone is seeking to enable and empower, but you also have these vicious networks that others are seeking to inhibit. And it's an incredibly ambiguous and complex world in terms of where you align with what's virtuous and what's vicious."



**ANDY O'CONNELL** | MANAGER, GLOBAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
FACEBOOK

"90 percent of the people on the planet are in a place where they could be connected to the Internet given the cellphone infrastructure that already exists, but again, only 40 percent are. So, there's 50 percent of the people where infrastructure isn't actually the barrier. It's something else. And we think those barriers are awareness and affordability."



**ANUP AKKIHAL** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
LOGISTIMO

"The biggest opportunities to gain traction in the developing world are wherever you touch on the most basic necessities—money, energy, and medicines. To me those are the three biggest opportunities that we're seeing where folks are willing to invest in going further. And in all cases high trust in the human network is essential to making anything scale."



**HELEN CLARK** | ADMINISTRATOR  
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

"A powerful theme in the new agenda is leaving nobody behind. The digital revolution creates divides in access to information, to opportunities, and to services. And if you're left behind, you're left behind in so many ways that are fundamental to human progress. I think inherent in the prioritization of connectivity is also prioritization of access, focusing on inclusion and equitable access, especially for women, who are often more behind than others."



**MARY ROBINSON** | PRESIDENT  
MARY ROBINSON FOUNDATION—CLIMATE JUSTICE

"Digital technology for development is not an end in itself; the success of digital technology in a development context depends on how it is deployed—and is greatly influenced by existing socioeconomic inequalities and power structures."



**V SHANKAR** | FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND AMERICAS

"Digital technology enables disaggregation of activities. One of the biggest changes that digital technology allows is for multinational companies to profitably and efficiently shift from an old paradigm of "think global, act local", to "think local, act global."



**RICHARD BLUM** | FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN  
BLUM CAPITAL

"Despite all this, never forget to walk the villages. Every time you think, well, I used to do this in whatever part of the world, and I know what goes on there—chances are, you don't. Every time you sit down with a bunch of villagers, you learn something that's new."