



Video Transcripts for Laura Hildebrandt, Digital Transformation Specialist, UNDP

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Hello, my name is Laura Hildebrandt.

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I am a digital transformation implementation Specialist, the Chief Digital Office of UNDP, and until recently, I was also the digital transformation specialist for Small Island developing states based in Barbados and supporting the Eastern Caribbean, including Antigua and Barbuda.

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And we're here today to really talk about the importance of digital transformation and the potential impact it can have as an accelerator and an enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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We've all seen how digital is transforming our society, maybe especially since the pandemic community.

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Before that, everybody was online.

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But when the pandemic hit, everything had to go to remote, remote work, remote school, remote government.

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And that meant that we all had to adapt very quickly.

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And the United Nations help governments to adapt from start to finish, whether was supporting the education environment, supporting businesses.

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But governments themselves also need to adapt to the change.



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And the pace of change is quick.

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We're living in an ever, ever increasing rate of change, whether it's climate disasters, economic and social disruptions, political disruptions, the rate of change is quick technology developments also disrupting our worlds at a rate that none of us can really keep up with.

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I think the the latest example really is with ChatGPT.

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Couple of years ago we all knew that artificial intelligence was coming, but now it's on everybody's mind, everybody's using it.

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We're also wondering how does this new technology affect us?

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Can we use it in our work?

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Are we allowed to use it in our work?

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Are we allowed to use it in school?

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We've got this tool, how do we use it?

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Well, governments are also really struggling with these questions and so is the UN system.

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So the UN systems come together with governments to try to develop policies and plans for how we're going to tackle this future and ensure that we can use these technologies for the best of all of all humankind.

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To a drive development, to drive progress on education, on health, but also how to keep ourselves safe in this new environment.

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There's a lot of fear, but we lose our jobs.

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Will technology take over the world?

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Will the machines attack us in the future?

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We don't know.

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I mean, we don't The, the, the, the fears are there and they're, they're rational fears.

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And so we're here working with governments to try to assess the risks and assess the opportunities and drive action to take advantage of the opportunities.

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So in Antigua and Barbuda, we recently launched a digital readiness assessment.

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This assessment is really, as I said, to help governments understand the opportunities, the risks and the challenges of this digital transformation that's already underway.

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It's not like we can completely control it.

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The new technologies come, social media technologies come and go, and we see the impact that they're making on our lives.

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Social medias potentially had a very important impact on election outcomes.

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That was something we couldn't have predicted many years ago.



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So this digital readiness assessment is working with the government of Antigua and Barbuda to understand where the country currently stands with respect to the digital connectivity and infrastructure, digital regulatory environment.

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Do we have the right laws that are needed to advance digital in the country?

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Also looking at the people in the country, does the country have the skills, the education needed to fully grasp the digital transformation?

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And what about the business climate?

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Are companies interested in new technologies?

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Are they adapting new technologies?

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What do they need to take on these new technologies?

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What's holding them back?

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Perhaps it's the regulatory environment.

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And then we also look at how the government's doing both respect to the planning and strategy making for the digital transformation, you know, not just necessarily in a central way, we're not just talking about the ICT ministry, for instance, but we also need all of government to understand and to think about how to integrate digital technologies more effectively into their work.

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And so we're working on assessing that government enabling environment and then also looking at how the government's doing itself with respect to its own online government services.



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How many services have gone online in the last couple of years?

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What's working, what's not working?

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How do we help to to get more of these services online?

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And really also to think about what's the point of all of this?

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It's, we're not, it's not digitalization for digitalization sake.

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It's really to drive progress.

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As I said, when we're talking about government, that might mean efficiency.

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Really we're hoping to support government to do government better so that everything the government does can be more efficient, but also really more evidence driven.

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As we implement different systems within the government, we ensure that there's an opportunity to capture data from each of those services and so we can see what's working, what's not working, how to do things better.

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We kicked off a session in late June with a collection of stakeholders who were selected from different ministries, from the private sector and also from civil society to give their views on how the digital transformation is going in Antigua and Barbuda with questions across all these different areas.

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So the UNDP is currently working on a report to on the basis of some of those views and also coupled with the existing data that we can get from other sources.



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In addition to this, it's important for the government of Antigua Barbuda to also tap into the public, understand what the public thinks are the opportunities, what the fears are.

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So we really want to hear from you.

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It's, it's, it's one thing for people who are within this close group of stakeholders to share their views, but really before the government acts and drives action on the digital transformation, it's important to understand what the people think and to feed that information into the developing plans and strategies so that the future of digital and Antigua and Barbuda really belongs to everyone.

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The opportunities are tremendous.

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The population of Antigua and Barbuda is quite young and there's nothing like the youth to take advantage of the opportunities that digital provide.

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They're, they're, they are born with devices in their hands and, and we want to see young people really grow in this environment and not be left behind.

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Their chances for training across the board.

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They're growing opportunities for employment and digital transformation.

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And you know, it doesn't mean you have to be an IT specialist to, to have a job that's, that's digitally enabled.

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So we see that the opportunities are tremendous.

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We want to ensure together with the government of Antigua Barbuda and the UN



system that the opportunities are there and brought to the people and that we also ensure that there's some safeguards in place.

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So with your help, we can help to develop a policy that meets the needs of everyone in Antigua and Barbuda.

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Thank you very much.