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“Towards shared knowledge societies ?”

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Abstract:

The scientific upheavals in the course of the 20th century have given rise to a third industrial revolution, based on the new technologies, which is accompanied by a further advance of globalization. The resulting knowledge economy has placed cognitive resources at the centre of human activity and of the social dynamic. Does this mean that the 21st century will see the emergence of *shared knowledge* societies? The answer to this question is largely in our own hands. For while the advent of the “network planet” has wrought radical changes in our relationship with information, it leaves open the question of the accessibility of knowledge to all. The global information society remains incomplete: its limits coincide with those of freedom of expression, the digital divide and inequalities in the realms of education and science. Moreover, the global information society is not necessarily a knowledge society. It should not be forgotten that the digital divide is itself the consequence of a more serious split: the cognitive divide, today more than ever, separates the countries endowed with powerful research and development potential, highly effective education systems and a range of public learning and cultural facilities from the other nations with their deficient education systems and research institutions starved of resources and under head-on attack from the brain drain. Another gap is furthermore opening up between the most advanced knowledge societies and those rich countries that fail to invest adequately in research and knowledge, which leads to a brain drain along North-North lines. Building shared knowledge societies will be the key to a new and “intelligent” form of sustainable human development in the new world that is currently taking shape before our eyes.