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Opening & Welcoming Remarks: Setting the Global Stage

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the first International Forum on Skills Intelligence. As the Director of the Skills Intelligence Unit at UOC, I am truly honored to open this important gathering. Reviewing the list of invited speakers and keynotes, and at the list of registered participants, I see a rich mosaic of perspectives: policy leaders, researchers, educators, technologists, and practitioners, spanning numerous disciplines and the whole world, from east to west and from north to south. We, at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya are truly excited to offer a global platform for dialogue around such an important issue.

This forum represents a unique opportunity: to pause, reflect, and co-create a shared vision for how we understand and act upon skills intelligence, in the context of post-secondary and higher education. Why skills intelligence? We live in a time of rapid change. Technological shifts, climate transitions, demographic changes, and geopolitical tensions are transforming the nature of work, learning, and inclusion, and also the demand for skills.

In this context, skills intelligence—the timely and actionable understanding of skills needs, gaps, and trends—has become not just important, but essential. It informs policies that prepare people for evolving labor markets. It helps educational institutions align their programs with real opportunities and emerging needs. And most importantly, it empowers learners to make informed decisions that can change their lives.

At the UOC, we are deeply committed to this agenda. As a pioneering and leading institution in digital education, we see the opportunity and responsibility to strengthen the data ecosystems, the tools, and the institutional capabilities that make meaningful skills intelligence possible—particularly in lifelong and higher education. We are just at the beginning, but we are committed to walking this path, in collaboration with many of you.

Over two days, IFSI aim to do three things: **First**, to build a shared understanding of what skills intelligence means in the context of postsecondary and higher education, and in particular, to guide curricula development and students careers. **Second**, to showcase innovations—from cutting-edge research to practice-based solutions—that demonstrate how skills intelligence is already being used to improve decision-making and outcomes. And **third**, to foster a **community of** collaboration—across countries, institutions, and sectors—so that this work can support long-term, systemic change.

Last, but not least, I would like to extend a big thank you to all my colleagues at the Skills Intelligence Unit, UPAL, and the broader UOC team whose hard work and dedication made this forum possible. Also, a special thanks to our President, Angeles Fitó, who has placed skills intelligence at the core of our lifelong education strategy. And, of course, a big thank you to all of you for being here and contributing your time, insight, and energy.