The world is in transition, from central to decentral structures. This relates to areas such as energy (e.g. distributed renewables), mobility (e.g. distributed ownership), land management (e.g. distributed finance), as well as currencies and markets in general. This trend affects all industries, and it requires fundamentally new approaches (bottom-up, rather than top-down), for industry and government. The private sector increasingly gets the message. For many regulators, this is still a challenge.

In the transition to decentral structures, one area of innovation stands out: distributed ledger technologies (DLT), commonly known as ‘blockchain’. DLT/blockchain must be seen as a major driver of disruptive innovation, no less powerful and game-changing than the Internet. Fundamentally, DLT/blockchain offers the current ‘Internet of Information’ to develop into an ‘Internet of Value’, allowing humans and machines to transfer digital value, without an intermediary. It increases transparency and thus stakeholder involvement. One prominent example of applied blockchain technology is the Bitcoin digital currency – with currently over USD100bn in market capitalization and no central party in charge. However, DLT/blockchain relates to far more than Bitcoin, and it is relevant well beyond currencies and the financial sector. Also for domains of direct and indirect importance to climate change, DLT/blockchain offers outstanding potential. Although the technology is still in its infancy and challenges such as energy consumption and scalability need to be addressed, solutions to these challenges are rapidly being developed. Several industry solutions, pilot operations, and use cases are already at work, including a myriad of start-ups just as well as the world’s largest firms.

At COP23, Hack4Climate draws attention to the importance of digital innovation in general, and DLT/blockchain in particular. Hack4Climate is a climate/blockchain hackathon held during four days on ‘The Fiji’, a Rhine riverboat symbolizing the small island state of Fiji and thus the urgency for ClimateAction in line with the Paris Agreement. Nick Beglinger, initiator and organiser of Hack4Climate states: “Our approach is simple: Climate is the world’s biggest challenge. DLT/blockchain a major driver of innovation. Hack4Climate brings the two together”. Hack4Climate is organized by the Zurich-based Cleantech21 foundation, and represents the world’s first hackathon linked to a climate conference. It is supported by UNFCCC Secretariat, a partner of Connect4Climate/World Bank as well as the Climate Ledger Initiative, and an endorsed initiative under the Fiji COP23 Presidency. Hack4Climate has engaged 1’300 developers in 17 preparatory workshops held in 17 global DLT/blockchain centres. From over 500 applications received, the top 100 have been selected and invited to Bonn. They represent an outstanding group of talented individuals, from 30 countries (incl. Fiji) and with an average DLT/blockchain experience of 3.5 years.

The following speakers present at the Hack4Climate press conference:

- Nick Beglinger, CEO Cleantech21, Initiator/Organizer of Hack4Climate
- Marion Verles, CEO Gold Standard, core partner of Climate Ledger Initiative
- Vanessa Grelle, ConsenSys
- Dominik Schiener, IOTA
- Thomas Treml, Microsoft
- Max Thabiso Edkins, World Bank

During the press conference, different options for interaction during the 4-day Hack4Climate program will be presented. To arrange for visits on The Fiji and/or individual interviews, please contact Anna Hadorn (anna@hack4climate.org, +41 78 849 00 65).
#Hack4Climate 2017: Partners

[Logos of various partners including Cleantech21, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, CLIMATE LEDGER INITIATIVE, giz, IOTA, Volkswagen, CHILDREN’S INVESTMENT FUND FOUNDATION, ConsenSys, Microsoft, SBB CFF FFS, everledger, Partners Group, Wasion, ETH Zürich, Deutsche Telekom, innogy, CONTEXT LABS, FuturICT 2.0, XTECH, MIT Media Lab, BIGCHAINDB, Validity Labs, ENERGY WEB FOUNDATION, Hacker Bay, IMPACT HUB, rockstar* RECRUITING, and FinTech4Good].