**PARTNERSHIP ON MEASURING ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT
INPUT TO THE 2022 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**

SDGs under review: The HLPF in 2022 will review the SDGs and will also discuss in depth Sustainable Development Goals: 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

(a) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the SDGs under review in the 2022 HLPF from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the interlinkages with other SDGs;

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly affected the ability of countries to conduct survey-based data collection and delayed statistical production overall. Consequently the pandemic has affected their ability to improve the availability of information and communication technology (ICT) statistics as well, including on ICT in education (SDG 4), on the environmental impact of ICT (SDG 14 and 15), and on gender disaggregation of all these statistics (SDG 5 and 17).

At the same time, the enforced digitalization of many aspects of daily life has made it more urgent to produce more and better ICT statistics in support of efforts to monitor recovery policies. The pandemic has highlighted the limitations of traditional data sources for ICT statistics and stimulated the search for innovative and alternative data sources, such as administrative data, big data and data-sharing schemes with the private sector. Building the capacity of national statistical offices to produce ICT statistics continues to be a priority and will require the support of development partners and international organizations, including through the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.[1] Capacity building is particularly relevant to SDG 17, target 18, which aims at supporting the significant and needed increase in the availability of high-quality and timely data.

(b) Actions, policy guidance, progress, challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs and to the theme within the area under the purview of your intergovernmental body;

While ICT statistics are lacking overall, especially from developing countries, one of the areas lagging further behind under the purview of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development is regarding the environmental impact of ICT in the form of e-waste. Very few countries currently report e-waste statistics, and those wishing to start may refer to the second edition of E-Waste Statistics: Guidelines on Classification, Reporting and Indicators. The Guidelines contains a universally relevant e-waste measurement framework and a classification of e-waste intended to facilitate the implementation of harmonized concepts to measure the size of a country's e-waste market, its transboundary e-waste movement and the e-waste recycling performance within its borders. It also offers tools, practical guidelines and mathematical methodologies and will help countries to understand how to gather data sources to compile

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[1] https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/intlcoop/partnership/default.aspx

internationally comparable e-waste statistics.

(c) An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of "ensuring that no one is left behind" at the global, regional and national levels against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, within the respective area addressed by your intergovernmental bodies;

Digital connectivity indicators are crucial at "ensuring that no one is left behind" since the individual and household levels are crucial in identifying the socioeconomic effects of the digital divide within countries. The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated the adoption of digital tools by enterprises worldwide in a bid to increase their resilience and counter a slow down in operations. However, larger enterprises were better able to leverage digitalization to weather the economic crisis than small and medium-sized enterprises. Better and more disaggregated data on connectivity and on access to ICTs by households, individuals, and enterprises will support the monitoring of policies aimed at post-pandemic recovery. As the 2030 Agenda deadline approaches, monitoring the digital divide appears increasingly urgent.

(d) Cooperation, measures and commitments at all levels in promoting sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;

The pandemic triggered a transformation in the field of statistics and created an unprecedented momentum towards the use of ICT in statistics, the integration of new data sources (deeply entrenched in digital data) and digital data collection that could become the new normal. At the same time, the United Nations E-Government Survey 2020, published in July 2020, shows that COVID-19 had pushed more government services online despite the persistent digital divides.

Member agencies and regional commissions that work in ICT statistics need to collaborate further. Several agencies in the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development are already exploring how to leverage non-traditional sources of data to produce timely data to inform recovery measures and policies, and supplement official statistics. For example, ITU's work on big data from mobile phone operators to measure Internet use and UNCTAD's Working Group on Measuring e-Commerce and the Digital Economy sharing experiences in using non-survey sources of data to measure some aspects of digitalization.

(e) Various measures and policy recommendations on building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development;

Overall, there is a **need for increased availability and quality of ICT statistics to better understand how the digital divide is widening,** such as significant disparities in broadband speed is harming vulnerable groups, and the need to restore better in the aftermath of COVID-19. Better ICT statistics will also help countries better assess the digital readiness to face future crises. There is also a need to support the collection of e-waste indicators to raise awareness in this area.

Governments and national statistical offices need to access new sources of data and

statistics on ICT and to promote data innovation as a complement to traditional ICT indicators. Big data, as a new data source, can help overcome significant data gaps.

Finally, statistical offices should take advantage of the latest methodological material and related capacity-building resources produced by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development and explore the use of big data for measuring the information economy and society. The Partnership offers a core list of ICT for development indicators, endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission, as well as a thematic list of ICT indicators for the SDGs. The Partnership will also continue to develop guidelines in order to improve the availability and quality of ICT indicators.