



ITU COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION TO THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF) 2024

Theme: *“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”*

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review: 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

General Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs). As such, it allocates global radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, develops technical standards that ensure seamless interconnection for networks and technologies, and strives to improve digital access and technology use for underserved communities worldwide.

ITU is committed to connecting all the world's people, ensuring that everyone – regardless of age, gender, ability, location, or financial means – benefits from accessible and affordable ICTs.

In supporting everyone's fundamental right to communicate, ITU's work aligns closely with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets for 2030, intended to stimulate prompt global action in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges: “The spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies, as does scientific and technological innovation across areas as diverse as medicine and energy.”

Increased connectivity, trust, and digital technology use, along with expanding information systems, digital skills and Internet access, can reduce poverty, create jobs, and help end hunger. Digital applications and services also support inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities; enable us to monitor and mitigate climate change and better sustain our natural resources; and improve efficiency and transparency.

All three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection – depend on ICTs as a catalyst. Digital solutions, including new and emerging technologies, must be fully harnessed to achieve the SDGs.

The ITU Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 and the Connect 2030 Agenda adopted by ITU's global membership set out five strategic goals for the organization, each with key indicators to measure progress towards the shared vision of a sustainable digital future.

ITU – in line with UN Resolution A/70/1 and Resolution A/70/125 – continues working in collaboration with more than 30 other UN agencies to strengthen the alignment of ongoing World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ITU helps strengthen this alignment through the WSIS Forum, WSIS Stocktaking and related activities, emphasizing the direct linkages between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs.

In accordance to the Geneva Plan of Action the WSIS Action Lines serve as a key framework for advancing progress towards the achievement of SDGs. They embody essential principles for building an inclusive information society, leveraging the transformative power of ICTs for sustainable development. The WSIS Action Lines provide guidance to policymakers, organizations, and other stakeholders in implementing strategies to harness the potential of ICTs for the benefit of societies worldwide. The WSIS Action Lines cover eleven areas of focus with technology serving as a key enabler for sustainable development. The [WSIS-SDG Matrix](#), developed by the UN Action Line Facilitators, clearly shows the linkage between each Action Line and the 17 SDGs and provides rationale for each.

(a) Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.

Multiple crises – including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, economic instability, humanitarian emergencies, regional conflicts, and rising geopolitical tensions – have impeded progress on SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

From ITU's vantage point, the challenges of the last few years have also increased the urgency of ensuring digital inclusion. ITU's core mandate emphasizes how digital technologies can address global challenges and help put us back on track to achieve the SDGs.

An estimated 2.6 billion people, mainly in remote, rural, and less developed areas, remain without Internet access. High-income countries have an internet usage rate of 93%, while in low-income countries it stands at a mere 27%. Furthermore, in the least-developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), respectively, only 35% and 39% of the populations are online. The world's stark digital divide hampers progress in eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and achieving zero hunger (SDG 2).

The COVID-19 pandemic boosted digital development yet accentuated disparities in digital access and use. Lockdowns magnified the critical role of ICTs, including digital connectivity. The shift to online work, e-learning, digital government services, and a heightened focus on e-commerce have widened the gap for people lacking connectivity. Those who remain unconnected now suffer substantial socio-economic penalties.

While technologies promise to improve lives and address post-COVID social and economic challenges, they present their own hurdles. To address people's needs meaningfully, tech must be widely accessible and user-friendly. Ambitious investments are needed to finish connecting the unconnected, bolster confidence and security in ICT use, and shape our collective digital future for the good of all.

Secure and reliable information access are matters of public safety – crucial to establish sustainable prosperity and achieve the SDGs. Digital resilience has become a key asset, with many countries setting up early warning systems or developing emergency telecommunication plans while accelerating digitalization of public services.

The global climate crisis calls for innovative and collaborative solutions, with technologies providing valuable leverage to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. This makes digital solutions a vital part of climate action (SDG13).

ICTs can enable emission reductions in other sectors and enhance our ability to monitor climatic patterns, anticipate severe weather events, and consequently fortify immediate disaster response. Yet an expanding digital society creates more electronic devices, e-waste and ICT-related carbon emissions.

Only 17.4% of the millions of metric tons of rapidly growing e-waste are formally collected and recycled. This poses considerable health and environmental threats that need to be addressed through effective e-waste regulations aimed at creating circular value chains. Initiatives to enhance early warning systems, promote sustainable data centers, and increase transparency in the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of digital companies are similarly crucial for the ICT sector to reduce its own carbon footprint and help shape the transition towards a sustainable, digital, and green future.

Conflicts often disrupt critical infrastructure, including telecommunications, inhibiting progress towards peace, justice, and the establishment of robust institutions (SDG16). In such situations, however, digital connectivity serves as a crucial lifeline, particularly for refugees and internally displaced people.

Advanced digital solutions can support rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance during crises. This is one way ITU's work to promote digital technologies aligns with the objective of fostering partnerships (SDG17) for all aspects of sustainable development. Escalating economic challenges, including rising debt and inflation, make broadband services even less affordable in low-income economies. This is notably evident in the mobile-broadband basket, which is over 20 times less affordable in low-income countries than in high-income countries. The discrepancy is even more pronounced in LDCs, LLDCs, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where geographical, infrastructural, and socio-economic constraints further widen the digital divide.

The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) presents a unique set of challenges. AI adoption is uneven around the world, potentially intensifying global inequalities and further hindering SDG progress. Moreover, the current approach to AI, which heavily relies on industry self-regulation, and the predominance of English in AI training data, could limit the participation of diverse populations in the AI revolution, especially those from developing countries and non-English-speaking communities.

ITU is working with regulators, policy-makers, industry players, civil society and other stakeholders to better understand the issues involved in AI adoption. This collaboration aims to leverage AI potential to drive sustainable development.

Despite the impacts of recent crises, ITU is committed to harnessing technology for the benefit of all. By emphasizing digital inclusion, fostering multi-stakeholder engagement, and advocating for sustainable solutions, ITU helps overcome obstacles and advance on SDG targets.

Initiatives such as the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, AI for Good, the WSIS Forum and a series of Regional Development Forums all help to match national or regional needs and priorities with practical digital solutions. Moreover, ITU's active engagement in the SDG Digital, Green Digital Action, Giga, and Connect2Recover initiatives, as well as through the Innovation and

Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development, underscores its unwavering dedication to harnessing technology to address global issues.

(b) Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, considering the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

ITU is firmly committed to harnessing digital technologies to accelerate the realization of the SDGs. ITU programmes and initiatives have made a significant impact towards the attainment of SDGs set for review in 2024, specifically SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). ITU is addressing these goals through initiatives spanning all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

Three key areas of our work are universal connectivity, sustainable digital transformation, and global digital cooperation.

1. **Universal Connectivity:** Despite considerable advancements, a third of the world's population, estimated at 2.6 billion people, remains offline. The resulting digital divide disproportionately impacts rural, remote, and less developed areas, including LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. ITU's comprehensive Connect 2030 Agenda, along with initiatives like Giga and the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative, can help ensure equal digital access for all. These initiatives are closely aligned with SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17, emphasizing the need for countries to invest in digital skills and infrastructure, adopt inclusive policies, and ensure access to crucial information related to agriculture and health services.

Universal connectivity is a key goal in all ITU initiatives. A recently launched joint initiative between ITU and the European Union, dedicated to 'Promoting and measuring universal and meaningful digital connectivity,' will help countries meet key digital connectivity targets. Along with advancing global sustainable development, the initiative is promoting Internet services and skills for everyone worldwide over the next three years. 'Girls Can Code' and 'Girls in ICT,' along with Accessible Americas, Europe, and Arab States initiatives and the publication of ITU's *Guidelines on Child Online Protection* and *Handbook on Mainstreaming Gender in Digital Policies*, provide tangible support to the policymakers and implementers in their efforts towards ensuring that no one is left behind. These programs aim to narrow the digital divide by enhancing digital skills and promoting online safety, especially among women, girls, and youth.

Nevertheless, a noticeable digital gap remains between LDCs and the rest of the world. The ITU-led Partner2Connect Digital Coalition aims to facilitate digital transitions, particularly in LDCs. All ITU's various digital development initiatives contribute to fulfilling SDGs 1, 2, and 17, reinforcing the broader goal of digital inclusivity.

2. **Sustainable Digital Transformation:** The digital economy boosts economic prosperity and competitiveness in any country. Yet the growing environmental footprint of digital technology is a rising concern. ITU is dedicated to promoting sustainable digital transformation, acknowledging the potential of digital technologies to accelerate the

global shift towards net-zero emissions and advocating for responsible practices to reduce their environmental impacts. ITU continues to focus on the collection and improvement of e-waste data including generation, collection, and recycling rates, plus the need for data to build and maintain a circular economy and address climate change. High-value or critical materials, energy efficiency, and emissions savings all require evidence-based monitoring. ITU helps address this priority through the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership (GESP), through which assistance is provided to governments around the world to improve their e-waste data collection and statistics. The GESP also publishes the Global E-waste Monitor (next edition to be published in March 2024) as well as regional E-waste monitors such as a recent one for the Western Balkans (December 2023). In addition, through Greening Digital Companies reports over the past two year, ITU has tracked the emissions, energy use and climate commitments of 200 leading tech companies.t The resulting data and analysis reinforces green practices in the ICT sector, supports wider decarbonization, and encourages sustainability in future digital infrastructure development.

Many governments still struggle to achieve true digital transformation or rely on third parties to build a one-time solution. Through initiatives such as GovStack, ITU supports countries with open-source technology, technical specifications for digital services, and government-wide implementation support.

In addition, governments need new, more resilient, and forward-thinking approaches to guarantee they can safely navigate a digital world that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The new Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development launched in 2023 aims to build critical local digital enablers while offering a new approach for bridging the digital innovation divide. Participating countries benefit from mutual support in unlocking their digital potential, building local capabilities for innovation and entrepreneurship, and accelerating digital progress in cross-cutting sectors for an inclusive and sustainable society.

The newly established Network of Digital Regulators seeks to accelerate sustainable digital transformation through common approaches to collaborative digital policy, regulation and governance across economic sectors and across borders. The network brings together regulatory associations at the regional and global level, leveraging South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation.

- 3. Global Digital Cooperation:** As digital technologies evolve and their societal implications become increasingly complex and interconnected, global digital cooperation is paramount. ITU brings together a diverse global membership -- encompassing 193 Member States and over 900 Sector Members and academic members, including many leading research institutes and universities -- to debate vital topics. As a trusted multilateral platform, ITU facilitates international agreements and standards, disseminates knowledge, and enhances human and institutional capacities worldwide across its member countries. ITU-facilitates platforms like the WSIS Forum, and the Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition foster comprehensive dialogues and enable multilateral agreements. P2C has gathered 861 pledges from 419 entities across 140 countries, with an estimated financial value of USD 36.87 Billion. These pledges are primarily directed towards the hardest-to-connect communities in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. Commitments to ensure the safe and responsible development and deployment of emerging technologies, including AI, align with SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17, underscoring ITU's key role in the endeavour to connect everyone, everywhere.

ITU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) set up the Multi-Stakeholder Network on Digital Capacity Development as a follow up to the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The network aims to

promote holistic, inclusive, sustainable approaches to digital capacity development, serving a 'clearing-house-function' that connects requests for support to providers of capacity development initiatives. The network also helps maintain a database of existing digital capacity development initiatives.

ITU engaged in setting up and operationalizing the Digital Window of the Joint SDG Fund, which will create new opportunities for multi-agency project support aligned with their national priorities.

In addition, as strongly suggested by Member States, ITU has committed to work closely with the Executive Office of UN Secretary-General, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (OSET), and other UN agencies on accelerating digital cooperation and addressing digital issues, especially as outlined in the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda report. This includes groundwork for the proposed the Global Digital Compact, along with supporting Member States and stakeholders in preparation for the Summit of the Future in September 2024.

While significant strides have been made towards the SDGs, challenges persist in areas like capacity-building, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, ICT infrastructure, and spectrum management. ITU continues to actively address these challenges through ongoing projects and strategic partnerships, contributing to the realization of all the SDGs, including 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17.

Section (c): Three examples of specific actions, policies, and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

ITU underscores the urgent need to address the global digital divide, with an estimated 2.6 billion people, a third of the global population, remaining offline. ITU's Facts and Figures 2023 report reveals a concerning disparity in global Internet connectivity, with particularly stark divides between high-income and low-income countries. The digital divide impedes overall progress on SDGs.

Three pivotal actions, policies and measures are:

1. Making broadband services more affordable, to help deliver universal connectivity:

Digital disparities persist, signified by a 66-percentage point gap between internet usage in high-income and low-income countries. ITU's 2023 report shows that fixed-broadband services accounted for over 80% of global Internet traffic in 2022, yet only one fixed-broadband subscription per 100 people exists in low-income countries due to high prices and lack of infrastructure. ITU advocates for the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development's target of making broadband affordable in developing countries by 2025, directly contributing to SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These actions align with the 'Growth' and 'Inclusiveness' objectives of ITU's Connect 2030 Agenda.

2. Enhancing Digital skills and literacy:

Equipping the global population with digital skills and literacy is critical. ITU's goal to empower 25 million young people with digital skills by 2030 is a significant step towards this. Initiatives such as the ITU Academy, Network of ITU Academy Training Centers, Digital Transformation Centers Initiative, Digital KIT, and Americas Girls Can Code Initiative help empower marginalized communities. These efforts integrate digital literacy, ensuring individuals can use digital tools and critically evaluate and engage with digital information. This investment aligns with SDGs 1, 2, 4 (Quality Education), and the 'Innovation' goal of the Connect 2030 Agenda.

3. Promoting inclusive and sustainable digital transformation:

ITU advocates for affordability, inclusivity, and digital literacy, particularly in low-income economies where fixed broadband remains unaffordable. The gender digital divide, with women making up a disproportionate share of the global offline population, is vital to address in line with SDG5 (Gender Equality). Inclusive digital transformation also aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and bolsters SDGs 1 and 2, providing equitable digital service access. Promoting inclusive and sustainable digital transformation also aligns with the 'Sustainability' and 'Partnerships' goals of ITU's Connect 2030 Agenda. Responsible innovation, linked to environmental and circular goals in the digital technology lifecycle, becomes increasingly crucial as connectivity expands.

The proposed actions, policies and measures aim to close the digital divide and help achieve all SDGs. These interwoven aims reinforce the 2030 Agenda through collective efforts to build a sustainable, inclusive, and digitally empowered global community. The ITU Council urges the HLPF 2024 to embrace these proposals, recognizing their transformative potential for a more equitable and sustainable future.

(d) Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit:

ITU's commitment to the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit is demonstrated through strategic initiatives, global partnerships, and decisive actions. ITU's work is driven by a desire to drive transformative changes, foster global digital inclusion, and respond effectively to the pressing challenges outlined in the Declaration, particularly through initiatives promoting universal connectivity, digital inclusion, gender equality, and sustainable digital transformation. ITU, as the UN's key digital agency, leverages technology to respond to global crises, protect the environment, and reduce the digital divide. Furthermore, it is dedicated to improving data and statistical capacities, fostering global digital cooperation, and development, and supporting the integration of SDGs into national policy frameworks. As ITU navigates the complexities of the digital era, it aims to align its actions and initiatives with the Political Declaration, creating a more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable digital future for all.

Key Actions:

1. Promote universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation

The ITU's strategic plan for 2024-2027 emphasizes universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation, reflecting its commitment to the goals outlined in the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit. These plans guide its continued

efforts to expand access to digital technologies and promote sustainable development.

2. **Foster inclusive and equitable education, gender equality, and digital literacy:**
ITU's initiatives, including the EQUALS Global Partnership and the Girls Can Code program, demonstrate its commitment to achieving gender digital equality and improving digital literacy. Furthermore, the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition has pledged 21.5% of its resources (worth US\$5 billion) towards women, underscoring its dedication to gender equality in the digital realm.
3. **Bridge the digital divide, ensuring infrastructure connectivity and Inclusion:**
Through the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, ITU is mobilizing over USD 36 Billion to bridge the digital divide and enhance digital infrastructure connectivity. It is also actively involved in the development of the Global Digital Compact, which focuses on promoting digital inclusivity.
4. **Enhance environmental protection, technological innovation, and connected, sustainable industrialization:**
ITU is leveraging ICTs for environmental protection and promoting technological innovation for sustainable industrialization. This includes the development of globally accepted energy efficiency standards for emerging fields such as 5G, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse.
5. **Upgrade data and statistical capacities, utilizing ICTs for monitoring, and policy-making:**
ITU provides technical assistance to member states, helping them build their ICT capacities and infrastructures. It also delivers knowledge sharing sessions, signs UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks with different countries, and develops early warning systems, thereby improving data and statistical capacities for effective monitoring and policymaking.
6. **Drive global digital cooperation and development:**
ITU is committed to improving global digital cooperation and development. This includes hosting global conferences, providing platforms for international collaboration, and implementing initiatives promoting gender equality and inclusivity in the field of ICTs.
7. **Bridge science, technology, and innovation divides, foster transfer of technologies, and address the challenges of AI:**
ITU continues to work on developing and implementing globally accepted standards for ICTs, especially in emerging fields such as 5G, Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence (AI), addressing the challenges of AI and promoting the transfer of technologies.
8. **Adopt ICTs for disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, and humanitarian assistance:**
ITU supports the UN Secretary-Generals Early Warning for All initiative and is developing early warning systems and leveraging ICTs for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance, reflecting the priorities outlined in the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

9. Integrate SDGs into national policy frameworks and planning:

ITU assists member nations in integrating SDGs into their policy frameworks by developing robust national broadband plans to accelerate progress towards these global goals.

10. Monitor and strengthen the alignment of the WSIS Process with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

This includes ensuring that the work carried out by ITU seeks synergies placing digital as a strategic enabler for accelerated achievement of SDGs.

11. Keep strengthening ITU's role in the UN Development System:

The digital development agenda requires proactive ITU participation in interagency work at the global, regional and national level, leading towards strengthened focus on prioritization of digital in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and One UN support to countries in digital development.

(e) Recommendations and Key Messages for Inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF:

Our world is undergoing rapid digital transformation, with technology and the Internet playing a profound role in all aspects of our lives. Emerging technologies like AI hold great promise to revolutionize sectors from healthcare to education, and from agriculture to energy. Yet, their potential benefits can only be fully realized if these technologies are harnessed for good, ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Crucially, we must establish robust safeguards to ensure the ethical use of AI, protecting against misuse and potential harm.

ITU's approach to achieving this must be multifaceted, tackling everything from enhancing digital connectivity and inclusion to investing in sustainable ICT infrastructure, improving digital literacy and skills, fostering effective public-private partnerships, utilizing ICT in combating climate change, addressing the gender digital divide, and ensuring youth engagement and participation. These recommendations and key messages are not isolated strategies, but reflect the interconnectedness of sustainable development and digital transformation, subtly weaving in elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17.

Recommendations and Key Messages

Digital Connectivity and Inclusion: Achieving meaningful digital connectivity is a crucial step towards addressing global issues like poverty. By ensuring access to digital technologies, particularly for marginalized communities, we can enable economic empowerment and foster social inclusion.

Investment in Sustainable ICT Infrastructure: Investing in sustainable ICT infrastructure, particularly in developing, rural, and low-income regions, is vital for bridging the digital divide. This would provide equitable access to the digital economy, directly contributing to poverty reduction and indirectly supporting efforts to combat hunger through improved access to information and resources.

Digital Literacy and Skills: Enhancing digital literacy and skills is essential for enabling individuals to participate effectively in the digital economy and society. This not only contributes to economic

growth but also aids in the fight against poverty and hunger by equipping individuals with the tools to improve their livelihoods.

Public-Private Partnerships: Public-private partnerships play a significant role in mobilizing resources, knowledge, and expertise for digital transformation. These partnerships can drive innovation, increase access to technology, and promote sustainable industrialization, all of which are necessary for achieving the goals of economic growth, poverty reduction, and zero hunger.

Climate Change Action and ICT's Role: The role of ICT in combating climate change and promoting sustainable practices is critical. The use of ICT to reduce energy use and waste, improve energy efficiency, and manage resources can support efforts towards climate action. On the other hand, the rapidly increasing digitalization, requires more energy and results in growing amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Better data on ICT sector energy use and emissions, as well as collaboration across ICT, energy and environment government entities is vital to make informed policy decisions and achieve the goal of universal connectivity while reducing emissions from the ICT sector.

Addressing the Gender Digital Divide: Achieving gender equality requires bridging the gender digital divide. Ensuring equal access to digital resources and opportunities for women and girls can empower them, promote their participation in the digital society, and contribute to building peaceful, inclusive societies.

Youth Engagement and Participation: Engaging and empowering youth in digital development is key to shaping a connected, sustainable, and inclusive future. This not only contributes to the creation of peaceful, just, and strong institutions but also ensures the active participation of the youth in achieving the broader sustainable development goals, as well as consideration of the interests of future generations.

Ethical Use and Safeguarding of AI: As we harness the potential of AI and other emerging technologies, it is vital to establish safeguards to ensure their ethical use. We must work towards creating global standards and regulations that protect against misuse and potential harm, while promoting transparency, accountability, and human rights in AI applications.

Digital Cooperation: Digital will play a crucial role in our efforts to achieve the 17 SDGs and establish a robust and stable foundation for global development. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades, with WSIS Action Lines withstanding the test of time. They are still relevant today to provide a robust framework for digital cooperation, moving forward.

ANNEX 1: IN-DEPTH VIEW OF THE ROLE OF ICTS AND ITU'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO GOALS 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

ICTs are a key enabler to achieve SDG-1, for example, by providing timely and accurate information services which will help ensure equal rights to economic resources, as well as ownership and control over different forms of property, as well as enabling services such as mobile banking for micro-credit, which have already brought direct benefits to millions of people who were previously unbanked.

ITU contributes to SDG 1:

- Promoting access to basic ICT services for all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable; by monitoring, collecting and disseminating data on access to basic ICT services, including households with broadband Internet access in urban and rural areas; by ensuring the radio frequency spectrum, a natural resource, is accessed everywhere and by all, equally and at the lowest possible price;
- Providing expertise through assistance and technical publications in the development of affordable ICT infrastructure to deal with the challenges and system requirements of fixed and mobile networks for rural and remote areas as well as broadcasting networks; by reducing vulnerability to disasters and to the effects of climate change through the development of National Emergency Telecommunication Plans, the establishment of early warning systems and business continuity plans, among other relevant activities related to disaster risk reduction; through the management of spectrum resources and the development of standards and best practices on radiocommunications and disseminating the related information and know-how, ensuring more accurate weather predictions, climate change monitoring and mitigation, public protection and disaster relief, as well as search and rescue;
- The mobilization of resources through partnerships with various stakeholders from the ICT ecosystem for the implementation of ICT development activities, projects and initiatives in developing countries, including through developing strategies and related tools and services (databases, sponsorship packages, dedicated websites, concept notes, promotional vehicles, etc.), by scaling up special initiatives such as GIGA, Connect2Recover, Smart Villages, Digital Transformation Centers, and other initiatives.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture all

ICTs give farmers new ways of accessing information and services. Extension agents improve their services through mobile access to digital information services, online

education, and business planning tools, allowing them to record service delivery events and solicit farmer feedback using mobile devices.

Government ministries can remotely monitor extension agent capacity building and service delivery efforts, as well as help evaluate results with an eye to improving services over time. Rural business productivity and effectiveness tend to increase once farmers and smallholders gain access to ICTs, enabling them to access market information, weather forecasts, and availability of fertilizers, as well as many programmes now springing up giving improved access to extension agents.

ITU contributes to SDG2:

- Supporting countries to develop their e-agriculture strategy as a framework to identify and develop sustainable ICT in agriculture services and solutions, in close collaboration with FAO. E-agriculture offers a strong potential for driving economic growth and rising incomes among the rural population through increased efficiency of agricultural production, improved livelihoods and value chain development;
- Providing specific digital skills programmes targeting people living in the rural areas as well as those engaged in the agriculture sector;
- Facilitating creation of digital innovation ecosystem in field of agriculture, fast forwarding digital transformation of the sector;
- Investigating the potential of expanding the concept of smart villages as the accelerator for digital agriculture development;
- Providing spectrum and standards and the dissemination of the related information and know-how for Internet of Things (IoT), unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), radionavigation, meteorology and Earth-exploration satellite systems, for the development and sustainability of e-agriculture. Satellite-based Earth observation and remote sensing systems and IoT sensor networks can help monitor for and detect impending droughts, wildfires, floods, hurricanes and tsunamis. They can also monitor the impacts of climate change on crops and the environment;
- Providing technical standards addressing ICTs for agriculture, smart farming, and smart greenhouses through the ITU-T Study Groups and Focus Group.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

ICTs, including satellite monitoring, play a crucial role in earth monitoring, sharing climate and weather information, forecasting, and early warning systems. ICTs therefore enable both the global monitoring of climate change as well as strengthen resilience by helping mitigate the effects of climate change through forecasting and early warning systems.

ITU contributes to SDG 13:

- Maintaining the Radio Regulations, the only international treaty on the international use of the radio spectrum and satellite orbits. The treaty harmonises on a world-wide basis essential spectrum used for early warning, disaster prediction, detection, mitigation and

relief operations relating to emergencies and disasters – as well as protecting of the unique spectrum needed for satellite weather sensors used for global prediction and warnings. ITU also works in the development of recommendations for [remote sensing systems](#) and [space applications](#) relevant to climate change.

- Supporting its Member States in the four phases of disaster management through the design of national emergency telecommunications plans, the setting up of early warning and monitoring systems and the provision of emergency telecommunications equipment when disasters strike. Sound and television broadcasting, PPDR and commercial mobile broadband networks, IoT, search and rescue satellite systems, as enabled by ITU activities, are also key enablers to ensure timely awareness and rescue of populations in case of climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
- Monitoring industry emissions, energy use and climate commitments from the ICT sector and supports countries in developing green ICT strategies and policies, including through tools, resources and training. Recent examples include:
 - ITU/World Bank [Green data centers practitioner's guide](#) and [e-learning course](#).
 - A guide and corresponding Standard on [Circular and Sustainable Public Procurement for ICTs](#)
 - An e-learning course on [“Green and Digital Entrepreneurship for Women”](#). The training course empowers women entrepreneurs in developing green digital entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. The course guides participants through the concepts and benefits of greening businesses and explores digital concepts, as well as how to green supply chains and green finance.
- Developing international standards that accelerate climate adaptation and mitigation. These standards support the sustainable use of ICTs, including products, services, installation, infrastructure, and more.
- Training programmes, guidelines, reports, convening multi-stakeholder initiatives and organizing seminars and workshops, contribute to improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- Providing technical assistance through an e-waste policy support programme to help countries manage e-waste at the national level and implement the extended producer responsibility principle in e-waste regulatory frameworks.
- The Global E-waste Monitor, a joint effort of ITU, the United Nations University (UNU) and the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), provides the most comprehensive overview of global e-waste statistics and an unprecedented level of detail, including an overview of the magnitude of the e-waste problem in different regions;
- The Green Digital Transformation Report of ITU and the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) documents the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy use of 200 of the world's leading digital companies. The report aligns with ITU's strategic plan's target to enhance the climate and environmental impact of ICTs, recognizing their contribution to global emissions. In addition to evaluating the climate data and goals of the companies, the report functions as a valuable tool that companies can use to gain insights from exemplary approaches. This enables

them to enhance their efforts in reducing emissions and expedite their progress towards achieving net-zero operations;

- In partnership with various stakeholders, including from the UN system, ITU's Green Digital Action initiative at COP28 and beyond, aimed at enhancing digital-technology-driven climate action, co-creating practical solutions, and mobilizing commitments to promote green and digital transitions. This is achieved by leveraging key partnerships and coordination mechanisms, such as the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, the Marrakech Partnership, and the UN Secretary-General's Early Warning for All initiative. The collective efforts at COP28 resulted in nine key commitments/outcomes across four thematic pillars. These include corporate agreements to set 1.5-degree aligned, science-based targets. Other agreements involve publishing transition plans and increasing transparency on emissions data across the tech industry through a joint database. An action plan was developed to strengthen industry and country collaboration on the implementation of environmental sustainability standards. In addition, pledges from the mobile telecommunication and satellite industry are supporting the Early Warnings for All initiative through cell-broadcast, location-based SMS and direct-to-handset services. Currently, the ITU and its GDA partners are working to ensure the follow-through of these pledges and commitments.
- ITU will continue to support the ICT sector's circular economy transition. For example, the ITU Standardization Study Group 5 is developing a new standard that will define the requirements of a global digital sustainable product passport for circular economy. The concept of global digital passport has recently generated significant attention, particularly at the European level.
- ITU also organizes a series of dialogues around the world to promote sustainable digital transformation, in addition to supporting key initiatives that focus on connecting digital technologies with environmental sustainability, such as the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES), which ITU is pleased to have joined as a co-champion.
- Through its partnership with the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), ITU is also supporting the Digital with Purpose movement to catalyze collective action across the ICT sector to accelerate their efforts in pursuit of a more sustainable strategy to meeting the Paris Agreement and United Nation Sustainability Goals by 2030.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

ICTs can play an important role in crisis management, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding, and have proved to be a powerful aid in areas such as electoral monitoring. The growing use of open data by governments increases transparency, empowers citizens, and helps to drive economic growth. ICTs are also essential in terms of record-keeping and tracking government data and local demographics.

When natural or man-made disasters occur, ICTs are crucial in obtaining, communicating and transmitting accurate and timely crisis information, allowing appropriate responses to be made.

ITU contributes to SDG 16:

- Committed to promoting broadband, and mobile broadband in particular, to enable citizens to access any content, anytime, anywhere in the global information society. Enabling ICT regulatory policies promote innovative services and technologies enhancing such access and driving social and economic progress;
- The monitoring of Target 16.10 by collecting and disseminating data on Internet access and usage, a key indicator for public access to information;
- Providing high-quality data, research, analyses, and tools to support membership in implementing and reviewing strategies, policies, and legal and regulatory frameworks as well as in moving towards evidence-based decision-making to achieve digital transformation;
- Capacity building initiatives in areas such as international Internet governance and training in cybersecurity. ITU also contributes to this target by providing institutional capacity support to ITU Academy Training Centres and Digital Transformation Centers;
- The creation and ongoing capacity building of ICT regulatory authorities. ITU regular activities such as the Global Symposium for Regulators allow for a constructive discussion on topical regulatory issues and identify best practice guidelines while ad hoc targeted assistance intervenes to leverage on those and provide for policy choices opening ways to new digital opportunities;
- Through the newly established Network of Digital Regulators, there is acceleration of sustainable digital transformation through common approaches to collaborative digital policy, regulation and governance across economic sectors and across borders. The Network is enabled by Regulatory Associations (RAs) at the regional and global level by leveraging South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation;
- Developing various platforms for developing a common understanding, vision and strategy on ICTs and multiple collaboration mechanisms are put in place to further the dialogue among regulatory authorities as well as with industry, consumers and other stakeholders;
- Acting as a partner to ICT regulators and policy makers as well as to the private sector to further ICT development and social inclusion, by facilitating and creating partnerships, such as private-public-partnerships (PPP), with aid-donors, governments, ministries and NGOs, in particular to meet universal access goals for rural, remote and unserved areas and for people with special needs;
- Promoting and facilitating international cooperation on specialized fields such as cybersecurity, together with other UN agencies, in order to contribute to the achievement of peace and international security;
- Monitoring commitment to cybersecurity worldwide, through the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), assessing national cybersecurity strategies, national plans or policies, capacity development questions, response teams and technical

aspects, specific legislation to counter the threats as well as cooperation amongst ITU Member States;

- Providing assistance to countries in field of legislation, national cybersecurity strategies (NCS), computer incident response teams (CIRTs), awareness and capacity development to communicate the strategies, and capabilities and programmes in the field of cybersecurity through annual Global Cyberdrill events;
- Rolling out the Global Child Online Protection Guidelines worldwide, ensuring the mainstreaming of the set of recommendations for all relevant stakeholders on how to contribute to the development of a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people. COP Guidelines are now available in over 15 national languages;
- Under the Generation Connect initiative engaging global youth and encourage their participation as equal partners alongside the leaders of today's digital change, empowering young people with the skills and opportunities to advance their vision of a connected future. Preparing the foundations for the preparations towards the 2025 Global Youth Summit;
- Providing globally harmonized spectrum and standards, ITU enables the development of mobile broadband, satellite and terrestrial sound and television broadcasting and their wider penetration, thus facilitating public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms;
- Standardizing technical specifications and solutions for identity management in (heterogeneous) in next generation networks for interoperable identification and authentication (SDG target 16.9).

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

ICTs are specifically mentioned as a means of implementation under SDG17, highlighting the cross-cutting transformative potential of ICTs. Indeed, ICTs are crucial in achieving all of the SDGs. Paragraph 15 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights that “the spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies...”

ITU contributes to Goal 17:

- ITU's World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in June 2022 provided a unique opportunity to develop innovative approaches and new models of collaboration for connectivity and digital solutions in this final Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. WTDC agreed upon a set of priorities for a joint action beyond 2022 around the areas of Affordable connectivity, Digital transformation, Enabling policy and regulatory environment, Resource mobilization and international cooperation, Inclusive and secure telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development. WTDC mobilized the global community around the

power of digital transformation and reshaped the connectivity agenda to achieve the SDGs;

- A series of ITU Regional Development Forums held in all regions in 2023 (RDF CIS to be held in March 2024) provided a platform for building effective partnerships and matchmaking between the real needs of the countries and stakeholders interested in supporting digital development;
- Strengthened engagement of ITU in the UN Development System, and its natural leadership as the UN Agency for Digital at the regional and country level has been leading towards extended interagency and multistakeholder partnership building for digital development;
- ITU-led coordination mechanisms, such as the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, UN Brussels Digital Taskforce or development of diverse products (such as the UN Digital Development Toolbox) and services supporting UN Country Teams in their endeavour of strengthening One UN support to countries on digital, opened new opportunities for scaled up operations;
- Engagement of ITU in the setting up and operationalization of the Digital Window of the Joint SDG Fund, leading towards new opportunities for multiagency support to the countries following their national priorities, with 23 countries benefiting from the first round of funding;
- The implementation of ITU Strategic Plan, linked to the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda, and WTDC Action Plan will contribute to achieving the SDGs. Based on key policy and regulatory developments which impact innovation and investment, including and in particular through implementation of the Regional Initiatives and to implement the SDGs where ICTs can play a decisive role, including health, education, gender equality, agriculture, governance, e-waste and emergency telecommunications. The mapping of activities between other Sectors is conducted and a calendar of events, which facilitates collaboration and coordination between Sectors, is developed;
- The “World Telecommunication and Information Society Day” celebrated annually on 17 May, to raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other ICTs can bring to societies and economies, as well as ways to bridge the digital divide;
- ITU provides a neutral platform for ITU members from government, industry and academia to share experiences, present ideas, exchange views and achieve consensus on appropriate strategies to address ICT priorities, as well as strengthening the means of implementation and enhancing access to science, technology and innovation by strengthening international cooperation and knowledge sharing on key ICT topics;
- Open platforms, such as ITU-T Focus Groups, help determine the way forward, while membership-driven ITU-T and ITU-R Study Groups develop the international standards that give everyone the opportunity to move forward together. Partnerships also receive key support from collaborative frameworks like AI for Good, United for Smart Sustainable Cities, the Digital Currency Global Initiative, and the AI for Road Safety initiative;
- Strengthening digital skills development in the America region through the implementation of the Americas Girls Can Code Project, in partnership with Meta

for Latin American countries. Through this project countries are assisted on topics related to promotion of gender digital inclusion policies and strategies;

- Promoting ICT capacity development training activities in benefit of youth from local communities in the Americas Region, more specifically in the Gran Chaco region, through the project entitled “Youth Digital Skills” in line with the needs of the ICT labour market/ecosystem. This project represents a cooperation between ITU and the Gran Chaco Foundation and also provides support to countries for the development of national strategies for enabling innovation and entrepreneurship oriented to youth;
- Promoting a regional platform on ICT accessibility that brings together stakeholders from the Americas region for participating in the event “Accessible Americas: ICT for ALL” as an opportunity for the development of strategic cooperation and collaboration in the field of digital accessibility and inclusion in the region. This platform also provides ITU executive trainings on the topic of ICT accessibility, promotes tools, resources, solutions and good practices to foster national policies toward achieving digital inclusion of everyone, including persons with disabilities;
- Strengthening the global ICT innovation ecosystem through activities such as know-how sharing (e.g. Global Innovation Forum, WSIS, Digital World, Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development), and co-creating grassroots projects based on new global and local partnerships. In addition, the established International Centre of Digital Innovation (I-CoDI) provides assistance to the Member States facilitation integration of telecommunication/ICT innovation into their national development agendas. Within the framework of the activities under I-CoDI, a Regional Hub for Africa has been established with dedicated physical space in the ITU Regional Office that aims to bring together different partners and create synergies around ongoing activities using different innovative approaches, tools and processes that can solve complex connectivity challenges for meaningful connectivity. It also aims to foster collaboration across governments, UN country teams, development partners, private sector, academia, and other stakeholders to implement joint initiatives to advance digital transformation in the region;
- ITU has launched the empowering Africa young leaders to solve regional digital challenges: Africa’s youth (ITU youth envoys, community workers, entrepreneurs, researchers, students and young professionals) from various backgrounds shared best practices on youth-led digital innovations at the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit in Kigali. ITU in collaboration with partners such as ILO, UNHCR and ATU convened young leaders from around the Africa region to lead and participate in partner sessions that provided youth organizations and youth leaders a forum to present and discuss their innovations and projects to empower youth to contribute to the digital transformation of their societies, in support of joint programmes and initiatives. In partnership with UNFPA, ITU helped rethink the Tech4Youth platform, which addresses a range of issues related to the empowerment and resilience of Youth for SDGs 3 and 5, and developed a new initiative called Tech4Girls, an innovative training and mentoring project to improve creativity and problem-solving, and communication and entrepreneurial skills of young girls. In addition, ITU partnered with UNFPA and WIPO to run an

Innovation Challenge to seek and support “Innovation to Empower Women and Girls”;

- Promoting and scaling up actions at the global level aiming at adopting whole-of-government approaches for investing in shared digital infrastructure that can lead to more rapid scale-up of digital services at less cost and greater return on investment, and how to coordinate investment to make digital public goods available that can enable digital transformation for SDGs;
- ITU, together with the governments of Germany and Estonia, and the Digital Impact Alliance, launched an initiative to assist national governments in establishing interoperable, secure and reusable IT infrastructure in support of their national development objectives. The “GovStack” is a set of digital building blocks that allow national public agencies to harness the power of emerging IT technologies, while minimizing costs and dependence on external contractors. The building blocks can be stacked together to easily build need-tailored, yet technically standardized solutions and services for citizen-oriented use cases in administration, health care, agriculture, education, and more. Within this framework, the following activities were launched:
 - Two Building Block (BB) technical specifications were published.
 - The Horn of Africa GovStack implementation in Djibouti and Kenya started in June with a series of digital service co-design workshops to prioritize and rank five government services to be digitized in 2023 using a GovStack Service Design & Building Blocks Approach.
 - Technical specifications for geographic information systems, e-signature, cloud & infrastructure, UX/UI, and e-marketplace started their co-design process in September.
 - The GovStack CIO Digital Leaders Forum was launched at WSIS Forum 2022 with the participation of Egypt, Estonia, India, Peru, Rwanda and Ukraine.
- Promoting ICT regulatory policies enhancing policy coherence, notably by making knowledge exchange tools and platforms available, raising awareness about the importance of an enabling environment; organizing global and regional forums and seminars to discuss global trends in digital regulation for Sector Members and other national and international ICT and intersectoral stakeholders, through events such as the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) as well as strategic dialogues on topical policy, legal, regulatory, as well as on economic and financial issues and market developments, and the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS);
- Proposing guidelines and recommendations addressed to the regulatory community and industry stakeholders (policy-makers, national regulatory authorities (NRAs), network operators/service providers, equipment manufacturers, digital players, governments, academics, international and regional associations, civil society) to promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration at regional and global level on policy, regulatory and economic issues notably through ITU Research publications, the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) Best Practices Guidelines, REG4COVID platform, ITU Datahub, ITU-World Bank digital regulation platform, G5 Accelerator, etc.;

- Providing a neutral platform for international cooperation towards building a harmonized and coordinated approach to fast-forward the evolution of the information society;
- Monitoring of Target 17.6 by collecting and disseminating data on Internet access and usage, in particular fixed broadband access, which is a key requirement for enhanced access to science, technology and innovation networks;
- The establishment of Mutual Recognition Agreements for a common and harmonized Conformance and Interoperability (C&I) programme at international and regional levels. Through the share and efficient use of C&I infrastructures – as laboratories, accreditation bodies and regulatory practices – technical requirements can be harmonized and the transit of ICT goods and services can be facilitated, increasing trade and regional development;
- The monitoring of Target 17.8 by collecting and disseminating a number of relevant ICT indicators that enable assessment of progress made by countries, including on Internet access and usage by households and individuals, international bandwidth and ICT prices. Activities are carried out in close collaboration with the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development;
- Promoting ICT regulatory policies enhancing policy coherence, notably by making knowledge exchange tools and platforms available, raising awareness about the importance of an enabling environment;
- Building harmonized regulatory frameworks within and across regions, and establishing a broader and inclusive dialogue and enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders;
- Enhancing the global partnership for sustainable development by working with governments, through their policy making and development of institutional frameworks for the ICT sector as well as with the private sector, to lay the foundation of modern digital economies;
- ITU with the support of the governments of Japan and Saudi Arabia launched the Connect2Recover initiative at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic to assist beneficiary countries, in particular LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, to build back better during the recovery period, and to remain resilient in times of hazards. In addition to Japan and Saudi Arabia, the initiative has since received support from the governments of Australia, Lithuania and Czech Republic. In addition, there is also support provided by Vodafone (to support the work of the Broadband Commission Working Group on Smartphone Access) and Huawei (to support the research competition). With the support of the partners, Connect2Recover has an impact on 43 countries around the world;
- Further scaling up a series of strategic initiatives aiming at acceleration of achievement of diverse SDGs thanks to ICTs, such as Connecting Every School to the Internet (Giga), Child Online Protection (COP), International Center of Digital Innovation (I-CoDI), Connect2Recover, Digital Transformation Centres, EQUALS, Africa and American Girls can Code, Be He@lthy Be Mobile, Big Data for Measuring the Information Society, Financial Inclusion Global Initiative (FIGI);
- ITU and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are working in partnership to support digital inclusion in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil. Four work streams in these Digital Access Partnership countries aim to strengthen the enabling policy and regulatory

environment, sustainable connectivity models, partnerships, and digital skills. The platform provided for stakeholders in the national ecosystem to engage, share, and tap into each other's expertise and insights for future joint work. The coordination and bringing together of initiatives also saw the crystallization of gaps, opportunities, and co-creation of guidance that could inform further interventions;

- Fostering the use of Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies in the health sector: During the Seventy-second session of the WHO Regional Committee meeting for Africa, ITU and WHO with support from USAID organized a Ministerial meeting on the use of Artificial Intelligence for Health as a side event on 25 August 2022. The event brought together Ministers of Health and Ministers of ICT who shared country experiences and emphasized the critical role of integrating digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence to advance digital transformation in the health sector. Different strategies to strengthen institutional capacity and enable cross-sectoral collaboration for enhanced health care in Africa were highlighted;
- Launch of the second phase of the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) in collaboration with the African Union Commission, UN Women, UNECA, UNICEF, UNESCO and other partners with financial support from the Government of Belgium. The second phase will aim to equip young girls with digital skills through national programmes in eleven selected countries delivered through ITU Academy platform;
- Enhancing the digital ecosystem and digital skills for the economic empowerment of women through the ITU-EIF project activities have been undertaken that include the Hub of Africa Addis Fashion Week, product development workshops, digital market webinar series and workshops which have enabled women entrepreneurs to show-case their products, receive training and mentoring, gain in-depth understanding of the information and digital tools needed to improve their readiness and competitiveness in the international market. During the webinar series and workshops, the women entrepreneurs have been equipped with knowledge on; how to understand customers using digital tools, how to build an online brand identity, introduction to pricing, wholesale marketing, design and digital photography;
- ITU and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are in partnership with a programme in Africa to boost decent jobs and enhance skills for youth in the digital economy. This has involved organizing online and face-to-face events, activities and challenges, engaging youth, Government agencies, private sector and civil society. From the 'Creating decent jobs for youth through digital transformation' webinar during the Africa-Europe Week of Partnerships 2022, to a youth led session on 'Decent jobs in Africa's digital economy' at the Generation Connect Youth Summit in Kigali, Rwanda and to progress made on country projects (South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, Ethiopia) that align with national priorities under the ITU-ILO joint programme in Africa, as a result of the work youth are getting more empowered and able to benefit from opportunities in the digital economy. Such efforts further allow strides to be made towards the goal of 25 million youth digitally skilled through the global ILO-ITU Digital Skills for Jobs Campaign;

- Creating a circular economy for electronic waste in Africa, ITU in partnership with UNEP is supporting Governments to develop policies, regulations and strategies including the implementing the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) concept to set the basis for a future implementation of the sound management and measurement of electronic waste with support extended 8 countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 2022;
- To scale up the impact and sustainability of the #Tech4Youth initiative and Task force Innov COVID-19 for local youth resilience and digital innovation in Benin established by UNFPA and to create lasting impact for beneficiary populations, there is a need strengthen the specialized technical assistance to develop and nurture digital innovation ecosystems through an open innovation approach. In 2022 ITU and UNFPA teamed up to assist, nurture and support the local digital innovation ecosystem in Benin and develop uses cases that can be applied for other countries in the region for the development of a sustainable and inclusive initiatives to accelerate inclusive digital transformation;
- Encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships by partnering with a range of stakeholders to empower women, girls, youth, children, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities(e.g. for example by leading the Thematic Area on Digital Skills of the Global Initiative for Decent Jobs for Youth, and through the ITU-ILO Digital Skills Campaign for Decent Jobs for Youth; by leading the global Child Online Protection (COP) Initiative, by leading the International Girls in ICT Campaign; by hosting EQUALS: the global partnership to bridge the gender digital divide or by contributing to the regional initiatives and events in ICT accessibility – ICT for all);
- ITU's Child Online Protection Initiative joining forces with its network of partners, released in 2020 a brief on [COVID-19 and its Implications for Protecting Children Online.pdf \(itu.int\)](#) main product a revised version of the ITU Guidelines for Child Online Protection;
- ITU and the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children have initiated a collaboration named [POP: Protection through online Participation](#), with international governmental and non-governmental organisations, academia and the private sector;
- An ongoing track record of inviting experts from developing countries to ITU meetings, workshops etc. Also, the Focus Group on Innovation studied cases of ICT innovations for developing countries and developed proposals for new standardization activities for ITU study groups and the ICT Innovation Panel;
- Developing and disseminating best practices on the use of radiocommunications and organizing seminars and workshops, ITU contributes to enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular information and communications technologies;
- Cooperation and coordination with other standards developing organizations, such as through ITU Focus Groups, workshops and seminars, liaison activities etc.;
- ITU has contributed to the development of capacities in regulatory and economic matters, and in the generation of digital skills for digital transformation, both to governments, regulators, and civil society, with an inclusion approach, through strategic alliances with subregional organizations such as COMTELCA, in the case of Central America, and in coordination with other United Nations agencies such

as UN Women, UNDP, WFP, among others. In the framework of the ITU Policy and Economic Colloquium for the Americas, Regional Economic Dialogues have been organized together with different specialized training to seek partnership with UN agencies, government and private sector, academia and civil society. The objective of these dialogues is to discuss on modernization of regulation and economic approaches in the telecommunications/ICT market;

- In November 2020, and in preparation for the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2023 (WRC-23), the Network of Women for WRC-23 (NOW4WRC23) was launched with the objective to implement the concrete actions in the WRC-19 Gender Declaration. The NOW4WRC23 worked at both global and regional levels towards increasing the number of women participating in and taking on leading roles, such as committee chairs and conference chairs, in the technical conferences of ITU's Radiocommunication Sector. A key component of the initiative was aimed at increasing the participation of women in the WRC-23 preparatory activities of the Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) that produce regional proposals to WRCs (APT, ASMG, ATU, CEPT, CITELE and RCC). This was supported by providing mentorship opportunities for women participating in ITU-R Study Groups;
- Similarly, the 2023 Radiocommunication Assembly adopted Resolution ITU-R 72 (Dubai, 2023), "Promoting gender equality and equity and bridging the contribution and participation gap between women and men in ITU-R activities". Res 72 addresses several of the objectives and targets of SDG 5;
- Through the Radiocommunication Assembly, ITU approves recommendations, setting international technical standards for various wireless services and spectrum management, that play a crucial role in accelerating the attainment of the SDGs. These globally implemented standards, freely accessible online, promote inclusivity and accessibility in the global ICT landscape, driving progress towards the SDGs;
- The annual WSIS Forum remains a key platform for multi-stakeholder networking and collaboration aiming to develop inclusive and development-oriented information and knowledge societies. The Forum brings together a diverse array of stakeholders, including representatives from governments, international organizations, technical community, academia, civil society, private sector, and youth to engage in addressing issues on ICTs for development. The WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event will take place from 27 to 31 May 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. It will be co-hosted by ITU and the Swiss Confederation, and co-organized with UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD. The agenda and outcome of the Forum are strategically aligned to the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs (www.wsis.org/forum);
- The WSIS Action Lines and SDG matrix, initiated at the WSIS Forum 2015 and coordinated by ITU with the collaboration of a number of United Nations agencies, has been continually utilized as a valuable tool to map how ICTs may contribute to the implementation of SDGs. The Matrix serves as an easy reference for stakeholders engaged in shaping the future of both the SDGs and the WSIS processes (www.wsis.org/sdg);
- Cooperate with the relevant international and regional organizations dealing with the use of spectrum, including the RTOs recognized by ITU for regional

coordination (see the list above); broadcasting organizations (ABU, ASBU, EBU and HFCC); and those focused on the use of specific radiocommunication systems and services (e.g., ITSO, ESOA, GVF, GSMA) by organizing, promoting and participating in events to build capacity on the use of the Radio Regulations, including World Radiocommunication Seminars and Regional Radiocommunication Seminars;

- Continue to participate in the activities of other international and regional standardization organizations, such as Global Standards Collaboration (GSC), 3GPP and IEEE. Other organizations we liaise with include the World Health Organization (WHO), ISO and IEC (including CISPR), Space Frequency Coordination Group;
- Cooperate with the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN-COPUOS), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), , the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM), the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO), COSPAS-SARSAT, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (CICR) with regards to the development and application of ITU treaty texts and in some cases to deliver capacity-building/training;
- In the Americas region more than seven National CIRT Readiness Assessments were deployed and more than 10 specialized cybersecurity capacity building workshops and raising awareness were deployed in coordination with the main regional organizations and cybersecurity stakeholders;
- ITU contributes to the development of the ICT Campaign to Combat COVID-19 Misinformation in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines;
- In the framework of Infrastructure and Network development, identifying connectivity gaps to ICT infrastructure is key. ITU Broadband Mapping activities (www.itu.int/go/maps) make use of geospatial tools related to telecom infrastructure, together with relevant data for identifying missing links on regional/subregional basis. This allows the development of projects and case studies for planning broadband infrastructure deployment. Examples of ITU activities and partnerships on this includes: the digital mapping of all schools connectivity in different countries in collaboration with UNICEF under the Giga project; Financial Inclusion; and development of ICT Business Planning for sustainable network development toolkit and training;
- The SDG Digital initiative, led by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has garnered substantial support from global entities to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative, launched during the high-level SDG Digital event, highlights how digital technologies can impact approximately 70% of the SDG targets. Commitments were made by various partners to increase digital connectivity and skills, invest in digital infrastructure, and foster digital transformation. Additionally, the initiative includes innovative financial solutions, a roadmap for digital transformation, and recognition of outstanding digital solutions through the SDG Digital GameChanger Award;
- ITU developed a Toolkit on Digital Transformation for People-Oriented Cities and Communities, together with other partners including FAO, UNDESA, UNU-

EGOV, UNECE, UNIDO, UN-HABITAT, UNDP, WMO, International Water Resources Association, UNEP-DTU, U4E, and Copenhagen Centre on Energy Efficiency. This toolkit provides guidance on driving digital transformation in the urban context;

- ITU is organizing the Digital Transformation Dialogues (DTD), along with other UN agencies. It offers a dynamic platform to facilitate a deeper understanding of emerging technologies to reshape traditional processes, improve operational efficiency and unlock new possibilities for innovation and standardization. The Digital Transformation Dialogues seeks to address evolving themes associated with digital transformation, foster cooperation among city stakeholders, and examine the role of standardization within this domain. The Digital Transformation Dialogues will encompass:
 - Digital Transformation Webinars
 - Fireside Chats
 - Ask the expert: ITU-T Standard in Focus Sessions