<u>Inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2024</u>

<u>Inputs from functional commissions of ECOSOC, other intergovernmental bodies and forums to the 2024 HLPF</u>

<u>Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development</u>

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

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that "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". However, out of the 232 indicators in the SDG monitoring framework, only 7 are ICT related. To help address this gap, the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development released a thematic list of ICT indicators for the SDGs in November 2019, that can be used to measure ICT availability and use in sectors relevant to the SDGs that are not covered in the global SDG indicators framework. In accordance with the focus of the HLPF 2024, this input will solely focus on the indicators related to SDG 17.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of countries to conduct survey-based data collection and delayed statistical production overall, including their ability to improve the availability of ICT statistics. At the same time, the enforced digitalization of many aspects of daily life increased the urgency of producing more and better ICT statistics in support of efforts to monitor post-pandemic recovery. The pandemic also highlighted the limitations of traditional sources of data for ICT statistics and brought renewed interest in finding innovative and alternative data sources, such as administrative data, big data and data-sharing schemes with the private sector to support digital policy making.

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.

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, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

In the context of the 2024 HLPF, the Partnership's thematic list of ICT core indicators is relevant to monitoring progress in SDG 17. Statistical offices in developing countries need support from their national governments and the international community to improve their capacity, including building skills and allocating regular and sufficient resources, to produce at least those indicators included in the thematic list of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. In turn, the indicators should be proactively used to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies to achieve SDG 17.

Internationally comparable indicators on ICT use by households, businesses, education, and government, on digital trade, and on the management and cross-border movement of electronic waste, would allow countries to produce insightful analysis to identify priorities for action and accelerate progress related to the implementation of international goals and targets. The Partnership's thematic list of ICT indicators span the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainable development.

The ability to leverage digitalization to overcome geographical constraints is particularly important for landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. The same indicators can inform SDG 17 to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development", to measure how countries have been able to "enhance the use of enabling technologies". Last but not least, these indicators can help countries better assess the digital readiness to face future crises.

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.

The Partnership on Measuring ICT Development supports initiatives in ensuring the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by bringing together knowledge, tools, and experiences, for monitoring performance in developing countries.

For example, the OECD Going Digital Toolkit helps to monitor progress towards the SDG 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development from connectivity and technology diffusion perspectives. The ITU DataHub is ITU's new data dissemination platform. It features hundreds of ICT indicators compiled by the ICT Data and Analytics Division and the Regulatory and Market Environment Division of ITU. The ITU DataHub is regularly updated with new indicators and new functionalities.

Partners produce and disseminate methodological guides that can be used by countries in improving their capacity in collecting ICT statistics and analyzing ICT developments. Partners conduct technical meetings and workshops to improve availability of comparable ICT statistics. Partnership report to the UN Statistical Commission on progress related to ICT statistics.

As part of the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, the ITU, the Office of the UN SG's Envoy on Technology and their partners, have established a set of aspirational targets for 2030 to help prioritize interventions, monitor progress, evaluate policy effectiveness, and galvanize efforts around achieving universal and meaningful connectivity by the end of the decade. Building on this groundwork, ITU and the European Commission (EC) have jointly designed the project "Promoting and measuring universal and meaningful digital connectivity". The project started in May 2023 and will run until 2026, with a budget of 3 million euros. Through three workstreams -- advocacy, measurement, and research – the project pursues four objectives: increasing awareness of universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) as a policy imperative;

improving the measurement and dissemination of UMC data; enhancing statistical capacity of national actors in measuring UM; and identifying better policies for achieving UMC.

Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

The following are actions that the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development undertakes to support the implementation of the Political Declaration, paragraph 38.r.

• regularly discuss ways to help countries increase availability of data for the core ICT indicators, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of ICT statistics to guide policy aimed at achieving international goals and targets.

• continues to disseminate methodological guidance and technical materials on ICT statistics, online and through capacity building activities.

• work with national statistical offices and other stakeholders to explore the use of big data for measuring the information economy and society, and other relevant areas.

• updates the list of core indicators and its methodological guidance to reflect the evolution of markets, as well as emerging needs such as measuring the use of ICT for post-pandemic recovery, and the potential to leverage the changing data landscape (including privately held data) to inform official statistics.

Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF.

• Countries should recognize that official ICT statistics are key inputs to digital policies for achieving the SDGs and prioritize the improvement of such statistics so that countries are able to measure progress in leveraging ICTs for development in time for the 2030 deadline.

• Reiterate that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), if adequately governed and well used, can significantly contribute to the progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

• Countries should consider the principles of the universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) in their national digital policies as a guide to developing quality ICT infrastructure, facilitating the inclusive access by all by fostering ICT skills and enabling the market conditions to ensure the affordability of devices and services.

• Countries should also recognize that official statistics are key inputs to digital policies for achieving the SDGs and prioritize the improvement of such statistics so that countries are able to measure progress in leveraging ICTs for development in time for the 2030 deadline.

• Cooperation and partnerships among governments and international organizations should be maintained to support countries – especially those in development – to improve of capacities of statistical offices for the collection, dissemination of data to monitor the level and quality of connectivity,

as well as those of policymakers for the use of such data to support the inclusion of UMC in their national digital policies.