ITU COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION TO THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF) 2025

Theme: "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind"

Sustainable Development Goals under review: (**SDG 3**) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; (**SDG 5**) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; (**SDG 8**) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; (**SDG 14**) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and (**SDG 17**) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

General Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs). ITU allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to and use of ICTs to 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 have available, accessible and affordable access to ICTs.

Through ITU's work, we support everyone's fundamental right to communicate. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets stimulate global action in the coming years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. As acknowledged by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "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, digital technologies, information systems, digital skills and Internet use have the potential to reduce poverty and create jobs through applications and services, such as e-agriculture and digital finance; help end poverty and hunger; ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities; monitor and mitigate climate change and sustain our natural resources; as well as improved efficiency and transparency. All three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection – need ICTs as key catalysts. The development potential of ICT as crosscutting enablers must therefore be fully harnessed for achieving the SDGs.

To enable this vision, ITU and its members have adopted the ITU Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 and the Connect 2030 Agenda which are based on 5 ITU strategic Goals. Each Goal has its own indicators that measure the progress towards this shared vision.

In line with [UN Resolution A/70/1](#) and [Resolution A/70/125](#), ITU, in collaboration with more than 40 UN organizations, is continuously working towards strengthening the alignment of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) Process implementation activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This ongoing effort emphasizes the direct linkages between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. The WSIS Forum, Stocktaking, and related activities, led by ITU and its partners, play a key role in advancing this alignment. In this context, ITU is also committed to aligning its initiatives with the objectives of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), adopted by Member States at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, as an Annex to the Pact for the Future, ensuring that digital transformation efforts globally are harmonized with the aims of the WSIS and SDGs, thereby fostering a more inclusive, sustainable, and connected world.

(a) *Your assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.*

The digital divide remains a significant barrier to achieving these goals, with an estimated 2.6 billion people worldwide still lacking internet access, predominantly in remote, rural, and less developed areas. This is largely fuelled by affordability challenges and difficulties faced by developing countries to access necessary capital impacting the ability of countries and individuals to harness opportunities for better health care and sustainable economic growth. This lack of connectivity impedes progress not only on health and well-being (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5) by limiting access to information and services but also affects economic growth (SDG 8) by restricting participation in the digital economy. Moreover, it hinders efforts towards sustainable management and conservation of marine resources (SDG 14), as digital technologies are crucial for monitoring and protecting our oceans.

The rapid advancement and deployment of ICT services and technologies, including 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing, offer unprecedented opportunities to address these challenges. These technologies can revolutionize healthcare delivery, empower women and girls by providing access to education and economic opportunities, foster sustainable economic growth, and enhance our ability to protect marine environments through improved data collection and analysis. However, rapid technological advancement also risks creating new and wider divides.

However, to fully leverage these technologies for sustainable development, it is essential to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital tools and services. The ITU is committed to this endeavour, focusing on initiatives that promote digital inclusion, enhance the security and reliability of ICT use, and make technologies more user-friendly and accessible to all segments of the population.

By emphasizing the role of digital technologies in advancing science- and evidence-based solutions for the SDGs, the ITU continues to support global efforts towards sustainable development. Through partnerships (SDG 17), the ITU collaborates with stakeholders across sectors to harness the potential of ICTs in achieving the SDGs, ensuring that technological advancements benefit everyone, everywhere, and contribute to leaving no one behind.

As the ITU, the United Nations' primary agency for information and communication technologies, our commitment to harnessing digital technology to accelerate the realization of the United Nations' SDGs remains steadfast, particularly in these three key areas:

1   **Universal Connectivity Progress:**

Despite significant advancements, the challenge of universal connectivity remains, especially as we aim to leverage this connectivity for health services (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5). Our Connect 2030 Agenda, alongside initiatives like Giga, connecting every school to the internet, and the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative, strengthening digital capacities in underserved communities, has made strides in ensuring equal digital access for all. These efforts are crucial for providing access to essential health information, continuous learning and other information to enable especially young people get productive employment and decent work, and empowering women and girls through targeted programs like 'Girls Can Code' and 'Girls in ICT'. 34 countries are already working with Giga to connect schools, with over 2.2 million schools across the world mapped, and over 14 000 schools accessing connectivity and benefitting more than 7 million children. As we progress, our focus remains on bridging the digital divide, which is foundational for achieving the broader spectrum of SDGs.

2   **Advocacy for Sustainable Digital Transformation:**

The digital economy's role in bolstering economic prosperity (SDG 8) is undeniable. Our initiatives, such as the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development, emphasize the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in bridging the digital divide while promoting responsible environmental practices. This dual focus aligns with our efforts to ensure that digital transformation contributes positively to economic growth without compromising our planet's health.

In addition, a new Resolution on Enhancing Standardization Activities for Sustainable Digital Transformation was adopted during the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24). This Resolution aims to bolster global efforts towards sustainable digital transformation by supporting the development and implementation of international standards. Moreover, ITU hosts the Digital Transformation Dialogues, which offer a dynamic platform for fostering a deeper understanding of emerging technologies. These dialogues help reshape traditional processes, enhance operational efficiency, and unlock new possibilities for innovation and standardization.

3   **Enhancing Global Digital Cooperation:**

The evolving landscape of digital technologies underscores the need for robust global digital cooperation (SDG 17). Through platforms like the WSIS, the UN Global Digital Compact, and the Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition, we have facilitated

dialogues that are critical for addressing complex digital challenges. WSIS serves as a leading multistakeholder platform fostering global digital cooperation and providing a well-established framework for addressing complex digital challenges while advancing the SDGs. Guided by its Action Lines, WSIS has stood the test of time as a functioning, inclusive multistakeholder model, with its principles continuing to serve as a key reference point for global digital discussions and governance. Through its annual WSIS Forum, participants engage in multistakeholder dialogues, collaborative partnerships, and coordinated actions, highlighting digital for development. The WSIS Prizes spotlight successful projects worldwide, showcasing innovative solutions that address connectivity challenges and foster digital transformation, further demonstrating WSIS's enduring role as a strong example of digital cooperation in action. The P2C platform, in particular, has seen significant engagement, with pledges aimed at connecting the hardest-to-reach communities. This global endeavour is essential for deploying emerging technologies responsibly and inclusively, aligning with SDGs 5, 8, and 17.

(c)   Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale, building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

The ITU emphasizes the critical need to bridge the digital divide that still affects a substantial portion of the global population, hindering progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Despite advancements, the ITU's latest report reveals ongoing disparities in global Internet connectivity, particularly between high-income and low-income countries. To accelerate progress towards SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17, the ITU identifies three pivotal actions:

1   **Enhanced Access to Affordable Broadband and Universal Connectivity:**

Building on the foundation laid in 2024, the urgent need for affordable broadband services and universal connectivity remains paramount, especially in advancing SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 5 (Gender Equality), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The stark digital divide continues to hinder progress, necessitating aggressive measures to make broadband affordable and accessible in underserved areas, including LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. This action supports the broader ambition of ensuring no one is left behind by providing the infrastructure necessary for inclusive economic growth, access to health services, and empowerment of women and girls through digital inclusion. Associated with this is the critical need for affordable internet-enabled terminal/user devices.

2   **Scaling Digital Skills Development and Literacy**:

Digital literacy and skills are critical for full participation in the digital economy and society, directly impacting SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by addressing the gender digital divide and fostering economic growth (SDG 8) through increased employability and entrepreneurship opportunities. The ITU's commitment to empowering millions with digital skills by 2030 should expand to include targeted programs for vulnerable and marginalized groups, ensuring equitable access to quality education (SDG 4) and digital literacy for all. This focus aligns with the 'Innovation' and 'Inclusiveness' objectives of the ITU's Connect 2030 Agenda, emphasizing the importance of

equipping everyone with the skills needed for the 21st century. This commitment is aligned with WSIS Action Line C4: Capacity Building, which emphasizes the development of skills and competencies in digital technologies, and Action Line C7: E-Learning, which highlights the role of e-learning in bridging gaps in access to digital education and skills.

3   **Promoting Inclusive Digital Transformation**:

Inclusive digital transformation, ensuring policies that promote affordability, inclusivity, and digital literacy, remains a cornerstone for achieving sustainable development. This transformation is crucial for bridging the gender digital divide (SDG 5), enhancing economic growth (SDG 8), and ensuring sustainable use of oceans (SDG 14) through innovations like digital monitoring of marine environments. Policies must prioritize the affordability of digital services in low-income economies and encourage the participation of women and girls in STEM fields. This approach is in line with the 'Sustainability' and 'Partnerships' (SDG 17) goals of the Connect 2030 Agenda, advocating for a holistic and inclusive digital ecosystem that supports the SDGs.

(d)   Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support the implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ITU's commitment to the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit is dynamically demonstrated through its strategic initiatives, partnerships, and decisive actions. ITU's work is motivated by a desire to drive transformative changes, foster global digital inclusion, and respond effectively to the pressing challenges outlined in the Declaration. Its initiatives promote universal connectivity, digital inclusion, gender equality, and sustainable digital transformation. ITU leverages technology to respond to global crises, protect the environment, and reduce the digital divide. Furthermore, ITU 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   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   Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education, Gender Equality, and Digital Literacy:

ITU's initiatives, including the [EQUALS Global Partnership](#) to bridge the digital gender divide and the Girls Can Code program, demonstrate its commitment to promoting gender equality and improving digital literacy. Furthermore, the

Partner2Connect Digital Coalition has pledged 21.5% of its resources (worth $5 billion) specifically towards women, underscoring its dedication to gender equality in the digital realm.

3   Bridge the Digital Divide, Digital Infrastructure Connectivity, and Digital Inclusivity:

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 committed to the Global Digital Compact (GDC), which focuses on promoting digital inclusivity and identified Giga as a foundation to build on to connect all schools and health centres.

4   Environmental Protection, Technological Innovation, and ICT for Sustainable Industrialization:

ITU is leveraging ICTs for environmental protection and promoting technological innovation for sustainable industrialization. This includes the development of globally accepted standards for emerging fields such as 5G, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse.

5   Data and Statistical Capacities, ICTs for Monitoring, and Policymaking:

ITU provides technical assistance to Member States, helping them build their ICT capacities and infrastructures for sustainable development. Increasingly, this is done jointly with partners in the UN development system through UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks with programme countries. It also delivers knowledge sharing sessions, and develops early warning systems, thereby improving data and statistical capacities for effective monitoring and policymaking.

6   Global Digital Cooperation and Development:

ITU is committed to improving global digital cooperation and development. This includes convening global conferences, providing platforms for international collaboration, and implementing initiatives promoting gender equality and inclusivity in the field of ICTs.

7   Science, Technology, and Innovation Divides, Transfer of Technologies, and 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   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   Integration of SDGs into National Policy Frameworks and Development of National Plans:

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

(e)   Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLP.

Our world is increasingly shaped by digital transformation, with technology and the internet playing a profound role in all aspects of our lives. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (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 and access to them is broadened, ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Crucially, we must also establish robust safeguards to ensure the ethical use of AI, protecting against misuse and potential harm.

The global community's approach to achieving digital transformation 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.

As we navigate this digital age, we must ensure that each step we take in advancing digital inclusion also moves us one step closer towards achieving the broader Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations and key messages

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

2   **Investment in Sustainable ICT Infrastructure:** The capabilities of technology continue to evolve, increasing opportunities and capabilities to countries and individuals. However, infrastructure is critical to harnessing these. 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.

3   **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.

4   **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.

5   **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 contributes to significant environmental sustainability, supporting efforts towards climate action.

6   **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, and more sustainable societies.

7   **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.

8   **Ethical Use and Safeguarding of AI:** As we harness the potential of AI and other emerging technologies, it is critical 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.

ANNEX 1: IN-DEPTH VIEW OF THE ROLE OF ICTS AND ITU'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO GOALS (SDG 3) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; (SDG 5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; (SDG 8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; (SDG 14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and (SDG 17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

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Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Connectivity provided by data and telecommunication networks enable health workers to be connected to information and diagnostic services and allow them to form support networks and communicate with doctors and nurses within clinics and hospitals. Mobile phones allow community health workers to learn and prepare for disease outbreaks, identify patient symptoms, follow established treatment protocols, perform remote diagnostics, access expert support, refer patients to clinics, send patient reminders, record delivery of health services, and receive mobile payments for those services. Social media helps to provide advice and support, and allows health workers and patients alike to benefit from shared best practice, and to obtain important information about disease outbreaks and the availability of health services. Analytics provide the capabilities needed to produce snapshots, analyse trends, and make projections about disease outbreaks, health service usage, and patient knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding their health – all within time frames critical to eradicating disease and reducing mortality rates.

ITU contributes to SDG 3

– By combating diseases through the establishment of monitoring systems using mobile networks;

– Targets 3.1, 3.2, 3.7 and 3.8 - By sharing information and documenting ICT best practices on how eHealth applications can play an essential role in meeting the SDG targets for women's and children's health. Additionally, ITU contributes by supporting countries through regional capacity building workshops and direct technical assistance, in collaboration with WHO, to develop their national eHealth strategies to better harness ICT for health, particularly for women's and children's health;

– Target 3.3 and 3.d - Through its ongoing project on ICT Applications Against Ebola Disease (being implemented in West Africa);

– ITU contributes to the implementation of broadband networks which provide the underpinnings of optimal service delivery calling for high quality and safety requirements. In addition, ITU is providing information about electromagnetic field (EMF) issues for the protection of the population;

– In the framework of the ITU Interactive Transmission Map, ITU is enhancing awareness of developing countries on the existing telecommunication/ICT infrastructure (including broadcasting networks) that are being taken into consideration when designing new networks for early warning and risk reduction;

- Targets 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.a - Through the joint initiative with WHO "Be Healthy Be Mobile", using mobile technology to help Member States combat the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (cancer, stroke, heart disease, lung disease and diabetes) and their risk factors (tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol). This initiative supports governments who are seeking to bring mobile health services to scale within national health systems, by providing technical expertise on implementing mobile health interventions. It also promotes a highly multisectoral approach to ensure that the programmes are sustainable. The initiative has established partnerships with its target 8 countries from a range of low-, middle- and high-income countries. The established mHealth Innovation Hub of ITU, WHO and EC, serves as a platform to share best practice and provide a one-stop shop to access guidance on mobile health implementation.

- Target 3.6 - By providing spectrum and standards and disseminating the related information and know-how for Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), radionavigation-satellite systems and IoT;

- Target 3.8, 3.9, 3.d - By providing globally harmonized spectrum and standards and disseminating the related information and know-how, ITU enables the development of mobile broadband and its wider penetration, thus permitting E-medicine to become available throughout the world. By providing spectrum and standards for weather forecasting, Earth Exploration satellites, sound and television broadcasting and mobile networks, ITU contributes to early detection of natural disasters and other health risks, timely information of populations and mitigation decisions;

- Technical standardization of multimedia systems and capabilities for e-health applications, for personal health systems/devices including conformity, security aspects of using tele biometrics for e-health and telemedicine, and digital health services enabled by Internet of Things (IoT) and smart sustainable cities and communities (SSC&C).

- ITU, in collaboration with partners such as WHO, the Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA), and others, launched the WSIS Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize in 2020 as part of efforts within the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). This special prize recognizes the most innovative and impactful ICT projects and initiatives that promote healthier and more active ageing.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

ICTs allow women and girls to access information of importance to their productive, reproductive and community roles and to obtain additional resources. Access to ICTs can enable women to gain a stronger voice in their communities, their government and at the global level. ICTs also offer women flexibility in time and space and can be of particular value to women who face social isolation. There is a growing body of evidence on the benefits of ICTs for women's empowerment, through increasing their access to health, nutrition, education, employment, and other human development opportunities, such as political participation. Women's sustainable livelihoods can be enhanced through expanded access of women producers and traders to markets, and to education, training and employment opportunities. ICT can provide new opportunities for women's economic empowerment by: creating business and employment opportunities for women as owners

and managers of ICT-accessed projects, as well as employees of new business ventures; creating an environment, including through training, where women feel comfortable participating in community development activities and advocating for their needs and priorities; developing ICT-based tools that address women's specific needs and are run by women (for example, literacy programmes, business planning courses, ICT training, access to market and trading information services and e-commerce initiatives); and offering economic opportunities in salaried employment and entrepreneurship, as well as in the ICT sector itself and in jobs enabled by ICT.

ITU contributes to SDG 5

– By leading the global International Girls in ICT Day campaign to encourage more young women and girls to study and take up ICT careers, by sharing best practices on the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the ICT sector and by publishing profiles of successful women role models on the Girls in ICT Portal;

– ITU contributes to the monitoring of Target 5.b by collecting and disseminating a number of gender-disaggregated ICT indicators, including on mobile phone ownership and usage, Internet usage and ICT skills. https://www.itu.int/en/action/gender-equality/data/Pages/default.aspx;

– The annual GEM-TECH Awards, jointly organized by ITU and UN Women, celebrate personal or organizational achievements and innovative strategies to advance Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the area of ICTs. The GEM-TECH Awards provide a platform for advancing women's meaningful engagement with ICTs and their role as decision-makers and producers in the technology sector;

– ITU/UN Women EQUALS: The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, a coalition of programmes dedicated to women and girls in technology with a vision of harnessing the power of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) to accelerate global progress to bridge the gender digital divide, focusing on three areas of action: access, skills and leadership;

– ITU actively supports WSIS initiatives focused on gender mainstreaming, such as the WSIS Gender Trendsetters, and hosts the Repository of Women in Technology. These efforts aim to advocate for and promote the inclusion of gender considerations in the digital discourse by recognizing and highlighting the achievements of women in technology and encouraging greater participation of women in ICT-related fields;

– The annual WSIS Forum incorporates a special track on gender mainstreaming and ICT. This special track brings gender perspectives into the digital dialogue, by sharing best practices, facilitating meaningful discussions, and setting tangible action plans to bridge the gender gap in the digital landscape;

– During the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event in 2024, ITU launched the ITU Network of Women Ministers and Leaders at a special breakfast. This initiative brings together a community of women leaders, where they can share their experiences, exchange ideas and collaborative strategies and best practices to address the gender digital divide. The network aims to empower more women to take on decision making roles in ICT and to strengthen gender equality in senior-level

positions in telecommunication/ICT administrations, government, regulatory bodies, intergovernmental organizations, and in the private sector;

− ITU, Geneva Gender Champions and the United Kingdom are co-chairing and [impact Group on digital and new emerging technologies](#) to accelerate progress towards gender-transformative implementation of digital governance mechanisms The impact group focuses on ensuring that gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality are a central component of global digital governance processes, as well as to explore how this can be translated into concrete, impactful actions at the national and regional level;

− ITU Network of Women (NoW) initiative: NoW activities focus on increasing the participation of women in ITU events and decision-making processes across ITU's three Sectors: Radiocommunication, Development, and Standardization. Through NoW activities, ITU supports sector-specific gender resolutions and fosters networking, capacity-building, knowledge-sharing among women delegates and women's participation into decision-making processes. [WTSA Resolution 55 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024)](#): Mainstreaming gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector activities: ITU promotes gender equality and active and meaningful participation of women in standardization. The Resolution aims at accelerating the integration of a gender perspective in standards work, encourage the participation of women in all aspects of ITU-T activities, and providing capacity building training on to develop leadership skills. It also encourages increasing the number of girls and women to pursue STEM education and other ICT standardization careers.

− ITU is promoting the implementation of the WRC-19's "Declaration on Promoting Gender Equality, Equity and Parity in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector" that, *inter alia*, declares that a call for governments and the private sector should:

  • encourage the adoption of proven measures to increase globally the number of women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields, particularly those related to the ICT;

  • urgently undertake active measures to increase the number of girls receiving primary and secondary education in mathematics and science that is sufficient to prepare them for undergraduate degrees in STEM fields, particularly in electrical engineering and computer science, which are critical for the development of ICT;

  • substantially increase the number of scholarships and fellowships provided to women pursuing academic degrees at all levels in STEM fields, particularly in electrical engineering and computer science;

  • by 2023, substantially increase the number of internships, training opportunities and summer jobs available for women pursuing academic degrees in fields related to the development of ICT;

  • encourage and actively support ICT education for girls and women, and support all measures that will help prepare them for a professional career in ICT.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

ICT skills have already become a prerequisite for almost all forms of employment, and ICT capacity-building must therefore be prioritized in national youth employment and entrepreneurship strategies in all countries. It is not simply that most jobs and businesses now require ICT skills, but also that ICTs themselves are transforming the way that business is being done everywhere and creating new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for women and youth.

ITU contributes to SDG 8

– Through technological upgrading and innovation by encouraging young people to learn to code, and publishing research on coding boot camps, and offering training workshops on coding boot camp methods, management and instruction, and scaling up strategic regional initiatives such as Africa Can Code, Americas Can Code, etc.;

– Assisting countries in the development of better understanding of strategic importance of digital skills, digital literacy frameworks, new methods of teaching and learning in view of digital developments as well as new capacity building concepts and initiatives in the digital age;

– Based on developed tools, such as Guidebooks, Assessment toolkits, others, providing technical assistance to Member States aiming at development of national digital skills strategies and carrying out the national digital skills assessments, that determine the existing supply of a digitally skilled cohort at a national level, assess skills demand from industry and other sectors, identify skills gaps, and develop policies to address future digital skills requirements;

– Providing assistance and training on migration to converged networks (NGN) to allow adaptability and long-term operation of telecommunication/ICT networks, the transition from IPv4 to IPv6, the adoption of IXP, and introducing digital broadcasting and developing Spectrum Management Master Plans. Developing and providing online training on ICT-enabled entrepreneurship and encouraging young men and women to learn coding and other digital skills in light of the skills shortfall for people with high-level digital skills;

– Reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training by leading the Digital Skills Thematic Area of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth;

– Collaboration with ILO, leading the Digital Skills for Decent Jobs Campaign as part of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth in order to foster decent and inclusive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in line with the SDGs;

– Promoting the involvement of young people in the field of cybersecurity, to address the field's worldwide workforce shortage, through the Youth4Cyber initiative. Youth4Cyber aims to introduce and expose young people to the cybersecurity domain, engage them to better understand the opportunities it holds and ultimately encourage them to take on the cybersecurity challenges of tomorrow;

– Promoting the use of new and existing telecommunication technologies for enhanced trade, in particular in Least Developed Countries (LDCs);

- The contribution of radiocommunication networks, notably broadband mobile, to overall growth is well demonstrated. Increased mobile broadband access, as impulse by ITU fosters economic growth and increases efficiency of work;

- Standards for telecommunication/ICT operators, network and service providers, and equipment manufacturers, in particular when addressing and providing security and trust, contribute to sustainable economic growth;

- Recognizing the transformative potential of digital technologies, ITU prioritizes skill-building, innovation, and people-centric approaches to urban and economic development. The Toolkit on Digital Transformation for People-Oriented Cities and Communities, developed by ITU in collaboration with other UN entities, supports the transition toward smart, sustainable, and inclusive urban ecosystems. The resources contained in the Toolkit include international standards and guidance, the latest research and projections, and cutting-edge reports on a variety of timely topics relevant to the digital transformation of cities and communities (https://toolkit-dt4c.itu.int/);

- The Digital Transformation Resource Hub, launched by ITU, serves as a centralized platform for sharing knowledge on a range of digital transformation topics, including smart sustainable cities, cities' actions to tackle COVID-19, artificial intelligence, Internet of things, blockchain, digital twin, metaverse and digital transformation trends (https://www.itu.int/cities/dt-resource-hub/).

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

ICTs can play a significant role in the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans – notably through improved monitoring and reporting which leads to increased accountability. Satellite-based monitoring delivers timely and accurate data on a global basis, while local sensors deliver on the spot updates in real-time.

Big data can be used to analyse short- and long-term trends in terms of biodiversity, pollution, weather patterns and ecosystem evolution, and to plan mitigation activities.

Mobile devices – and especially mobile broadband enabled devices – help individuals to access information concerning the oceans, and to take an active role in discussing environmental issues and monitoring adherence to conservation targets.

ITU contributes to SDG 14

- In alignment with WSIS Action Line C7: E-environment, ITU, as co-facilitator along with WMO and UNEP, plays a key role in leveraging ICTs to address environmental challenges, advance climate action, and support sustainable development initiatives;

- Target 14.1 and 14.2 - Spectrum and standards provided by ITU for Earth observation systems are a key enabler to monitor, conserve and use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. In particular, understanding the forces behind changing weather patterns which requires mapping variations in ocean surface conditions worldwide and the use of collected data to develop and run powerful models of ocean behaviour;

Target 14.a - Spectrum and standards provided by ITU for GNSS, sea drones and satellite oceanic observations, are an essential enabler to increase scientific knowledge on the state of oceans and marine resources;

ITU, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/IOC), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) established a Joint Task Force (JTF) in late 2012 after Workshops in Rome (2011) and Paris (2012). The JTF is tasked with developing a strategy and roadmap that could lead to enabling the availability of submarine repeaters equipped with scientific sensors for ocean and climate monitoring and disaster risk reduction (tsunamis). It will also analyse the potential renovation and relocation of retired out-of-service cables in this realm. With the installation of new trans-ocean and regional telecommunication cable systems equipped with sensors, a global network could be established providing decadal real-time data for ocean climate monitoring and disaster mitigation (particularly from tsunamis).

Examples of recommendations include

1   [Recommendation ITU-R RS.515 – Frequency bands and bandwidths used for satellite passive remote sensing](#). This Recommendation provides information on the frequency bands and bandwidths used for satellite passive remote sensing of the Earth and its atmosphere for microwave passive sensors. Earth exploration and meteorological satellites provide increasingly important environmental data relating to the Earth.

2   [Recommendation ITU-R RS.577 – Frequency bands and required bandwidths used for spaceborne active sensors operating in the Earth exploration-satellite (active) and space research (active) services](#). In this Recommendation frequency bands and bandwidths for five basic types of spaceborne active sensors are given. Although the discussion mainly concentrates on Earth observation, it is generally believed that the measurement techniques are equally valid on other planets. Therefore, this Recommendation covers both Earth exploration-satellite (active) and space research (active) services. Spaceborne active microwave sensors can provide unique information on physical properties of the Earth and other planets.

3   [Recommendation ITU-R RS.1624 – Sharing between the Earth exploration-satellite (passive) and airborne altimeters in the aeronautical radionavigation service in the band 4 200-4 400 MHz](#). Global warming is one of the most serious environmental problems for the planet Earth. And the parameter known as the sear surface temperatures (SST) is a useful indicator of global warming. It is very important to be able to monitor the SST continuously to clarify and to better understand the mechanism of global warming. Only spaceborne passive microwave radiometers in orbit on Earth exploration satellites can monitor the whole Earth SST on a continuing basis.

4   [Recommendation ITU-R RS.1883 – Use of remote sensing systems in the study of climate change and the effects thereof](#). This Recommendation provides guidelines on the provision of satellite-borne remote sensing data for the purpose of studying climate change.

5	[Recommendation ITU-R RS.2017 – Performance and interference criteria for satellite passive remote sensing](#). This Recommendation provides information on the performance and interference criteria for satellite passive remote sensing of the Earth and its atmosphere for microwave passive sensors. Passive microwave remote sensing is performed in absorption bands to obtain important three-dimensional atmospheric data that are used in particular to initialize numerical weather prediction (NWP) models.
6	[Recommendation ITU-R SA.1627 – Telecommunication requirements and characteristics of EESS and MetSat service systems for data collection and platform location](#). A data collection system (DCS) has many fields of application, including meteorology, Earth resources, hydrography, seismic observation, vulcanology, geodesy and geodynamics, anchored or drifting oceanographic buoys, oil prospecting, wild animal tracking, etc.

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, since ICTs are catalysts that accelerate all three pillars of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability – as well as providing an innovative and effective means of implementation in today's inter-connected world. 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 SDG 17

– The [ITU 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 mobilized the global community around the power of digital transformation and reshape the connectivity agenda to achieve the SDGs;

– The implementation of ITU Strategic Plan, linked to the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda, and WTDC Action Plan will contribute in 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. Mapping of activities between other sectors is conducted and 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. Since 2020, aligned with the Decade of Action, themes are focused on promoting the Connect 2030 Agenda to follow the progress of ITU membership to

deliver on its goals and targets (in line with the SDGs), and to share the guidance of ITU and the contribution of the membership towards connecting the world;

– 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 Focus Groups, help determine the way forward, while membership-driven ITU 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;

– Mobilizing in-cash and in-kind resources through partnership with various stakeholders from the ICT ecosystem for the implementation of ICT activities, projects and initiatives in developing countries at national and regional levels, including by developing strategies and related tools and services (databases sponsorship packages, dedicated websites, concept notes, promotional vehicles, etc.);

– Strengthening the global ICT innovation ecosystem through activities such as know-how sharing (e.g. Global Innovation Forum, WSIS Forum, 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. In 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 accelerate 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 ITU testing laboratories database, which lists laboratories competent in verifying product compliance with ITU technical standards, along with the product conformity database, will enable stakeholders worldwide to conduct testing in different laboratories and enhance customer awareness of the ITU-T Recommendations applied to ICT equipment;

– 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);

– The ITU and United Kingdom's FCDO partnership around four streams of work to support digital inclusion in Digital Access Partnership countries in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil, namely support toward a strengthened enabling policy and regulatory environment, sustainable connectivity models, partnerships, and digital skills, saw stakeholders engaged through the work in each of the five countries. 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 in LDCs 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 (https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Pages/EIF-Regional-Project-.aspx);

–　　The ITU and International Labour Organization (ILO)'s partnership and programme in Africa to boost decent jobs and enhance skills for youth in the digital economy organized 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 (COP) 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 COP Guidelines;

- 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;

- The annual WSIS Forum, hosted by ITU, continues to be a key platform for multistakeholder networking and collaboration to develop inclusive and development-oriented information and knowledge societies. The Forum brings together high-level officials, academics, practitioners, ICTs experts, youth, business, and civil society leaders to engage in addressing issues on ICTs for development. The upcoming WSIS Forum in 2025 branded as the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 will take place from 7 to 11 July 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland. The agenda and outcome

of the Forum are strategically aligned to the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs (www.wsis.org/forum);

–   WSIS Action Lines and SDG matrix, coordinated by ITU and developed in collaboration with various United Nations agencies during the WSIS Forum 2015, has become an essential tool for mapping how ICTs contribute to the implementation of SDGs. Since its creation, the Matrix has served as a practical reference for stakeholders engaged in shaping the future of both, the SDGs and the WSIS processes (www.wsis.org/sdg);

–   In accordance with para. 120 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, ITU has been maintaining the WSIS Stocktaking Database as a publicly accessible repository of information on ICT for development activities. The database serves as an international register of ICT projects and initiatives carried out by governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and other entities. It provides a valuable reference for identifying successful practices, fostering innovative solutions, and stimulating collaboration, thereby advancing the global commitment to sustainable digital transformation (www.wsis.org/stocktaking);

–   Cooperate with the relevant international and regional organizations dealing with the use of spectrum, including the Regional Telecommunication Organizations recognized by the ITU for regional coordination (APT, ASMG, ATU, CEPT, CITEL and RCC); 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 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, the ITU Broadband Mapping activities

(www.itu.int/go/maps) makes 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 GameChangers Award (https://www.itu.int/initiatives/sdgdigital2024/);

– In June 2024, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) and Digital Dubai, launched the Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds - Discovering the Citiverse. The Global Initiative is a groundbreaking effort to harness the transformative potential of virtual and immersive technologies to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 17. This initiative exemplifies how emerging technologies, such as the metaverse and virtual reality (VR), can foster global collaboration and innovative solutions for sustainable development, bridge the digital divide and advance knowledge sharing and capacity building (https://www.itu.int/metaverse/virtual-worlds/);

– The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative, coordinated by ITU, UNEP and UNECE and supported by 19 UN entities, is a critical mechanism for advancing Goal 17 by fostering collaboration across sectors to create smart, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments. Through its Thematic Groups, the U4SSC initiative aligns with SDG17's focus on partnerships and the use of ICTs to drive sustainable development, particularly in urban areas where over half of the global population resides (https://u4ssc.itu.int/).