Strengthening partnerships for digital development at the Regional Development Forum for the Americas

San Salvador, El Salvador, 22 August 2023

The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Americas (RDF-AMS), held from 16-18 August 2023 in San Salvador, El Salvador, welcomed over 250 participants from 22 countries, to discuss priority development issues for the region and identify avenues to scale-up implementation of country and regional priorities including the ITU Regional initiatives for the Americas.

The Forum gathered decision-makers from ITU Member States and Sector Members, including telecommunication/ICT policymakers, regulators, industry, academia, as well as regional and international development agencies, representatives of the UN system and other stakeholders in the Americas.

The Government of El Salvador hosted the Regional Development Forum for the Americas, with the support of the Ministry of Economy and the Superintendencia General de Electricidad y Telecommunicaciones (SIGET).

In opening the Forum, H.E. Ms María Luisa Hayem Brevé, Minister of Economy of the Government of El Salvador said, "we work every day to position El Salvador as a Digital Nation, making it a regional benchmark to attract digital and technological investments."

"I would like to thank the Government of El Salvador for hosting the Regional Development Forum for the Americas," said Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. "The Forum discussions and the matchmaking of regional and country needs with partner pledges under the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition will help advance the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan and will contribute to the realization of universal meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in the region."

The Forum reviewed the outcomes of the Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22) that was held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2022 and includes the following Regional Initiatives for the Americas: address the needs of the region in digital infrastructure; digital inclusion; digital transformation; and ICT policy and regulation.

The event highlights were the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtables which focused on partner announcements of concrete financial commitments to support the implementation of country and regional priorities in the Americas region.

Examples of matchmaking highlighted at the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtable included projects in El Salvador, Guatemala and Argentina by the Interamerican Development Bank in the fields of infrastructure and connectivity and the development of a digital ecosystem to boost employment, growth and social inclusion; activities by the

Development Bank of Latin America in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador in the areas of digitalization of services, telemedicine and Artificial Intelligence; the work in Bolivia by ZTE to help develop their 5G sector; and activities by the BBVA MicroFinance Foundation in several countries in the region benefiting vulnerable communities; an ITU Academy course by SBA for government officials to match the need to upgrade digital skills of national employees; the activities by COMTELCA to help Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic upgrade their Indexes in different aspects of digital development; the "Profuturo Digital Education Program" by Telefonica to narrow the digital education gap and improve the quality of education in Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

During the Forum, a new financial contribution agreement valued at 150,000 USD for the financing of Regional Initiatives in the Americas region was signed by Huawei and ITU. This represents a milestone in the implementation of the Huawei Partner2Connect pledge to address ICT priorities through partnerships and resource mobilization.

"The Regional Development Forum for the Americas was very well attended, and it will go a long way towards strengthening a collaborative approach in the region," said Bruno Ramos, ITU Regional Director for the Americas.

The Forum concluded with the adoption of an impressive number of partner commitments that will accelerate the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan outcomes.

The Regional Development Forum was held back-to-back with the ITU Internet Colloquium and New Technologies (ITEC 2023). Discussions centred around the public and private perspectives under the theme, 'Innovation in Connectivity'.

On the same day, a workshop on the ITU developed Digital Transformation Kit was held for women and young entrepreneurs from El Salvador.

Resources and background information:
- [RDF-AMS website](#)
- [RDF-AMS photos](#)
- [RDF-AMS highlights video](#)

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For questions, please contact:

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