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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau  on behalf of the Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Group  (GC-ASP) | | | |
| Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific: Draft Action Plan 2022-2025 - Empowering Youth for a Digital Future | | | |
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| **Generation Connect Asia And The Pacific: Draft Action Plan 2022-2025** | **EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE**  Prepared with the Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Group |

**GENERATION CONNECT ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE**

**DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2022-2025**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Youth Group (GC-ASP) is fully committed to supporting the implementation of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) global Youth Strategy in the Asia and the Pacific (ASP) region, including its vision

"a *world where every young person is connected, benefits from the digital economy and digital transformation, and is fully empowered through access to and use of ICTs"*,

and objective

"*to improve and have a real impact on the lives of young people around the world and to ensure meaningful participation of youth in ITU as key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".

The youth in ASP represents roughly 750 million of 1.8 billion youth of the world's population, the largest ever number in history. The role of youth in Asia and the Pacific is becoming increasingly important as they can become a driver for economic change. Digital technologies can prove a game-changer in channelising the power of youth in manifesting digital economies and societies. UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, and the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda, also recognise the strategic role of meaningful connectivity for sustainable development. COVID-19 response has clearly demonstrated its transformative potential.

At the same time, the pandemic has magnified the digital divide, depriving vulnerable communities, including youth, of economic and educational opportunities due to lockdowns and restriction of movement. Inadequate infrastructure to support their learning, such as limited internet access, lack of IT equipment at home, insufficient digital skills amongst teachers, trainers and students, are all contributing factors that have further diminished various opportunities in this digital arena.

It is very important to develop an Action Plan that can support the implementation of the strategy in the ASP context. These can be grouped into three areas of action:

* **EMPOWER:** Supporting youth empowerment by creating a community of young leaders;
* **ENGAGE:** Bringing young people together to engage with ITU and its members; and
* **PARTICIPATE:** Fostering youth dialogue and participation in ITU activities and decision-making processes.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE GC-ASP**

Drawing upon the vision of the ITU youth strategy, to develop the Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific Action Plan 2021 (GC-ASP Action Plan 2021) that stipulates:

* Expected outcomes in the ASP region;
* Priority areas within ITU thematic priorities to be used as a guide to implementing the ITU Youth Strategy in the ASP region;
* Underlying challenges in meeting the priorities;
* Actions required by key stakeholders to overcome these challenges and meet the identified priorities
* ITU programs, events and activities, to encourage youth participation as well as contribute to the decision-making processes with the ITU, in particular towards the Generation Connect Youth Summit planned in November 2021 in conjunction with the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021.

## **3.0 GENERATION CONNECT ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ACTION PLAN (2022-2025)**

GC-ASP also recognises the work being undertaken by the ITU as part of the [Generation Connect Initiative](https://www.itu.int/generationconnect/) and would like to propose an Action Plan for its contribution to Asia to the Pacific region. The Action Plan takes into cognisance the undergoing digital transformation in the region that has been accelerated by COVID-19, as well as the priorities and challenges of the youth. In drawing up the Action Plan that engages youth meaningfully in the journey, it is our endeavour to build back better and leave no one behind.

The structure of the Action Plan is as followsThe Action Plan over the next four years (2022-2025) builds on the vision of the [ITU Youth Strategy](https://www.itu.int/generationconnect/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ITU_Youth_Strategy.pdf) and lays down various elements of the Action Plan. This includes:

**Figure 1: Structure of GC-ASP Action Plan**

1. **Expected outcome:** The Action Plan contributes towards meeting the objective of the ITU Youth Strategy in the ASP region. It is targeted

* to mainstream youth engagement and participation in the work of ITU to support the achievement of the overall goals;
* to encourage youth participation in ITU programs, events and activities, as well as contribute to the decision-making processes;
* to promote ICT youth-related policies within the ITU Member States to ensure inclusiveness and empower youth, particularly in developing countries;
* to engage in regular dialogue and consultations with youth and undertake concrete actions;
* to incorporate a youth perspective in the implementation of the ITU strategic plan.

1. **Challenges**: It identifies the challenges experienced by the youth in their respective communities;
2. **Priorities**: The Action Plan identifies the priorities of youth action plans across the ten thematic priorities (Figure 2); and
3. **Actions to be implemented by GC-ASP:** Propose concrete actions that can be taken by the youth.

Taking into account the opportunities presented and challenges posed by ICT in the ASP region, GC- ASP seeks the support of the ITU Members on **Generation Connect Asia and the Pacific: Draft Action Plan 2022-2025** (Draft GC-ASP Action Plan 2022-2025).

## **4.0 GC-ASP COMPOSITION AND WORKING METHOD**

Generation Connect is the overarching initiative of the ITU Youth Strategy on the journey to the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21) and the WTDC-21 Generation Connect Global Youth Summit.

GC-ASP provides a unique participative process for youth to contribute to the work of ITU in the ASP region. ITU called for nominations of youth from Administrations of ITU Member States, ITU-D Sector Members, Academia, Regional Organizations and UN Organizations to support the establishment of GC-ASP on 4 February 2021. As a result, ITU received interests from 97 applicants. The applicants were evaluated based on a set of pre-determined criteria including geographic diversity, gender, representation of vulnerable groups, age, education and occupation), 26 applicants (Annex 1) were selected.

The first task of GC-ASP was to familiarize themselves with ITU’s work in Asia and the Pacific and discuss an action plan drawing upon the ITU Youth Strategy, taking into account the opportunities and challenges related to digital technologies and their interests, concerns and perspectives on digital transformation.

GC-ASP will continue to work with ITU Regional Office for ASP by engaging and participating in the ITU activities, such as the WTDC Youth Summit, and providing youth perspectives to ITU and its Members on ICT development. GC-ASP participation will primarily be on a voluntary basis and the coordination support will be provided by the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Throughout the implementation of the GC-ASP initiatives, members of GC-ASP acknowledge that all work and activities carried out will adhere to the agreed **Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct (Annex 4)** outlined by ITU**.** This will ensure that GC-ASP conduct and express itself in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment for all members and relevant stakeholders, regardless of inter alia, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, race, national origin, age, religion and political differences.

## **5.0 INPUTS FROM GC-ASP MEMBERS TO THE ACTION PLAN (2022-2025)**

GC-ASP members shared their experiences, provided inputs and actively engaged in developing the Action Plan.

The elements of the Action Plan include:

1. The challenges GC-ASP members articulated based on their own experiences and the priorities across the ITU’s thematic priorities;
2. Actions needed to address the challenges

## **5.1 Thematic Priorities**

GC-ASP has identified and agreed on the four thematic priorities that should be included in the GC-ASP Draft Action Plan 2022-2025. The thematic priorities were identified based on the background, experience and understanding of the issues amongst GC-ASP members and are listed below.

1. Capacity Development;
2. Cybersecurity;
3. Digital Inclusion; and
4. Digital Services and Application

## **5.2 Challenges experienced by the youth in the Asia and the Pacific region**

The GC-ASP members met on 4th and 5th March to discuss the challenges and priorities as a basis to develop proposed action plans. GC-ASP identified a list of challenges (Annex 2) that youth experienced in their own communities in harnessing ICTs for digital development and accelerating their digital empowerment.

These include:

1. Capacity development

* Lack of digital skills leading to lack of educational and employment opportunities for youth;
* Limited education curriculums and contents on the current issues related to digital technologies and societies;
* Inadequate awareness, opportunities and capacities to engage in policymaking dialogues and processes;
* Lack of adequate resources, both financial and technical, to develop capacity development programmes.

1. Cybersecurity

* Inadequate cybersecurity awareness, training and skills needed for youth in the digital space;
* Inadequate knowledge of data security and privacy issues.

1. Digital inclusion

* Gender divide amongst youth, in particular on access, devices and the use of ICTs;
* Limited attention to the need of vulnerable populations to be meaningfully connected;

1. Digital services and applications

* Unaffordability of digital devices and services among youth and their marginalization in societies and economies;
* Lack of meaningful youth engagement in designing digital services and applications.

## **5.3 Identified Priorities**

The group also identified priorities(Annex 2) relating to enhancing their digital empowerment, contributions to their respective communities and engagements in the ICT sector. These include

1. Capacity development

* Building digital skills and improving digital literacy;
* Maximizing the use of digital technologies and platforms for better job opportunities;
* Enhancing the capacity of youth for their engagement to support issues such as emergency telecommunications, e-waste etc.

1. Cybersecurity

* Raising the awareness among youth of cybersecurity risks; Enhancing the role of youth in building cybersecurity and child-online protection awareness and skills in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Digital inclusion

* Promoting digital inclusion of youth groups (gender, persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, migrants) to address the divide within social structures;
* Enhancing engagement of youth organizations with relevant government agencies and private sector companies;
* Developing a youth-centered, Universal Design approach including ease of use in developing digital services and applications.

1. Digital services and applications

* Connecting the unconnected youth meaningfully to provide the youth with affordable access to digital devices, services and applications important for their digital empowerment;
* Developing an appropriate ecosystem for digital services (e.g. work, home, agriculture, living) while developing sustainable smart cities, islands and smart villages.

## **5.4 Draft Action Plan 2022-2025 (Under development)**

Taking into consideration the wide range of identified challenges and priorities, GC-ASP is currently under discussion to develop an Action Plan for 2022-2025 with concrete actions in the four identified thematic priorities of capacity development, digital inclusion, cybersecurity as well as digital services and applications. The Action Plan will be formulated taking into account the level of commitment by GC-ASP members as well as available resources.

## **ANNEX 1- Generation Connect - Asia and the Pacific (GC-ASP) Youth Group Members**

| **No** | **First Name** | **Family Name** | **Age** | **Gender** | **Country** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Abdullah | Salim | 19 | Male | Afghanistan |
|  | Rahimullah | Ibrahimi | 21 | Male | Afghanistan |
|  | A S M Humaun | Kabir | 24 | Male | Bangladesh |
|  | Md. Hasibul Husain | Hisham | 21 | Male | Bangladesh |
|  | Connie Man Hei | Siu | 19 | Female | Hong Kong, China |
|  | Joanne | Liu | 19 | Female | Hong Kong, China |
|  | Olly | Daugunu | 22 | Female | Fiji |
|  | Shradha | Pandey | 21 | Female | India |
|  | Simran | Sahni | 22 | Female | India |
|  | Karenina Nuraini | Yustika | 21 | Female | Indonesia |
|  | Neira | Budiono | 24 | Female | Indonesia |
|  | Riyadho | Santiko | 22 | Male | Indonesia |
|  | Ramu | Pandey | 22 | Male | Nepal |
|  | Muhammad Umair | Ali | 21 | Male | Pakistan |
|  | Nayab | Zahra | 21 | Female | Pakistan |
|  | Demas | Apti | 23 | Male | Papua New Guinea |
|  | Jayveen | Vaá | 23 | Female | Papua New Guinea |
|  | Taumeasina Melaina | Fomai | 21 | Female | Samoa |
|  | Jeffery Junior | Maesala | 23 | Male | Solomon Island |
|  | Julia | Waitara | 24 | Female | Solomon Island |
|  | Jidapa | Nitiwirakun | 18 | Female | Thailand |
|  | Vorodom | Anantakul | 18 | Male | Thailand |
|  | Bless Ann | De Vera | 24 | Female | The Philippines |
|  | Cresencio | Bacolod | 23 | Male | The Philippines |
|  | Son | Nguyen Dang | 21 | Male | Viet Nam |
|  | Thao | Dao | 21 | Female | Viet Nam |

## ANNEX 2: List of identified challenges by GC-ASP during online submission and meeting

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| Challenges Identified | |
| 5.2.1 | While the ASP has a huge diversity, there exists numerous populations in the region that experience challenging economic circumstances, adverse security conditions, low level of education, as well as the lack of opportunities and motivation. |
| 5.2.2 | Lack of access to ICTs hinders the dissemination of adequate information coming from public campaigns on different social media platforms. |
| 5.2.3 | Due to challenges related to connectivity and access to digital services, there is an inadequate sharing of knowledge and information with the youth. |
| 5.2.4 | The affordability of digital devices and services is a challenge and it risks bridging the digital divide. this challenge adversely impacts those without access to reaping the benefits of the digital economy and society, and are stopping youth from further pursuing education and work, especially online. Having access to reliable and credible information during COVID-19 is a great recent example that proves the importance of digital inclusion. |
| 5.2.5 | Gender divide still remains a challenge in access to and use of ICTs. There are also continuous existing challenges relating to gender-based discrimination with regard to access to ICTs. |
| 5.2.6 | Inadequate cybersecurity skills, capabilities and mechanisms to protect youth against issues such as cyberbullying and protecting children online. |
| 5.2.7 | Insufficient awareness and understanding of the implications of terms and conditions and security of data available in online platforms and digital applications. |
| 5.2.8 | Level of compliance to policy and regulations, and awareness on the implication of risks and threats that exist online related to ICTs, including social media. |
| 5.2.9 | Need for improved coordination amongst stakeholders on the development of the capacity of youth, in particular accessibility and availability of capacity development platform as well as technical and financial support. |
| 5.2.10 | Inadequate focus on vulnerable communities, particularly on People with Disabilities to enhance their capability (digital literacy, digital skills) and develop a good understanding and use of digital technology. |
| 5.2.11 | Young people, who are not meaningfully connected, are unable to engage in ICT-related experience sharing opportunities. |
| 5.2.12 | Inadequate opportunities and capacities for youth to engage in policymaking decision. |
| 5.2.13 | Inadequate access to information, data availability in a simplified (processed manner) and easily usable manner impacts youth’s capacity to do research. Lack of awareness amongst youth on the availability of credible platforms to conduct research. |
| 5.2.14 | Lack of access to emergency hotlines and information to youth at times of disaster for unconnected communities |
| 5.2.15 | Lack of confidence in technology on its reliability to carry out warning effectively during natural disasters. Lack of coordination amongst youth teams to enable the warnings or procedures for the general public. |
| 5.2.16 | Inadequate awareness of the impact of e-waste on the environment. |
| 5.2.17 | Inadequate awareness and promotion of the benefit, support and services provided in digital innovative space to drive youth to be innovative. |
| 5.2.18 | Lack of digital skills results in a lack of opportunities in the educational and employment levels for youths. Insufficient availability of appropriate financing, trained educators, and content materials for training for and via ICTs. |
| 5.2.19 | Lack of meaningful youth engagement in designing digital services and applications. |
| 5.2.20 | Lack of adequate guidance available to youth to harness digital opportunities. |
| 5.2.21 | Lack of updated education curriculums to address the digital technology and society issues adequately. |

## ANNEX 3: List of identified priorities by GC-ASP during online submission and meeting

| **List of identified priorities** | |
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| 5.3.1 | While recognizing the diversity in the ASP region, there exists the needs in underserved areas to deliver high-quality training, make adequate digital devices available. Scholarship opportunities to support better education, better learning environment and better job opportunities would facilitate youth’s incentives to undertake ICT studies. |
| 5.3.2 | Need to create more opportunities for youth to develop soft and hard skills through the development of ICT modules and e-learning courses, such as webinars and online training, aimed at increasing employment in the ICT industry, particularly for youth living in remote areas. |
| 5.3.3 | Need to create opportunities to enhance the quality and recognition of youth work through virtual workshops, digital platforms and common knowledge-sharing space. |
| 5.3.4 | Need to improve designs and develop digital literacy and capacity building programs targeted at youth. |
| 5.3.5 | Need to make more online training available that can build skills for the digital job market and provide opportunities for youth to build capacity through online events (e.g. webinars, speakers, coffee with experts). This can also be promoted through youth circles. |
| 5.3.6 | Need for building capacity to effectively and efficiently prepare and respond to natural disasters (typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the like) using digital tools like emergency communication systems. In addition, there is a need to develop the resources and capacity to utilize ICT to disseminate accurate information and publication materials as a way to better alert the public on natural disaster |
| 5.3.7 | Need to build competency and skills of youth on digital networks and infrastructure, cybersecurity, ICTs for climate change that enables the community to embody digital transformation and innovation leading to meaningful progress. |
| 5.3.8 | Need to reduce the exposure of risk associated with cybersecurity amongst youth and children while promoting champions and advocates to tackle issue such as cyber-crime and cyber-bullying, so as to promote a safer online environment for all. |
| 5.3.9 | Need to raise awareness of youth by developing and informing youth of rules, regulations and guidelines that can promote meaningful use of digital technologies for ICT applications (in particular social media) in a safe manner and make the youth aware of the dos and don’ts. |
| 4.3.10 | Need to address e-waste issues in order to take greater care of the environment and the youths to have the capacity to help the use of technology for the purpose and transfer these skills amongst citizens and build awareness. |
| 4.3.11 | Need to prioritize digital inclusion to address the divide within social structures, through targeted projects, where youth can participate and contribute |
| 4.3.12 | Need to adopt a youth-centered, Universal Design approach, including ease of use in developing digital services and applications. |
| 4.3.13 | Need to support digital inclusion for vulnerable groups such as Person with Disabilities for them to get better employment and to address the existing divide in opportunities (e.g. gender, vulnerable population) and capacity. |
| 4.3.14 | Need to enhance engagement between ICT related government agencies, organization and youth organizations that provide the opportunity for youths to discuss, collaborate and share views on the needs of the youth. In addition, there is a need to energise youth through volunteering targeting schools and education institution to sustain the effort. |
| 4.3.15 | Need to facilitate easy access to data. For example, availability of data to youth for research. |
| 4.3.16 | Need to develop an appropriate ecosystem for digital services (e.g. work, home, agriculture, living) while developing sustainable smart cities, smart islands and smart villages. |
| 4.3.17 | Need to provide meaningful and affordable connectivity and enhance access to digital devices, services and applications which could support e-learning, public services such as healthcare, and other relevant services that could support employment and development of capacity in the area of digital skills. |
| 4.3.18 | Need to make available ICT tools for easy access to information and knowledge to develop necessary digital skills for practical applications such as in the area of agriculture, tourism, healthcare and education. |

Note: Awareness includes targeted consensus building, enhancing knowledge using digital workshops/webinars, digital platforms, digital skills development activities, online training etc.

## ANNEX 4: Terms and Conditions

These are the Terms and Conditions governing your participation in the Generation Connect – Asia and the Pacific Youth Group (GC-ASP) launched by ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. By submitting your application and agreeing to be part of GC-ASP, you agree to these terms and conditions, which form a binding legal contract (“the Agreement”) between ITU and the applicant (“you”).

ITU reserves the right to change its Terms and Conditions at any time and without notice and its terms are non-negotiable.

* **Conditions of participation**

Participation in GC-ASP is done on a voluntary basis. Participants will not be remunerated for their efforts. The work of GC-ASP will be carried out remotely.

Please note that participation in any ITU related activities, including WTDC-21 and Generation Connect Global Youth Summit is a subject of distinct processes.

* **Cancellation by the participant**

The participant has the right to cancel her/his participation in GC-ASP. In that case, she/he should notify ITU via email of her/his cancellation by 8 March 2021 at the latest.

* **Cancellation by ITU**

While every reasonable effort is made to carry out the platform, circumstances beyond the control of ITU can arise, which may cause changes or cancellation of the project. Such circumstances include but are not limited to acts of terrorism, war, compliance with government requests, orders and legal requirements, etc.

You agree that ITU shall not be liable for any damages or expenses which may be incurred by you as a consequence of the programme being changed, postponed or cancelled.

* **Personal data**

By applying for participation in the platform and accepting these terms and conditions you give full rights to ITU to gather and store your personal data, including but not limited to your name, address, email address and phone number. This data will be used by ITU for the purpose of the platform only.

ITU is committed to respecting data-protection regulations. We will maintain appropriate safeguards to ensure the security, integrity and privacy of your personal data. We will under no circumstances and in no way provide this personal data to third parties, unless this is necessary for performing the services agreed under the Agreement or when legally obliged.

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If you would like your personal data to be removed at any time from our database, please send a written request to our office.

* **Copyright and intellectual property**

**Any content you created during your participation in GC-ASP is your property and is protected by copyright laws.**

However, ITU reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to use the films, audio recordings and/or photographs of GC-ASP’s meetings and the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific in any media without first obtaining the consent of the participants and without making any payment whatsoever for publicity, advertising, trade or promotion purposes.  Any participant waives her/his intellectual property rights to any photographs or recordings published in a manner described here.

* **Representation**

Members of GC-ASP will act in their personal capacity. Any views expressed during the work of GC-ASP will be of a personal nature and should not be affiliated with any institution or country.

**Code of Conduct**

* **Purpose**

ITU is dedicated to providing an inclusive, respectful and safe environment for all participants, regardless of, inter alia, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, race, national origin, age, religion and political differences.

GC-ASP is guided by the highest ethical and professional standards and all participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful and responsible manner at all times.

* **Prohibited Conduct under this Code**

Harassment is any improper or offensive conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment in any form, including but not limited to harassment based on gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, race, age, religion and political differences is prohibited.

Sexual harassment is a specific type of prohibited conduct. Sexual harassment is any improper conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation. It may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

* **Complaint process**

If Prohibited Conduct occurs during or in relation to GC-ASP’s meetings, then the person who is the target of possible harassment or any third party who has direct knowledge of the incident should report it as soon as possible, preferably before GC-ASP meetings have concluded, to the person(s) or service identified for this purpose by ITU (‘Focal Point’).

Unless indicated otherwise, the Focal Point is ITU’s Head of Safety and Security Division who can be contacted on +41 79 715 84 77 and/or security@itu.int.

The Focal Point will gather and record relevant information in a written account of the incident, taking into consideration any applicable ITU regulations, rules and procedures.

If the person who reports the incident is not the target of possible harassment, the views and situation of the person who is the target of possible sexual harassment will be taken into consideration. Due discretion and relevant confidentiality rules apply to this process.

As a guide, the following is the information typically required to commence the preliminary fact-finding process: name or other identifying information of the person being accused of sexual harassment; date and location of the incident; a description of what happened; if there were witnesses, their names.

A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about prohibited conduct.

* **Response to complaint**

Once it is completed, the Focal Point conveys the written account of the incident to ITU for such action as may be appropriate in response to a credible complaint, including revocation or suspension of participation or other privileges of the alleged perpetrator to GC-ASP. If any additional information is required in relation to the Prohibited Conduct, it will be gathered in accordance with ITU regulations and rules, as applicable.

ITU will keep the person who has reported the incident reasonably informed of actions taken while applying due discretion and relevant confidentiality rules.

* **Prohibition of retaliation**

Threats, intimidation or any other form of retaliation against a participant who has made a complaint or provided information in support of a complaint are prohibited.