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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **23rd Meeting, Geneva, 9-11 April 2018** | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg |
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| REPORT ON THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION/ICT  INDICATORS SYMPOSIUM (WTIS) 2017 AND 2018 | |
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| **Summary:**  This document provides a summary of the 15th WTIS, held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 14 to 16 November 2017. The meeting featured policy debates on pertinent issues related to ICT policy and monitoring for sustainable development, bringing together users and producers of ICT data. The ITU flagship publication *Measuring the Information Society Report 2017*, which includes the latest ICT Development Index (IDI), a benchmarking tool that monitors information society developments worldwide, was launched at the Symposium. Delegates endorsed the work of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) and agreed on a number of conclusions and recommendations for future work on ICT measurement by the national and international community.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this report.  **References:**  WTDC Resolution 8 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017); PP Resolution 131 (Rev. Busan, 2014). | |

**Introduction**

First held in 1996, and annually since 2005, the ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) has evolved to become the main global forum for telecommunication and information society measurements. It brings together delegates from all over the world, ranging from government ministers and business leaders to regulators, national statisticians, lead academicians and ICT data producers and analysts.

The objective of the Symposium is to debate new and emerging issues in the field of ICT data and statistics and their role in policy making, to provide strategic guidance to the national and international community on information society trends and future monitoring, to showcase the impact of ICT on development based on quantitative analysis, and to develop standards and methodologies for producing high-quality data and statistical indicators. WTIS provides a unique platform for ICT data users and producers to meet and exchange knowledge, share best practices, identify business opportunities and enhance cooperation.

**WTIS-17**

The 15th WTIS took place in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 14 to 16 November 2017. It was organized by ITU and hosted by the Government of Tunisia.

WTIS-17 attracted 418 participants from 74 countries, representing public and private organizations including ministries, regulators, national statistical offices, universities and research institutions, and regional and international organizations.

WTIS-17 highlighted the important work that ITU is carrying out in terms of ICT statistics and the role of WTIS in bringing together ICT data producers and users, and the opportunities it provides in terms of discussing ICT measurement issues, sharing experiences, and learning from each other.

The Symposium highlighted the continued need for high-quality, timely, and disaggregated ICT data to enable policy makers take the right policy decisions that promote sustainable development. At the same time, the Symposium provided guidance on how to achieve better ICT data for better policies.

The high-level session recognized that both public and private investment are needed to meet national and international targets for expanding ICT access and use. A congenial policy and market environment helps encourage private investment in broadband infrastructure and allow a healthy ICT start-up ecosystem to flourish. Timely, good quality and internationally comparable data are needed to serve as evidence-base to support the design of investment-friendly public policies that are suited to local conditions. At the same time, the wide availability of good quality ICT data will better inform investors on market opportunities.

The experiences of six countries that participated in the ITU project on ‘Big Data for Measuring the Information Society’ were presented, along with the ITU big data methodology document that can be used by operators and service providers. The project aims to explore how big data from the ICT industry can complement existing indicators to measure the information society.

The lack of skills required to exploit new data sources and access to data is a challenge to all stakeholders and countries, which should be overcome by countries who want to implement big data analysis.

The *Measuring the Information Society Report 2017* was launched on the second day of the Symposium. The report features the latest ICT Development Index (IDI), a benchmarking tool that monitors information society developments worldwide. The latest IDI captures the level of ICT developments in 176 economies worldwide, presents country rankings, and compares progress made during the past two years. The Symposium agreed that the data presented in the Report provided useful insights on progress in ICT access, use and skills, and provided a good overview of emerging ICT trends. The Symposium also noted with satisfaction the inclusion for the first time of country profiles of ICT developments.

The reports by the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) were presented and endorsed by the Symposium, including its proposals for future work, in particular the newly created sub-groups on measuring ICT skills and on reviewing the indicator on location of Internet use. The revised list of 14 indicators for the ICT Development Index (IDI) was presented, which will be implemented from 2018. The Symposium highlighted the importance of collecting and reporting the agreed new IDI indicators.

The final day of the Symposium was forward looking. Artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing and the Internet of Things are developing exponentially and will bring about massive socio-economic changes. These new technologies imply risks in terms of new digital divides and job displacement but they also present new opportunities and tools for achieving the SDGs. The Symposium also heard that ICTs are helping to meet the challenge of providing public services efficiently and sustainably by unlocking the potential of digital data to make cities smart and sustainable. To maximize the benefits of all these trends, countries will need to promulgate public policies that ensure affordable and available connectivity infrastructure and upgraded user skills and education. The Symposium acknowledged the importance of starting the work on developing internationally harmonized indicators to track the uptake and application of these technologies worldwide and to aid the formulation of enabling public policies.

During the Symposium, four interactive parallel sessions held: tutorial on data visualization and big data analysis tools, demonstrations on innovative initiatives to crowdsource the collection of ICT-related data, sharing of country experiences in the collection of ICT statistics, and work of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

The main conclusions and recommendations agreed upon by WTIS-17 are available on the WTIS website at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/events/wtis2017>.

**WTIS-18**

It has not been decided yet where the 16th WTIS will take place. Negotiations are under way with a number of countries. WTIS-18 will include a number of international high-level panel debates on key issues related to ICT policy and monitoring addressed by both users and producers of ICT data. Panellists will include Ministers, Director-Generals of National Statistical Offices, Heads of Regulatory Authorities, CEOs from the business sector and other high-level experts.

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