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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
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|  | **25 February 2020** |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| Progress report on the ITU Index | |
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| **Summary:**  This document provides an overview of progress in developing a new ITU composite index, which will replace the ICT Development Index. An Expert Group Meeting was held in Geneva on 10 February 2020 to discuss a proposal for the development of a new composite index linking digital technologies to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and agree on the way forward.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this document.  **References:**  Resolution 8 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC); Resolution 131 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference. | |

**Introduction**

From 2009 to 2017, ITU published the ICT Development Index (IDI), a composite index designed to assess and compare the state of ICT development within and between countries. The need to continuously improve measurement methods and update the composition of the IDI in response to technological developments was recognized from the very beginning of the index’s creation. As broadband and advanced wireless connectivity became more critical for countries to fully realize the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the initial set of indicators needed to be reviewed.

ITU launched a process to revise the indicators in the IDI in 2016; and in 2017, a revised set of indicators was adopted for inclusion in the IDI as from 2018. Data for 2018 were collected from Member States. However, that year, ITU could not publish the index based on the revised set of indicators for reasons of data quality, data quantity, as well as a number of flaws that occurred in the process of revising the indicators included in the IDI. In 2019, these problems persisted and so, again, the IDI could not be published.

The IDI was successful in what it was trying to achieve in the earlier stages of the digital transformation. But a simple revision of the IDI would not do justice to the digital transformation that is sweeping across the planet today and the role of digital technologies in achieving the SDGs. A revised index needs to take into account not merely the development of the digital infrastructure, but also what technologies are used for in the entire digital ecosystem. This will help countries identify areas where they need to focus in order to leverage the sustainable social benefits of digital technologies.

Against this background, the ITU secretariat proposed to develop a composite index that will provide a monitoring tool for governments to assess the impact of digital transformation on their ability to achieve the SDGs. The index will embody a move beyond the often technical world of digital technologies to a more human side touching on well-being and sustainability by addressing all of the SDGs. This proposal was discussed with Member States at an Expert Meeting.

**Expert Group Meeting on the ITU index**

The Expert Group Meeting on the ITU index took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 10 February 2020. The meeting attracted 89 participants from 37 Member States, along with Palestine (Resolution 99 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)) and experts in the field of ICT development. Of this number, 65 were remote participants. In terms of gender distribution, there were 39 female and 48 male participants (and 2, who selected “other”).

The objective of the meeting was for the ITU secretariat to present to Member States a proposal for the development of a new composite index linking digital technologies to the SDGs. A [background document](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/events/egmITUindex2020/EGM_ITU_index_background_document.pdf) was circulated ahead of the meeting.

Participants widely welcomed the proposal to develop and publish a new ITU index that is based on the SDG framework, which will provide a monitoring tool for governments to assess the impact of digital transformation on their ability to achieve the SDGs. Questions were raised about the possibility of also calculating the IDI according to the revised methodology of 2017. However, there was a general agreement that because of the persistence of conceptual and data problems, the IDI will no longer be produced. Rather, a fresh and forward-looking approach is required that will take into consideration the widespread technological changes and the cross-cutting nature of digital technologies and their impact on all sectors of the economy as countries move towards digital transformation.

Many participants raised questions on how Member States would be part of the process to develop the new index, emphasizing the importance of informing and consulting with Member States throughout the process to ensure transparency. A roadmap was presented and agreed, which foresees continuous interaction between the secretariat, Member States and experts at different stages of the index development process. This roadmap can be found in the table below.

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| 28 January 2020 | Brainstorming with potential partners |
| 10 February 2020 | Expert Meeting with Member States to discuss new proposals |
| February - March 2020 | Finalizing conceptual framework  Initial checking of data availability and description of quality profile of available indicators |
| March 2020 | Second brainstorming with partners  Sharing of draft concept with Member States  Present concept to TDAG for discussion (remote participation) |
| March - May 2020 | Methodology preparation, data collection/compilation, preliminary indicators testing |
| 15-17 April 2020 | Present progress at the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) |
| 17 April 2020 | Expert Meeting with Member States to present and discuss the draft index framework/methodology (half day, remote participation) (relevant document will be shared with Member States in advance) |
| June - July 2020 | Calculation of the index, sensitivity analysis, finalization of indicators, data and results |
| June 2020 | Present draft index methodology to the Council for discussion (relevant document will be shared with Member States in advance) |
| July – September 2020 | Drafting/analysis |
| Second half 2020 | Launch of the new index |

The summary report of the Expert Meeting is available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/events/egmITUindex2020/Summary_EGM_10_Feb_2020.pdf>.

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