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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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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| Summary of TDAG Web Dialogue on the new ITU index | |

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| C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg**TDAG Web Dialogues**  **24-26 March 2020, Online** |
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| **TDAG Web Dialogue on the new ITU index** |
| **Date: 6 May 2020** |
| **Submitted by: Director, BDT** |
| **Title: Summary of TDAG Web Dialogue on the new ITU index** |
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**Summary**

Following Circular SG/BDT/010 of 5 December 2018 and Circular/BDT/DKH/IDA/026 of 3 October 2019, and as announced in Circular/BDT/DKH/IDA/027 of 16 October 2019, BDT is committed to working on a robust and reliable methodology with a view to publishing an ITU index in 2020, taking into consideration Resolution 131 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference and Resolution 8 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC).

A first Expert Group Meeting for Member States was organized on 10 February 2020 to present and discuss a draft conceptual framework of this new index. A second Expert Group Meeting for Member States took place on 17 April 2020.

During the Web Dialogue on the new ITU index, which took place on 25 March 2020, a presentation was made that highlighted the conceptual framework, the approach for the development of the new index, and the timeline for future work.

Participants provided comments and suggestions to ITU during the interactive Web Dialogue.

**Setting out the objectives**

The objective of the Web Dialogue was to present to the ITU Membership the conceptual framework and the proposed way forward for the development of a new composite index. The objective of the new index is to provide a measurement tool to assess how digital technologies may impact the ability of countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A background document was posted before the meeting, which set out the present state of the framework that aims to map digital technologies to the five-pillar SDG structure - people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

This document provides a summary of the presentation and discussions.

**Setting the scene**

Solid, reliable, and impartial evidence is needed to guide policy-makers in the complex digital transformation process.

ITU published the ICT Development Index (IDI) from 2009 to 2017, when a revision of the IDI led to an adoption of a revised set of indicators. The revised IDI, for a number of difficulties, such as data quality and quantity, and flaws in indicator selection process, could not be published since 2018.

In this context and in accordance with Resolution 131 (Dubai 2018), ITU has initiated a consultation process with Member States to develop a new index to succeed the IDI. During the 1st Expert Group meeting on 10 February 2020, Member States supported the proposal of linking the use of digital technologies to the achievement of the SDGs.

The concept of the new SDG-focused ICT index is to assess how digital transformation impacts the ability of countries to achieve the SDGs. The aim is to broaden the perspective, to reflect the pivotal role of digital technologies in other sectors, to enable ITU to promote digital networks, services, and applications, for social, economic, and environmentally sustainable growth and development by drawing on metrics from across the whole of the UN system, building on the strong relationships with other UN agencies to measure ICT for development.

Many members are keen to see the ITU Index published in 2020 and the Web Dialogue was a means to share the progress and to hear membership feedback. This Web Dialogue presented the new index draft conceptual framework and provided an opportunity for Member States to raise questions and receive clarifications. The Web Dialogue was moderated by Mr Kishore Babu GSC Yerraballa, Vice Chairman of TDAG, Deputy Director General, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Communications, from India.

**The challenge**

ITU has long been a global reference for measuring the development of information and communication technologies. A new tool is now being proposed that will reflect the trust and values embodied in the IDI published from 2009-2017.

The new index will aim to have a forward-looking and broader perspective compared to the IDI, and must consider and reflect the pivotal role of digital technologies in other sectors in the digital ecosystem, from health to education, business, government, employment, agriculture, gender, and poverty alleviation.

It also will aim to bring together a wide range of comparable data not only from ITU, but also from other international agencies, including members of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

The **objective of the Web Dialogue was** to present a draft conceptual framework to ITU Member States for the development of a new composite index, linking digital technologies to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by mapping digital technologies to the 5P structure commonly used for the SDGs: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

**SDG-focused ICT index and framework overview**

The IDI focused on specific elements of the ICT sector such as measuring the level of infrastructure and access to the technology. In the wake of a global digital transformation, a broader approach towards measuring ICT would be more useful for policymakers.

For the new index to track changes over the next decade, it will need to reflect new developments, and new technologies. It will also need a more comprehensive approach, looking into the crosscutting and pervasive nature of technologies and how they impact development. This will allow for the measurement of meaningful connectivity.

The SDG framework has been endorsed by the international community to track economic and social progress through 2030 and it refers to the role of ICTs in the process of accelerating human progress and bridging the digital divide.

A digital technology related index based on the SDGs will help governments to adopt and formulate strategies to achieve the targets set for 2030. The SDG framework is also in line with the ITU overall mandate especially that of the Development Sector. Policy-makers need fact-based monitoring tools that can help them to see how ICTs and the digital transformation impact the ability to meet the SDGs.

The 17 SDGs have been grouped into five pillars: people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnership. Each pillar covers a set of developmental issues which digital technologies can help address:

* People refers to poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, and decent work and labour conditions. Here, digital technologies can enhance opportunities for increasing income, health, spending, educational opportunities, and also facilitating gender equality and female inclusion and employment.
* Prosperity includes SDGs related to economic growth, innovation, inclusiveness, smart cities, and responsible production. Digital technologies can enhance productivity, create new opportunities for doing business, and transforming industry across economic sectors.
* Planet refers to water, energy, climate, and life on land and under water. Here, digital technologies can contribute to a more efficient use of natural resources, to the optimization of transport and utility infrastructures, and to monitoring and conservation efforts.
* Peace refers to institutions and governance. By using open data sets, online public services, online transactions and digital IDs, technology will contribute to transparency and less corruption.
* Partnerships refer to global multi-stakeholder collaboration on various topics, including digital technologies, where they can foster operational collaboration, new data standards and collection methods.

The proposed index framework would consider two main elements: the availability of digital technologies that support each pillar and the use of those technologies to achieve specific targets. There are three key value points of this proposed framework: it is simple and intuitive, it is comprehensive, and it takes into account the crosscutting nature of the technology in society, the economy, and the environment.

*Areas of measurement:* The framework will cover a number of different measurement areas, such as telecommunication infrastructure and household access, the use of technologies by individuals, organizations and business, governments, hospitals, and schools, aspects of health, education, the digital economy, government and regulation, employment, food and agriculture, environment, and gender.

*Measurement scope:* The framework will look at both statistical and policy indicators that could be included, taking into consideration other UN agency approaches.

*Measurement and data:* Brainstorming sessions are being conducted with other UN organizations to exchange views on measurement aspects to explore data availability and to draw on data from other UN and other international agencies. Specific indicators to be used in this framework will be considered at the next stage of the development of the index. When new indicators or new technologies need to be included, the framework will need to adapt to new developments.

The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development’s thematic list of SDG ICT indicators could be used as a starting point when looking at the indicators. The list, covering eleven of the seventeen SDGs, was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission at the beginning of March 2020.

**Next steps**

* Refine further the conceptual framework based on the comments received from the February 10 meeting and during the TDAG Web Dialogue;
* Identify indicators relevant to the measurement areas and explore data availability and quality;
* Build on recent dialogues with other UN agencies on what could be included;
* Present progress during a second Expert Group Meeting, which will be held on 17 April 2020, as agreed at the 10 February Expert Group Meeting;
* Finalize the conceptual framework by May 2020;
* Prepare the methodology of the index, data collection and compilation;
* Carry out preliminary indicator testing;
* Continue in June and July 2020 with the methodology and calculation of the index;
* Carry out a series of statistical analyses to test the indicators.

**Key inputs from participants**

A number of points were raised concerning the index and framework:

* Clarify and stipulate where the statistical information resides;
* Clarify what data will be used for each indicator explored under each pillar;
* Clarify what digital technologies will be put under each pillar;
* Provide more detail about what lies underneath each of the subject areas;
* More clarity on how the index will be able to adapt to technological change;
* Show how new data and new priorities that emerge in the near future will be integrated in the index;
* Consider a sub-index below each pillar, separating the indicators with complete and reliable data from those indicators with missing data;
* Take into consideration subjective differences when specifying indicators on the potential negative aspects of digital technologies for development;
* Specify how the index would be presented. Study the way OECD presents the OECD Going Digital Toolkit;
* Consider including specific elements such as affordability or child online protection.

There were points raised on the process of developing the index:

* Expression of support for the overall concept and development process of the index;
* More in-depth discussion when defining indicators, dimensions and pillars and transparency from the ITU during this definition process;
* Synergy with Study Group work and the work of other ITU Sectors;
* Calls to reconsider the proposed timeline.

There were also a number of points raised concerning the data to be included in the Index.

* Prioritize data from Member States;
* Consider countries with very large populations to have adjustable indicators;
* Calls for indicators to value policy and technology outcomes, not just technological means;
* Specify how the index would help Member States to improve their ability to pursue, accelerate, and reach the SDGs;
* Avoid ranking or benchmarking of Member States when presenting results and indicators;
* Explore expertise and data sources from other institutions to maximize impact;
* Consider the sustainability of data provision from private sources;
* Involve the World Bank and regional development banks for access to regional data.

**Concluding remarks**

During the constructive discussions, participants agreed that the index represented a positive step towards creating a new index and acknowledged the progress made. It was also globally accepted that comparability, adaptability, and flexibility of the indicators used in the index would be key elements of a successful tool to follow future trends and that the present stage of developing the framework is by nature broad in scope. The next stages involve developing definitions and scope of indicators.

It was also noted that there would be no change in the way ITU collects data from Member States and that present data dissemination would not change the core work of the Statistics Division, which will continue its analytical and statistical work for the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database, the ITU website, the ITU Statistical Yearbook, statistical reports and ICT Facts and Figures.

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