

**Telecommunication Development  
Advisory Group (TDAG)**

**25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020**



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**Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau**

**OPENING REMARKS BY MS DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN,  
DIRECTOR, TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU**

Please find below the opening remarks delivered by Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau.

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Contact:	Name/Organization/Entity:	Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau
	Phone number:	+41 22 730 5533
	E-mail:	<a href="mailto:btdir@itu.int">btdir@itu.int</a>

[TDAG](#)

# TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP (TDAG)

25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020

ADDRESS BY MS DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN,  
DIRECTOR, ITU TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU<sup>1</sup>

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**Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Director Maniewicz, Director Lee, Madame Chair, TDAG vice chairs, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,**

**Welcome** to this first-ever virtual meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group.

**Conducting a fully virtual TDAG is a totally new experience for us.** I want to thank you in advance for your flexibility and your indulgence, should we encounter any technical or logistic problems over the next 4 days.

While ITU has significant experience in organizing remote participation, **virtual meetings of this scale and importance are new for us. Please be patient with us,** and of course **don't hesitate** to offer any comments that could help us to improve.

As you know, I would have preferred to meet with you all face to face for these important discussions. When we postponed our March session, we were assuming that, by June, we would be able to meet physically. Of course, the continued global health emergency has made this impossible.

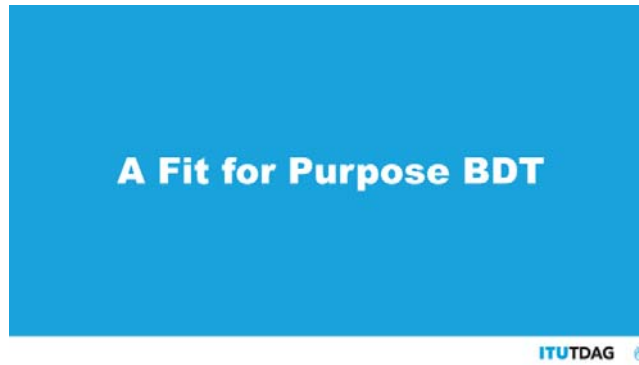
**We have tried our best to adjust to the circumstances,** and I am pleased that the power of digital platforms means that we are able to hold this meeting virtually.

To facilitate our discussions and advance our work we have taken a number of steps:

- We advanced **consultations on certain agenda items** to make the best use of our time over the next 4 days, through a series of "TDAG web dialogues". These sessions have allowed us to take a deep-dive into important issues such as: *RBM, the ITU index, Regional Presence, partnerships and private sector engagement and two rounds to kick-start our WTDC preparations.*
- We have also fine-tuned the documents we will be discussing during this meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been prepared based on the captioning records of the presentation delivered by the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau during the opening session of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ITU Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG).



When we met last year, I unveiled my plan for **my First 100 Days in Office**. I shared my vision to re-shape BDT into an agile, fit-for-purpose organization.

An organization **that listens** to its Members, that can quickly **identify and leverage new opportunities, build new alliances**, more effectively engage **with traditional, long-standing partners**, and – most importantly – attract and cultivate new partners and ensure that they see real value in collaborating with us.

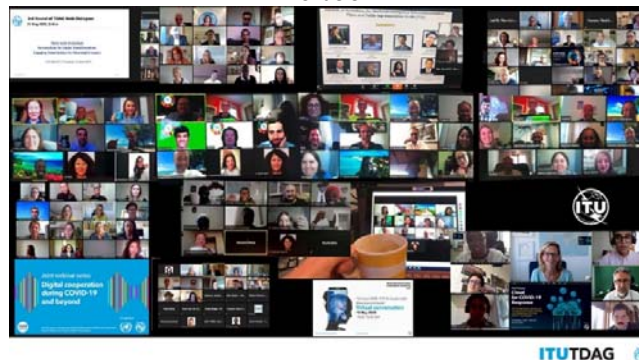
Today marks my **519<sup>th</sup> day in office**, and this vision, and my continued commitment to implementing it as rapidly as possible, remains unchanged.

**TDAG plays a key role** in providing expert and considered advice on how to move in this direction.

During my remarks this afternoon, and during the course of our meeting this week, we will be providing you with an overview of the work that has taken place in BDT over the past 12 months.

Let me start with an example of recent work: an example that summarizes perfectly what it means to be “fit for purpose”.

Slide 3



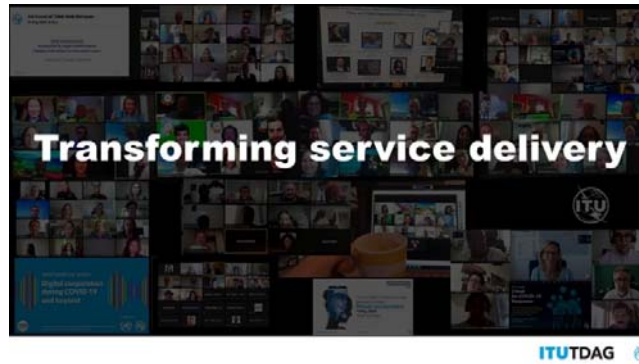
The COVID pandemic has turned our world upside down: our healthcare systems, our education systems and our economies. No one is sure what the “new normal” will look like, post-COVID. And for many of us, that post-COVID world still seems a long way off.

These dramatic changes have impacted us as individuals, but also as an organization, since an important part of our work is linked to the organization of physical meetings.

Over the past 3 months (this week marks our 12<sup>th</sup> week of working remotely) we have embraced digital solutions, gradually developing new ways to deliver our services. This image presents a sample of the many virtual meetings, coffee chats, knowledge exchanges and high-level discussions that we have organized during this period.

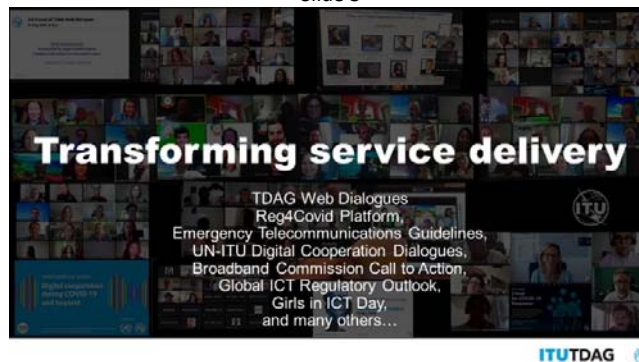
This new way of delivering our services has become **our new normal**: Not only it has allowed us to continue our work despite the circumstances, but it has also helped us come closer together, to be more available to our Members, and to adjust to the times in which we are living.

Slide 4



This is an example of the “fit for purpose BDT” that we want to build: a Bureau that is agile, that embraces new tools and approaches, and that delivers the services ITU Membership needs, in partnership with a growing range of partner organizations.

Slide 5



Looking at the deliverables that we have achieved during these 12 weeks, it is clear that we have found innovative and effective ways to continue to provide valuable services to our members, through:

- TDAG Web Dialogues;
- The Reg4Covid Platform;
- Our Emergency Telecommunications Guidelines, adapted to also cover epidemic outbreaks;
- UN-ITU Digital Cooperation Dialogues (5 broad multistakeholder dialogues);
- The Broadband Commission Agenda for Action;
- The ITU, GSMA, WEF & World Bank Digital Development Joint Action Plan and Call for Action;
- Global ICT Regulatory Outlook;
- A fully virtual Girls in ICT Day;
- and many other activities, such as the digital skills guidebook, with more to come.

However, one issue we still very much wish to address is the fact that many of our sessions thus far have largely been in English. This has been challenging for non-English speakers, and is contrary to our commitment to multilingualism and broader international cooperation.

Let me assure all of you that we are working very actively to ensure, as far as practicable, that more of our products and meetings will be offered in all 6 UN languages.

I believe these actions are an example of our ability to rapidly adapt ourselves to changed circumstances. It is an excellent illustration of what a “fit for purpose BDT” is all about: it is about working to achieve the right impact, to deliver on the vision I presented at our last TDAG – a vision which, in the wake of the COVID crisis, has become more relevant and urgent than ever.

Slide 6



ITUTDAG

Because one thing this crisis has dramatically and completely reinforced is **the vital importance of connectivity**.

For those of us joining today, ICT networks and services are helping us continue our important work, stay in touch with family, and keep our children learning through remote schooling. In other words, connectivity has been the “hidden hero” of this crisis.

But **we are the lucky ones**. Billions around the world still have **no connectivity at all**. In addition, many hundreds of millions more **struggle with access** that is too slow, too costly, and too unreliable to have made a meaningful difference to their lives during this crisis.

During these weeks of confinement, I have been thinking about the students in this picture, which was taken during the Girls in **ICT Day celebrations** hosted last year by the Government of Ethiopia. With no connectivity in their schools and at home, I am pretty sure that **these enthusiastic young students** have found their education dramatically and tragically disrupted.

Slide 7



ITUTDAG

If there's one thing the unprecedented events of the past few months have conclusively illustrated, it is the life-changing importance of being connected.

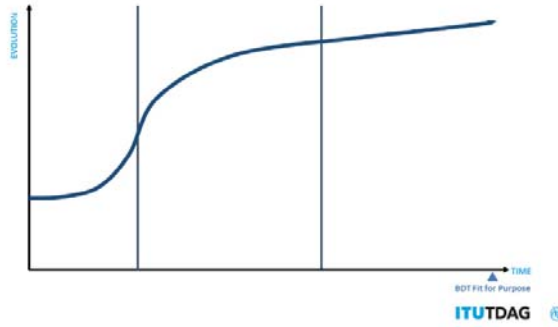
I am sure all TDAG delegates agree with me that we **cannot**, and **must not**, accept as ‘normal’ a situation where every second person on the planet has to manage without this vital digital lifeline. So when we set about defining a ‘new normal’ for our post-COVID world, let us agree that this ‘new normal’ must be based on inclusive connectivity for all, **broadband access for all**.

UN SG Antonio Guterres has urged us all to use the COVID crisis to ‘build back better’. Let us, in TDAG, agree to go one step further, and help the world to ‘build back better with broadband’. This vision has **never been** more relevant.

Throughout the **whole development community** there is a strong consensus regarding the importance of connecting humanity. It has become **an imperative**, and a **top priority** on the agendas of almost every government.

And **ITU will be a fundamental pillar of this global effort**.

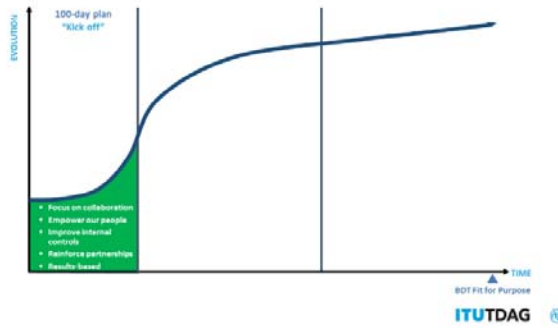
Slide 8



Let's take a brief moment to look at what has been achieved, and where we are now. **18 months have passed since I shared my vision for the future shape of BDT.**

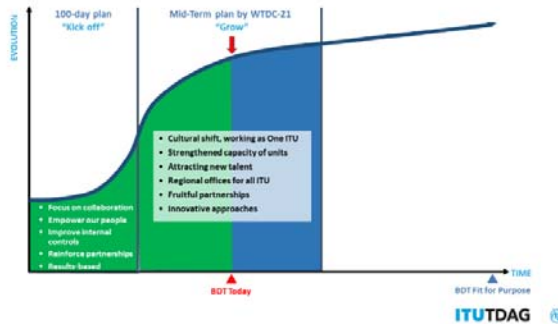
You may remember that last year I presented this same graph, which **illustrates the journey that BDT will take** on the road towards WTDC-21 and beyond.

Slide 9

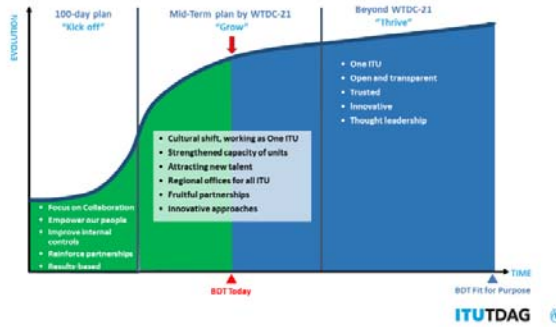


*Phase 1.* The first 100 days began with a strong focus on strengthening collaboration through the introduction of our clusters, capacity building, improving internal control systems, reinforcing partnerships, and Results-Based Management.

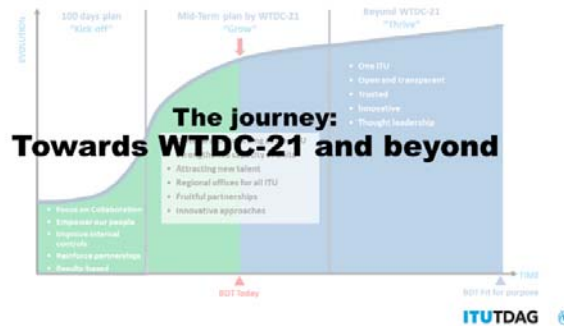
Slide 10



*Phase 2.* This process concluded with the introduction of a new Bureau structure, which signalled the start of our current phase: **the mid-term plan** that will take us to WTDC. Today I will be presenting some of the actions that we have undertaken during this phase, and the results that we are starting to see.



Phase 3. And finally, we will look ahead to our third phase, post-WTDC-21.



One important message that I would like all of you to retain is that all the actions that have taken place to date, as well as the ones that will follow, **are part of a journey.**

By working through them in **a methodical and comprehensive manner**, I believe we will achieve the impact we all aspire to see through ITU's work.

## 5 strategic priorities

- Improved efficiency
- Regional relevance
- Partnerships
- Capacity building
- Data-driven thought leadership

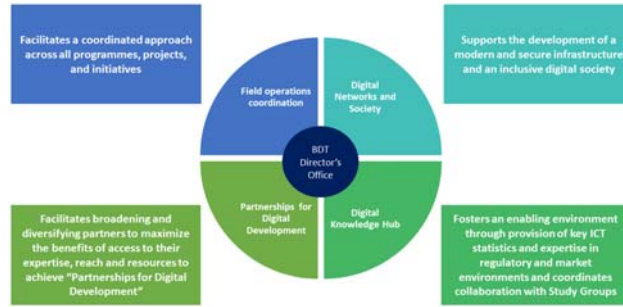
To move ahead on this journey, **five strategic priorities** will guide our work:

- improving the efficiency of the Bureau;
- achieving regional relevance by working closer with our regional offices, as well as with the UN system;
- putting a greater focus on working in partnership;
- upgrading the capacity of our staff by conducting an important number of internal capacity building activities;
- and providing data-driven thought leadership based on strengthening our statistic-gathering and data analysis capabilities.

We are making steady and significant progress in these areas.



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Let me start by presenting the refined structure of the Bureau.

As you may recall, at the last TDAG we gathered your feedback on how to improve the structure of the BDT. This discussion resulted in the introduction of a new structure, which was put in place in July 2019.

The new Bureau is structured around four interlinked departments:

- Field Operations Coordination;
- Digital Networks and Society;
- Digital Knowledge Hub;
- Partnerships for Digital Development.

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Improving the efficiency of the Bureau has also been a fundamental goal of this exercise.

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This focus on efficiency has been complemented by two additional efforts:

The first is the continuation of our work through **clusters**, which, as you may remember, are structured around the work programmes defined by the **Buenos Aires Action Plan** connecting with the **RI's and Study group Q's**, promoting better focus on the core issues that our Members care about.

The second is efforts to drive forward the implementation of **Results-Based Management (RBM)**.



As we discussed in our last series of web dialogues, RBM represents a seismic shift in the way we approach our work and evaluate its results. RBM serves as the foundation **for every** fit-for-purpose organization, promoting transparency, rigor and honesty in measuring our effectiveness, and promoting the agility we need to constantly adapt our work to today's fast-changing digital landscape.

The results of this increased focus on improving efficiency are already starting to show, providing us with new tools, such as **the quarterly dashboards**, which give us actionable information to ensure that we achieve the impact that we aspire to see through the work of BDT.

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The second strategic priority has been to achieve regional relevance by working more closely with our regional offices, as well as with the UN system.

This image captures very well this proximity with our membership. This is the map of missions by BDT staff during 2019. In just 12 months we covered over 130 Member States.

Let me stress, of course, that this picture represents just one aspect of our work, since we are involved in many activities with Member States that do not always necessitate physical travel.

Slide 18



That said, I think this 'mission map' provides a good overview of what regional relevance means: it means working as a team to be closer to our Membership, and working more closely on the ground with partner organizations to maximize our impact.



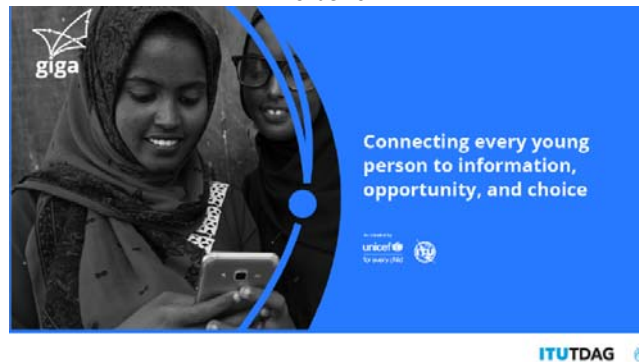
To complement this image, I want to share with you some new faces that have recently joined our senior management team. You have seen already the face of my new **Deputy Stephen Breaux**, who joined us 13 weeks ago. I am also pleased to introduce the three new regional directors who joined ITU recently as staff member.

- Ms Atsuko Okuda, the Director for ITU Regional Office for Asia Pacific;
- Ms Natalia Mochu, the Director for the ITU Regional Office for CIS countries;
- Mr Adel Darwish, who will be taking his functions as new Director for the ITU Regional Office for Arab States.

We are also putting a stronger emphasis on being part of the **UN development coordination mechanism** on the ground. Joining regularly the meetings and planning exercises conducted by the UN Development System.

We have also included our regional offices in all our **internal capacity building activities** – and in particular the **RBM** process – as well as in the **project management certifications** and **change management** programmes – to name just a few.

And finally, we are looking forward to the outcome of the independent review being conducted by PwC, the external consultancy hired to review our regional presence.



Our third strategic priority has been to **make “working in partnership” our default methodology.**

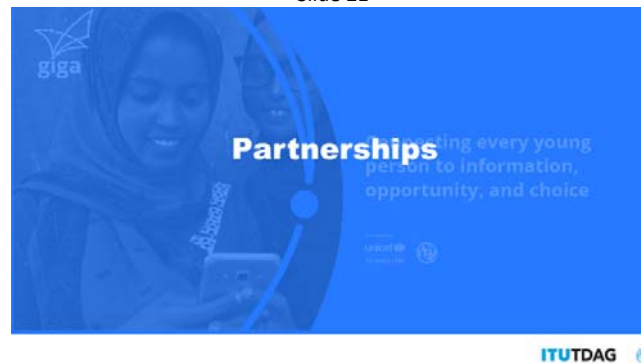
What you see here is the image and new branding of the GIGA initiative, the partnership between ITU, UNICEF and others to connect every school and every young person to information, opportunity, and choice.

We will have a comprehensive presentation on GIGA on Friday (Document 49), but for now I simply wanted to emphasize that GIGA has provided us with an opportunity to activate some of our regional initiatives, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has conferred new urgency on this work, with **tens of millions of children and young people still lacking connectivity**, and thus deprived of access to education, basic health services and public information.

The pandemic has prompted us to **broaden the GIGA vision**, to position school connectivity as a shared community resource that can help dramatically promote grassroots digital inclusion and support related initiatives like digital skills training.

What excites me about GIGA is the high-level aspiration of this vision, and the fact that it is a joint initiative with trusted and proven partners like UNICEF.

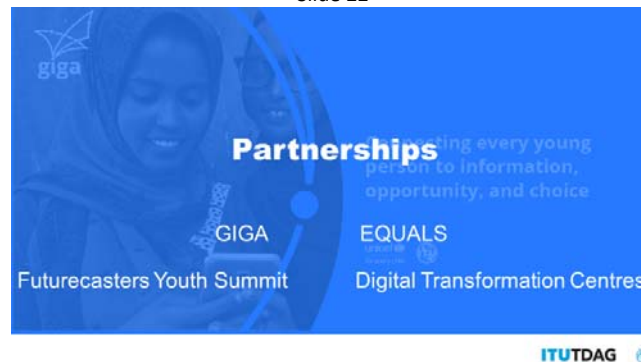
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Working in partnership has become critical to advancing digital development, since we need to work fast to bring digital solutions to areas such as education, health and finance, where we need to mobilize new expertise.

None of us can do this alone: **We must all work together.**

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The partnership model has taken root in a number of initiatives, such as the following:

- The EQUALS partnership for digital gender equality, and which brings together over 100 partners worldwide, and which we co-founded with UN Women, GSMA, ITC and the UN University;
- **Our youth efforts** - The Futurecasters Global Young Visionaries Summit, which we held last January in partnership with the Ferney Lycée Internationale Model UN Conference, welcoming 700 students from 25 countries. This summit saw the launch of a broad global youth consultation, with over 2,000 young people from 58 countries contributing inputs on our draft **BDT Youth Strategy (document 16)**;
- **Our Digital Transformation Centres** partnership with Cisco. 10 DTCs have already been selected to participate in the first phase: 4 in Africa, 3 in the Americas, and 3 in Asia-Pacific;
- Other partnerships with organizations like FAO in the area of e-agriculture or WHO in the – be healthy be mobile... UNDP

These are just some examples of the types of broad, multi-stakeholder partnerships we have initiated or reinforced over the past 12 months, and they provide a good model for ways we can build new partnerships and alliances to support our future work. Further details on partners are included in Document 7, to be presented later today.



ITUTDAG

The fourth strategic priority has been to upgrade the capacity of our staff by conducting an important number of internal capacity building activities.

Throughout this process I have sought to **avoid “one-off”** training that doesn’t deliver real, tangible change. Instead, I am striving to build a **movement**: a movement of **change makers** who will play a vital role in converting training sessions into **actual change**.

This image presents one of these initiatives, the **“Champions for Change”.C4C**

This first cohort of 10 ITU staff have been certified in Change Management, and they have become ambassadors of our vision of a new fit-for-purpose BDT, working across organizational structures to facilitate this transition.

A second cohort, of an additional 12 staff members was recruited this year, and has successfully completed their training.



Related initiatives include training on project management, a process that has so far certified nearly 40 staff members, with benefits for the whole of ITU. Another 40 staff will be included in a second round of training, which will commence shortly.

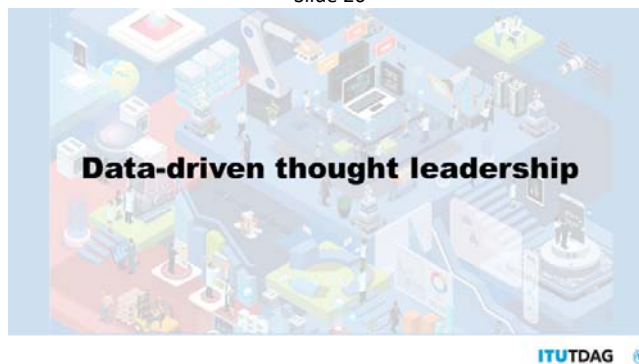
This process has led to the revision of our Project Management Guidelines, which we will be sharing with all of you in the coming few weeks.

And finally, we have undertaken a full-scale coaching exercise on RBM, starting in October 2019, and still ongoing; first to train us, and then to guide us in articulating our “theories of change”, so that we can achieve the right results at the right time (further information available in Document 28).



Our fifth and final strategic priority is leveraging **our data collection** and **making our data actionable**, so we can provide thought leadership based on the insights revealed by our work.

This image is from the cover of our latest statistical publication, the ICT Price Basket, which is part of the Measuring Digital Development series



Now more than ever, it is vitally important to strengthen ITU's **role as the place to go** to access relevant data on digital development.

Data that is trusted, reliable and impartial, and that we can use to make a convincing case for the vital importance **of bridging the global connectivity gap**.



Let me give you just a few examples of our efforts to date:

We have reinforced **our ICT Data and Statistics division** by hiring a new Senior Economist to head this unit, and by advertising two new posts that will strengthen the capacity of the team. Although these positions are still being recruited, I am confident that we will get the full team onboard over the summer.

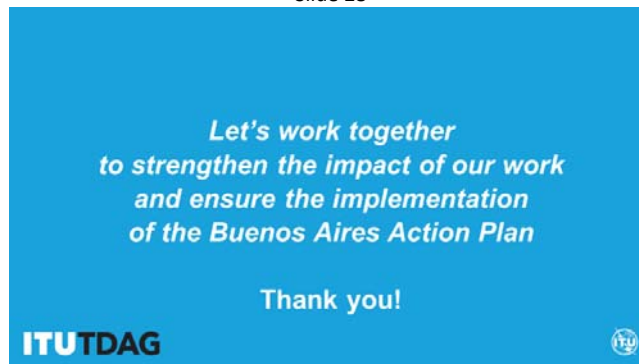
We have **transformed our series of reports** on Measuring the Information Society into **the new Measuring Digital Development series**. As I mentioned before, just last week we published our new ICT Price Trends report, which monitors the affordability of ICT services around the world.

We have also continued working on the broadband connectivity maps and the global cybersecurity index, and have started the process of reviewing the ICT index. We will seek the guidance of ITU Council on the next steps in this very important effort.

As the COVID pandemic gained momentum, we responded quickly by launching our **REG4COVID platform**, a **central repository** where regulators and policy makers can share information, view initiatives, and discuss and exchange information with peers on emergency measures to help communities remain connected, working to share that info with **new data visualization tools**.

**All this information** is being used to continue **advocating for the importance of achieving meaningful connectivity** with our member governments, the private sector, civil society, the UN and other stakeholders.

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Distinguished colleagues,

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and proposals on how we can continue advancing in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan.

It is said that one 'must never waste a good crisis'.

As we begin our preparations for next year's WTDC in Addis Ababa, let us seize this **unique opportunity** to harness an unprecedented tide of political will. **We may never again** benefit from the intense focus governments are now according digital networks and services.

WTDC represents a **unique opportunity** to make huge strides forward in connecting the unconnected, and building government and industry cooperation around a global 'big dig', so that we get those without access online as fast as possible, and leverage the power of digital to achieve the SDGs.

Our fit-for-purpose BDT, and next-year's streamlined WTDC, can be the prime movers in driving real and rapid progress towards a world of **universal connectivity, and universal opportunity**.

Let's seize that chance, and be a part of the change we want to see.

Thank you.

And now I would like to introduce you to the **BDT colleagues** who work **behind the scenes** every day to advance the mission of BDT

**They help us make the world a better place for all.** Every day.

I know this period has not been easy for anyone. And it is not over yet. But we are together, we remain strong, and we remain positive. So, it my pleasure to present team BDT with a "fun" video clip to lighten our spirits...

Ladies and gentlemen, this is us