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| C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg**TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities**  **3 March 2021, Virtual** | | |
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| **Title:** | Draft Addis Ababa Declaration | |

We, the high-level representatives of ITU Member States and delegates endorse the present Declaration at the eighth World Telecommunication Development Conference, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8 to 19 November 2021 under the theme **Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development** endorse this **Addis Ababa Declaration**.

**We declare that:**

1. Telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become the foundation for every economic sector and a catalyst for social inclusion, decent employment, and personal growth. Yet, in 2021 some 3.7 billion people remain **unconnected**, of whom 360 million are young people and for them, the transformative power of ICTs remains untapped;
2. **COVID-19** has changed many things, including the way we live, work, learn, and do business. In this era, connectivity is indispensable and provides opportunities for boosting productivity and efficiency to end poverty, for improving peoples' lives, and for ensuring that sustainable development becomes a reality. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the digital skills gap and revealed a need for students and workers in all industries to have strong digital skills;
3. inequalities remain and continue to widen in the use of data and digital ICT technologies, and in ICT skills between regions, between and within countries, and between women and men. In many countries, digital **ICT skills** need to be extensively developed and ICTs are not affordable. We recognize that affordable, available, and accessible ICTs can provide powerful drivers for development, and are also instrumental in timely, inclusive, and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;
4. insufficient digital capacity and lack of digital skills is a core barrier to digital inclusion and **digital transformation**. The demand for digitally skilled workers will increase with the accelerated move towards digital transformation across all industry sectors. While many jobs will be lost due to the economic crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, new ICT-centric jobs will emerge;
5. we have just ten years left to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**, and telecommunications/ICTs are agents of change that shape the future of the world for better. Telecommunications/ICTs are instrumental in multi-stakeholder activities and sharing of best practices as demanded by the **World Summit on the Information Society**. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder cooperation offers a platform for all to join forces, seize opportunities and leverage innovations offered by digital technologies while mitigating the risks, so that progress towards achieving the Goals by 2030 can be made collectively;
6. **developing countries**, and in particular **LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**, face additional challenges in mobilizing sufficient investment and financing for digital infrastructures and require substantial support to provide universal, safe, reliable, and affordable ICTs.

**We commit to:**

1. ensure that the **unconnected** 3.7 billion people in the world have access to reliable Internet to participate more effectively in economic, social, educational, and other activities; mobilize financial resources to **connect,** and make **broadband connectivity** cost-effective and affordable; create a system to monitor the level and quality of delivered services;
2. urgently mitigate the impact of disasters and **COVID-19** pandemic through bold and innovative national recovery strategies to ensure business, education, and social life continuity. This includes providing necessary platforms and networks for teleworking, e-commerce, remote learning, telemedicine, etc.; and ensuring that all schools are connected to the Internet as soon as possible by mobilizing all needed resources, including the required financial resources;
3. develop and implement innovative strategies and regulatory initiatives to bridge the widening **digital gap** and increase universal and affordable **broadband access** while addressing trust, security and safety of infrastructure and services. This includes effective plans to urgently develop the required **digital ICT skills**, without which the digital gap will continue to widen. This will also include promoting **investments** in broadband infrastructure, services, and applications in support of sustainable development, encouraging cooperation between Member States and creation of alliances and partnerships between the public sector, private sector, international funding agencies and other stakeholders.
4. fully exploit the opportunities provided by **digital transformation** of various sectors of the economy; and support the industry, academia, and private sector to unleash new technologies by encouraging innovations that can foster sustainable development and address current and future challenges, including poverty alleviation, job creation, gender equality, quality and timely education, child online protection, etc. This will include evidence-based decision making to measure and maximize the impact of digital transformation. Knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices are essential in the realignment of public policies pertaining to digital transformation and efficient implementation of such policies. In doing so, we pay special attention to the needs of women and girls, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs, and children;
5. provide support to and cooperate with **developing countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS** in addressing their constraints to accessing digital technologies and their integration into different sectors, such as national government, agriculture, education, health, finance, transport, etc.;
6. promote international **cooperation** among ITU Membership and development-oriented stakeholders for achieving sustainable development using ICTs. Also, enhance and encourage **cooperation and partnership** between developing countries and between developed and developing countries to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer with a view to promoting sustainable development and economic growth.

Accordingly, we, the delegates to the eighth World Telecommunication Development Conference, **declare** our commitment to the full and rapid implementation of **this Declaration**. We also pledge to spare no effort towards the expansion and use of digital infrastructures, applications, and services for building and establishing truly sustainable digital economies and societies.

The World Telecommunication Development Conference calls upon ITU membership as well as all development-oriented stakeholders, including those in the United Nations system, to contribute actively towards the successful implementation of **this Declaration**.

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