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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **28th Meeting, Virtual, 24-28 May 2021** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **TDAG-2****1/19-E** | |
|  | | **13 May 2021** | |
|  | | **Original:** **English** | |
| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | | | |
| Preparations for the WTDC-21 Partner2Connect Segment | | | |
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| **Summary:**  The ITU Partner2Connect Segment will offer participants from government, business, international organizations, civil society, and academia, attending WTDC, as well as those who have not traditionally attended WTDC, an opportunity to engage in high level discussions around the challenges and opportunities related to digital development, make concrete commitments, and forge new partnerships. Their commitments will help advance access and use of digital technologies to transform lives particularly in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. Participants will be engaged through a dynamic preparatory process, which will be coordinated by the co-chairs of the four focus areas that make up the Partner2Connect Segment agenda. The four focus areas each addressing a different dimension critical to digital development, also relate to the Regional Priorities identified during the WTDC-21 Regional Preparatory Process.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this document.  **References:**  [TDAG-20/3/5](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27-C-0005/en) and [TDAG-20/3/7](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27-C-0007/en) | | | |

1. **Background**

Further to early conversations during the [TDAG Web Dialogues](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC21/Pages/Web-Dialogues.aspx) on the topic of making the World Telecommunication Development Conferences more efficient and the work of BDT more impactful TDAG, at its 2-5 and 16 June 2020 meetings, created a working group on WTDC preparations ([TDAG-WG-Prep](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/TDAG_WG_WTDC_Prep.aspx)) that worked through the summer and autumn of 2020 to submit its conclusions and proposals to the TDAG meeting of 23 November 2020 (Document [TDAG-20/3/5](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27-C-0005/en)). The approved proposals contained the basis for the Partner2Connect for Digital Development:

* The High-Level Segment and high-level policy statements could make way for a Development Track that would incorporate senior level panels, roundtables and thematic discussions of development topics related to the implementation of the Action Plan and establishment of the new Action Plan;
* It should not take time from the work of WTDC Plenary and committees and their related groups;
* Thematic tracks should reflect the ITU-D thematic priorities;
* The constituents to be targeted should include: International financial institutions, regional development banks, United Nations System, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders such as youth organizations, representatives from marginalized communities;
* The proposal of the Working Group is that high-level participants from Member States, Sector Members, private sector, Academia, UN System, civil society and from international and regional financial organizations be invited to chair and/or deliver keynote speeches on the theme(s) selected.

During the Regional Preparatory Process for WTDC-21, Members consistently identified the importance of resilient and reliable connectivity, empowering communities, and digital transformation as Regional Priorities. In this context, the Partner2Connect for Digital Development (P2C) event at WTDC-21 will provide an opportunity for leaders from all ITU-D constituents (Members, Sector Members, other private sector and academia leaders, civil society, and international/multilateral organizations) to discuss the key digital development challenges and opportunities to achieving universal meaningful connectivity.

The provision of the P2C event is in recognition of partnerships as a critical enabler for achieving the ITU-D Regional Priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The enormity of the resources needed requires global partnerships and new models of collaboration with all stakeholders.

1. **Participants**

Consistent with the guidance from TDAG, the participants to the WTDC-21 P2C segment will be leaders from government, business, international organizations, civil society, and academia. P2C aims to bring participants and organizations who do not traditionally attend WTDC but are critical to advancing digital connectivity and development in the context of the SDGs, and to position the ITU-D Sector as the key platform for advancing this agenda. Participants will be invited at the highest level and will be joined by Ministers and high-level officials who are attending WTDC21, in an interactive and impactful format providing an enhanced experience for all attendees.

1. **Goals of the WTDC-21 Partner2Connect Segment**

The Segment will have the following goals:

* To secure meaningful commitments from participants to advance the access and use of digital connectivity to transform lives in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS;
* To advance progress on the Regional Priorities;
* To attain broad engagement and ownership from key partners through the creation of Working Groups and the nomination of Working Group co-chairs for the four focus areas of the segment;
* To be aligned other internationally recognized declarations and pledges, including the Broadband Commission, the UNSG Digital Cooperation Roadmap, and the UN LDC5 conference in January 2022.

With the organization of the Partner2Connect segment, the following results are expected:

* A WTDC-21 Partner2Connect Digital Coalition will be launched;
* A WTDC-21 and Partner2Connect preparatory process;
* Follow up after the WTDC-21, including periodic reporting on commitments made by signatories to the coalition and progress against the Regional Priorities

1. **Partner2Connect Segment Format, Content and Design**

The Partner2Connect segment will take place over the course of two-and-a-half days starting from the afternoon of Day 2 of WTDC-21, and will be built around four focus areas:

**CONNECTING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE** – Resilient and reliable connectivity for all;

**EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES** – All people have access to the relevant digital services and the skills and resources to maximize their potential;

**BUILDING DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS** – Providing the enabling leadership and capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and policy/regulatory frameworks to digitally transform ecosystems;

**INCENTIVIZING INVESTMENTS** – Creating investment models and financing instruments that incentivize new sources of investment from both traditional and non-traditional sources.

Each focus area will have 3-4 co-chairs, including 1-2 from Members, 1 from private sector, and 1 from Civil Society/International Organization. Co-chairs of these focus areas would lead the preparatory process, and facilitate the development of concrete commitments to be announced around those areas at the Partner2Connect segment. The segment may include activities such as: panel sessions, small group discussions, plenary pledges, and signing ceremony for the coalition.

Following the principles approved by TDAG the panels, round tables and group discussion, will either include or be chaired/moderated high-level participants from membership. In addition to this, other high-level participants may wish to record video messages that will be played during the coffee breaks in meeting rooms and in the screens dotted around the conference venue.

1. **Partner engagement**

BDT intends to invite key, relevant partners to serve as co-chairs of the focus areas and track leads for this segment. The co-chair Members representatives will be drawn from across all six regions and represent the Regional Priorities. Co-chairs will support the BDT to ensure participation from new constituent groups, robust dialogue with a broad set of stakeholders leading up to WTDC21, meaningful commitments at the Partner2Connect segment, and consistent follow-up and reporting after WTDC21.

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