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|  | **Document** **TDAG-2****1/24-E** |
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| Arab States |
| Draft Addis Ababa Declaration |
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| **Summary:**According to the TDAG June2020 meeting recommendations, the declaration should be more concise, short, focused, to the point and written in such a way that is easily understood by people outside ITU.The Arab Group proposes a draft declaration including important themes such as:* Security and personal data protection; -Capacity building;
* Conformance and interoperability of telecommunication/ICT equipment and systems;
* Transparent and collaborative collection and dissemination of quality indicators and statistics that measure the information society;
* Role of ITU-D which should target its efforts in achieving ITU-D contributions to the ITU Strategic Plan and the ITU-D Action Plan.

**Action required:**TDAG is requested to note this document. **References:**Document TDAG-WG-RDPT/31-E |

The eighth World Telecommunication Development Conference (Addis Ababa, 2021), which took place from 8 to 19 November 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme **Connecting the Unconnected to achieve Sustainable Development and** endorse this **Addis Ababa Declaration**.

**We declare that:**

1. ITU is committed to improving people’s lives and making the world a better place through the use of telecommunications/ICTs which have become the foundation for all sectors 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** have introduced new challenges and as a result altered the way we live, work, learn, and do business. In the time of global pandemics , having access to modern, secure, affordable and accessible telecommunication/ICT services and applications, including high speed broadband connectivity is indispensable and provides opportunities for boosting productivity and efficiency to end poverty, improving peoples' lives, and 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. while there has been significant progress and efforts throughout the years, the digital divide continues to persist in both the applications and the skills of telecommunications/ICT technologies, between regions, and between urban, rural and underserved areas within countries, as well as in the availability of accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs for women, youth, children, indigenous people, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, including age‑related disabilities;.
4. Digital Inclusion is not a luxury, no one should be left behind to enjoy the access to digital services and fully benefit from the integration of emerging technologies in the different sectors of the economy. Developing countries still witness mounting challenges to acquire the necessary digital skills to accelerate the digital transformation process.
5. The 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 Sustainable Development 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.
7. widespread conformance and interoperability of telecommunication/ICT equipment and systems through the implementation of relevant programmes, policies and decisions had proved and remain important to increase market opportunities, competitiveness and reliability as well as encouraging global integration and trade;
8. security and personal data protection are a fundamental aspect to enhance trust in the network and accelerate the process of digital transformation. The use of telecommunication/ICT applications provides innovative and beneficial services for users, but also presents challenge of building confidence and trust in the availability, reliability, security and use of telecommunications/ICTs, bearing in mind the ethical dimension of the information society.

**We commit to:**

1. that ITU-D should target its efforts in achieving ITU-D contributions to the ITU Strategic Plan and the ITU-D Action Plan, especially in mobilizing financial resources to **connect the unconnected,** ensuring access to cost-effective and affordable **broadband connectivity, and to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**.
2. 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;
3. that ITU should support Member States in building capacity regarding the use of telecommunications/ICTs in preparing for and responding to disasters and pandemics, including in the area of early warning and disaster preparedness plans, and in encouraging regional and international cooperation, collaboration and information sharing;
4. that transparent and collaborative collection and dissemination of quality indicators and statistics that measure the information society and provide comparative analysis of advancements in the use and adoption of ICTs continue to be a major factor for supporting socio-economic growth and assist in identifying gaps that requires national policy formulation.
5. 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 and capacity building initiatives 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.
6. 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 children, women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs. and people living in unserved and underserved areas
7. Provide adequate support to Member States to develop a conducive ecosystem to leverage the full benefits of emerging technologies and share possible guidelines to achieve resilient and efficient cross-border data flows assisting broader integration of such technologies between Member States to promote socio-economic benefits of such technologies.
8. 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.;
9. further develop cooperation among actors, particularly ITU’s membership on cybersecurity and data protection issues, and also to contribute more effectively to the global efforts in order to make cyberspace more secure and safer for everyone;
10. 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, and other interested parties and development-oriented stakeholders, including those in the United Nations system, to contribute actively towards the successful implementation of **this Declaration**.

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