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|  | **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **29th Meeting, Virtual, 8-12 November 2021** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | | | |
| Preparations for the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit | | | |
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| **Summary:**  The ITU Youth Strategy will offer opportunities for young people to participate in ITU meetings, make their voices heard, engage with ITU members, and contribute to ITU’s work. The Strategy includes a plan to organize a “Generation Connect Global Youth Summit” back-to-back with WTDC. The Summit will focus on building strong engagement of youth in preparation for the Conference, and bringing the voices of young people into the WTDC discussions, sessions, and activities. Preparations for the Youth Summit are underway and coordinated by the ITU Youth Task Force and the Generation Connect Youth Summit co-design team.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this document.  **References:**   * Document TDAG-20/3/INF/2-E: Draft Concept Note WTDC-21 Generation Connect Global Youth Summit * Document TDAG-20/16-E: Draft Youth Strategy * Document TDAG-21/18-E: Preparations for the WTDC-21 Generation Connect Global Youth Summit * Resolution 198 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference; Resolution 37 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017); Resolution 67, (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017); Resolution 76 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference; ITU-D Objective 4 on inclusive digital society; ITU-D study group Question7/1 * <https://www.itu.int/generationconnect/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ITU_Youth_Strategy.pdf> | | | |

1. **Background**

The global COVID-19 pandemic crisis has exposed the fundamental role that digital solutions play to ensure the continuity of key public services. Youth have been particularly disrupted by this crisis, in particular in the area of face-to-face education. This experience has confirmed that digital technologies must lie at the very heart of our efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) by 2030.

To recognize this context, the ITU Youth Strategy has included in its activities the organization of a “Generation Connect Global Youth Summit” before WTDC. The Summit will focus on building a strong engagement of youth in preparation for the Conference, and on bringing the voices, perspective, and creativity of young people into the WTDC discussions, sessions, and activities.

1. **Participants – leave no one behind**

The participants in the “Generation Connect Global Youth Summit” will be youth from all over the world, but especially from developing countries. The Summit will mobilize young representatives from ITU Member States, along with representatives from youth-led organizations, the private sector and academia, who will join an event designed as a multi-stakeholder engagement platform.

The Summit will put special emphasis on ensuring diversity and inclusion and, to this end, the organizers will encourage the participation of young women, people with disabilities and representatives from indigenous communities. The Summit will also include the voices of young people that are not connected and are currently not being empowered through technology. The Summit will be designed to ensure that each participant is fully included in the meetings, discussions, events, and activities.

1. **Goals of the “Generation Connect Global Youth Summit”**

The Summit will have the following goals:

* To achieve meaningful youth engagement, consultations, collaboration, empowerment, participation and calls for action, aimed at bringing the voices of young people into the   
  WTDC discussions, sessions, and activities;
* To attain serious, open, and frank discussions, where youth can discuss and share what is good about technology, and what worries them. By taking this approach, by fully engaging youth, from the design, the content to the format of the Summit, ITU will get a truly meaningful youth roadmap for the future;
* To encourage the participation of young women, young people with disabilities and young indigenous people. The Summit will also include the voices of young people that are not connected and are currently not being empowered through technology;
* To implement, through the organization of the Summit, the ITU Youth Strategy, which was adopted by ITU Members during TDAG-20;
* To be aligned with the vision and objectives of the United Nations Youth Strategy: Youth 2030 – working with and for young people.

With the organization of the Summit, the following results are expected:

* A “Generation Connect Global Youth Summit” Declaration, which will be submitted to WTDC;
* A WTDC and Youth Summit preparatory process;
* Regional and global meaningful youth engagement before and during the Youth Summit and WTDC;
* Follow up after the Youth Summit and WTDC, with the ongoing implementation of the ITU Youth Strategy.

1. **Youth Summit Format, Content and Design**

The Youth Summit will be organized under the theme of WTDC: “Generation Connect: Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development”. This overarching theme will be further developed to cover sub-themes linked to the BDT thematic priorities, the areas of interest resulting from the engagement in youth consultations, as well as with the 17 SDGs and the UN Roadmap on digital cooperation.

Based on the postponement of WTDC to 2022, the Generation Connect Youth Summit will be held on 4-5 June 2022, back-to-back with the Conference. The Youth Summit will be in a hybrid format, with physical participation taking place in Addis Abba, as well as virtual youth engagement. The aim is to have the physical participation of at least 400 youth, between 18 and 24 years old, at least two youth per country, including gender balance and youth with specific needs.

A Youth Summit Co-Design Team of over 40 members was assembled in July 2021, comprised of: Generation Connect Regional Youth Envoys, Generation Connect Visionaries Board Members, ITU Regional Focal Points, ITU Youth Task Force Members and Generation Connect Video Pitch Competition Winners.

Three co-design workshops were held in August and September 2021 in an effort to co-create a draft outline of the Summit. In the first workshop, participants brainstormed and discussed ideas for the content, structure, and ‘look and feel’ of the Youth Summit while the focus in the second workshop concerned the selection of Summit participants and how to promote the Summit. The third workshop focused on refining the ideas that had been discussed in the first two workshops. The Youth Summit Co-Design Team produced a first draft of the format, content, and design of the Summit.

The Summit may include activities such as: panel sessions lead and organized by youth, dialogue between youth and ITU elected officials and Members, inter-generational debates with WTDC participants, digital testimonials, bootcamp sessions, hackathons, workshops, challenges, trainings, as well as fishbowl sessions with mentors.

Regional virtual hubs will be set up to facilitate youth who are unable to attend physically to join the Summit virtually. The virtual hubs will allow youth in the same region to come together to engage with other young leaders from around the world, fostering networking and exchange opportunities. There will also be a live streaming option for those who would like to participate virtually in the Summit.

For the virtual aspect of the Summit, different online platforms are being reviewed, considering the importance of ensuring that the solutions to be selected should be available and accessible to all target participants.

1. **Engagement strategy**

The success of the Summit will depend on setting up a solid engagement strategy, built around the *Participate* pillar, different actions, and engagement groups:

ITU Youth Task Force

ITU has currently over 40 youth focal points from the BDT, TSB, BR and General Secretariat in ITU headquarters, as well as ITU regional and area offices, to effectively coordinate and mainstream efforts related to the implementation of the Youth Strategy. The task force has been divided into three working groups, based on the Youth Strategy pillars: *Empower*, *Engage* and *Participate*.

Generation Connect Regional Youth Groups

In line with the Youth Strategy, youth from each region have been called upon to contribute to the preparatory process for WTDC and the Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPM). Six Generation Connect Regional Youth Groups have been established and presented at the different RPMs between January and April 2021, through side events and plenary sessions.

The youth envoys of each Regional Youth Group developed outcomes documents providing their views on the regional priorities of relevance to each region, as well as challenges and opportunities, which have been shared with ITU Members. The documents will serve as inputs for the drafting of the Generation Connect Youth Summit Declaration.

There are seven cross-cutting themes across the ITU thematic priorities that were emphasized in all regional outcome documents: youth participation; youth innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment; youth education, training, and capacity building; safeguarding and online protection for youth; inclusion and access for all youth; environment and sustainable development; and digital citizen and community digital services.

Generation Connect Visionaries Board

The Generation Connect Visionaries Board was assembled in January 2021 to offer strategic guidance to ITU on our youth-related work as we implement the ITU Youth strategy and advocate for meaningful youth engagement. The work of this Board has been so far instrumental to the organisation of the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit. The Board is comprised of ITU representatives, 8 young leaders and 8 high-level appointees, working together towards the board’s strategic objectives.

The first meeting of the Board was held on 14 April 2021, and the second meeting was held on 8 September 2021. In both meetings, the Board members shared their views and ideas for the organization of the Youth Summit.

Youth Summit Communications Strategy

The engagement plan for the Summit will be supported through a Youth Summit communications strategy built around the following objectives: build momentum and awareness among diverse young people and youth organisations towards the Youth Summit, increase wider cognisance of the ITU’s vast work on youth and its initiatives, utilise the Generation Connect Visionaries Board, Regional Youth Groups and the Generation Connect virtual community to engage more young people before, during and after the Summit.

The communication strategy will be divided into three phases: pre-promotion; promotion during the Youth Summit and WTDC, and post promotion.

Partner engagement

Partnerships are crucial for the sustainable and meaningful implementation of the Youth Strategy and the organization of the Youth Summit. BDT intends to work with ITU members and relevant organizations, networks and interested donors (development banks, foundations, private-sector entities) that are strategically focused on supporting youth development and empowerment.

Different partnership options will be given to support the Youth Summit with in-kind and/or financial contributions, such as: cover the costs for youth participation to travel to Ethiopia, sponsor the Summit and specific activities, as well as organize interactive workshops/sessions/ trainings.

The Generation Connect Visionaries Board established “The Partnerships Working Group”. This group of GCVB members is dedicated to attracting and fostering partnerships with organizations, to directly contribute to the implementation of the Generation Connect Initiative and the organization of the Youth Summit.

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