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| Logo, company name  Description automatically generated | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated**World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22)**  **Kigali, Rwanda, 6-16 June 2022** | |
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| PLENARY MEETING | | **Addendum 29 to Document WTDC-22/24-E** |
|  | | **2 May 2022** |
|  | | **Original: English** |
| Member States of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) | | |
| Draft WTDC Declaration: Proposed modifications | | |
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| **Priority area:** - Declaration  **Summary:**  The World Telecommunication Development Conference’s Declaration presents an external message regarding aspirations for telecommunications/ICT development consistent with the WTDC theme.  CITEL proposes modifications to the latest version endorsed by during the ITU’s Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) in November 2021. CITEL’s views are also shaped by comparisons to views expressed on the Declaration by other RTOs.  **Expected results:**  WTDC-22 is invited to examine and approve the proposal in this document.  **References:**  Draft WTDC Declaration | | |

DECLARATION

**MOD** IAP/24A29/1

Draft WTDC Declaration

We, the high-level representatives of ITU Member States, delegates and participants **endorse the present Declaration** at the eighth World Telecommunication Development Conference, which took place in Kigali, Rwanda from 6 to 16 June 2022 under the theme **Connecting the Unconnected to Achieve Sustainable Development**.

We declare that:

1) Telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become the foundation for every economic sector and a catalyst for improving peoples’ lives by way of social inclusion, decent employment, and personal growth. Yet, in 2021 some 3.7 billion people remain **unconnected**, and for them, the transformative power of telecommunications/ICTs remains untapped.

2) **COVID-19** has introduced many challenges and changed the way we live, work, learn, and do business. In the digital era, universal, secure, and affordable broadband connectivity, is indispensable and the openness it provides creates opportunities for boosting productivity and efficiency, ending poverty, improving livelihoods and ensuring that sustainable development becomes a reality for all. Continuing to build confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs remains of vital importance.

3) Inequalities remain and continue to widen in the use of data and digital ICT-centric technologies, and in the **digitally skilled human resources** between regions, between and within countries in urban and rural areas, and between women and men. We recognize that available, affordable, dependable, and accessible ICTs when leveraged through adequate digital skills can provide powerful drivers for development, and are instrumental in timely, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Capacity development in different ICT areas, including spectrum management, remains a challenge.

4) **Digital inclusion** is a necessity, and insufficient digital capacity and lack of digital skills are core barriers to **digital transformation**. The demand for digitally skilled workers will increase with the accelerated move towards digital transformation. While many jobs have been and will be lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital transformation can nurture new ICT-centric jobs.

5) We have just nine years left to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**, and telecommunications/ICTs are agents of change that can shape the future for the better. Telecommunications/ICTs are instrumental in multi-stakeholder activities and sharing best practices as prescribed by the **World Summit on the Information Society**. Multi-stakeholder cooperation offers a platform for all to join forces, seize opportunities and leverage innovations offered by efficient new and emerging telecommunications/ICT services and technologies while mitigating risks, so that progress towards sustainable development can be made collectively.

6) **Developing countries**, and in particular Least Developed Countries (**LDCs**)**,** Land-Locked Developing Countries (**LLDCs**)andSmall Island Developing States (**SIDSs**), face additional challenges in mobilizing sufficient investment and financing for telecommunications and digital infrastructures and require substantial support to provide universal, secure, reliable, and affordable telecommunications/ICTs.

We commit to

a) accelerating the expansion and use of efficient and up-to-date digital infrastructures, services and applications for building and furthering digital development, including mobilization of financial resources for providing **universal, secure, and affordable broadband connectivity to the unconnected** to encourage greater adoption as soon as possible. This will also include promoting **investments** in broadband infrastructure deployment access and adoption with a view to supporting sustainable development, encouraging cooperation between Member States, promoting open and global Internet access, and creating alliances and partnerships between public and private sectors, international funding agencies and other stakeholders.

b) urgently mitigating the impact of disasters and the **COVID-19** pandemic through implementation of bold and innovative national plans and recovery strategies for ensuring governance, business, education, and social life continuity. This includes providing the necessary platforms and networks for essential activities such as teleworking, e-commerce, remote learning, telemedicine, and digital financial services while paying special attention to the needs of women and girls, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs, such as the elderly and children

c) promoting sound, open, transparent, collaborative and future proof policy and regulatory decisions with a view to facilitating **digital transformation** in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. We will implement innovative strategies and policy/regulatory initiatives to bridge widening **digital divides** and promote adoption and uptake by enabling **universal, open, secure,** **and affordable** **broadband connectivity** while enhancing confidence and **security** **in the use** of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services. As such, we will develop and implement policy/regulatory frameworks to promote infrastructure resiliency, interoperability, and protection of personally identifiable information. Besides, we will adopt effective plans to develop and enhance **digital capacities and skills** that are required for individuals and communities to thrive in the online world, without which the digital divide and existing inequalities will continue to widen.

d) fully exploiting the opportunities provided by **digital transformation** of various sectors of the economy by supporting industry, academia, civil society and other private sector actors to unleash new and emerging telecommunications/ICT technologies and services. We will encourage innovations to foster sustainable development and address current and future challenges, such as poverty alleviation, job creation, advancing gender equality, and cybersecurity best practices. In doing so, we will put in place the needed prerequisites such as electricity, facilitate **digital inclusion** and implement evidence-based decision making to measure and maximize the impact of digital transformation.

e) providing support to and cooperate with **developing countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDSs** in addressing their constraints for accessing new and emerging telecommunications/ICT technologies and services and their integration into different sectors, such as government services, agriculture, education, health, finance, transport, etc.

f) promoting international **cooperation** among ITU Membership and development-oriented stakeholders for achieving sustainable development using telecommunications and ICT-centric digital technologies. We will enhance and encourage **cooperation and partnership** among developing countries and between developed and developing countries to facilitate voluntary technology and knowledge transfer on mutually agreed terms and the exchange of best practices 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 telecommunications and 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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