**Annex 5. Inputs received from GCYE Commonwealth of Independent States Region**

**Generation Connect for Commonwealth of Independent States Youth Envoys (GC-CIS)
Proposals to the Outcome Document of the Global Youth Summit 2024**

In the modern era of rapid technological progress and digital transformation, youth play a key role in shaping the future. This document, representing the contribution of the Generation Connect youth group of CIS countries, emphasizes the need to create conditions where the younger generation is not just a user of innovations but an active driver of global changes in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

We, the youth, as digital aborigines are more influenced by innovations. In current reality decisions regarding the implementation of technologies (including the determination of technical standards and priorities for innovative development) in public processes are made by a narrow group of stakeholders, creating a generational gap in influencing digital transformation. Although we are the most active group utilizing technologies, we lack the voice and influence over the processes that define our lives in many areas, from education to governance involving new technologies.

The gap between older and younger generations creates a situation of distrust among the youth towards modern global processes and leaves behind a large number of individuals who could bring fresh, ambitious, and innovative ideas to building a human-centered digital transformation. These challenges require systematic solutions that incorporate the perspectives and initiatives of youth themselves.

The preparation for the 2024 ITU Global Youth Summit under the theme "Amplifying Youth Voices in ICT for a Connected Future " provides a unique opportunity to highlight the priorities and positions of CIS youth to form a shared understanding of the issues and strategies for overcoming them. This allows not only addressing the needs of young people but also channeling their energy and creativity towards building a sustainable and inclusive digital society.

This document is crucial for shaping youth policies and programs in the field of ICT, as well as for ensuring fair participation of youth in decision-making processes at the international level. It will serve as the foundation for dialogue with leaders and support developing joint strategies aimed at achieving digital development goals and a sustainable future. The Generation Connect CIS Youth Document was created and approved based on multilateral consultations with youth from the CIS and social surveys conducted among the youth of CIS countries.

**We, the youth of the CIS countries, prioritize overcoming the following digital development challenges by 2027 and propose key solutions:**

**1. Challenge: Digital Divide**

The digital divide creates significant barriers for youth and limiting access to education, healthcare, and employment. These disparities in digital opportunities stem from socio-economic factors, including infrastructure, income levels, and geographic location, with particularly severe impacts on vulnerable groups. This challenge encompasses unequal access to the internet, digital skills, and technologies.

**Solution**

Investing in the development of infrastructure (fiber-optic lines, 5G networks, satellite internet) and implementing support programs for vulnerable populations could help bridge the digital divide. Introducing digital literacy courses and establishing public internet access centers will provide equal oppotunities for everyone. Regulating tariffs and supporting telecommunications operators are also critical measures for advancing digital inclusion.

**Potential**

Bridging the digital divide will enhance quality of life, increase access to socio-economic benefits (digital services, healthcare, education, high-paying and remote work), and stimulate economic growth while fostering social inclusivity. Expanded digital accessibility will create new opotunities for innovation and sustainable development, ensuring that technologies are accessible and affordable for all.

**2. Challenge: Development, Implementation, and Advancement of Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

AI holds significant potential for automating routine tasks and application in complex fields such as healthcare, emergency prediction, and data analysis. However, its rapid adoption poses risks: job displacement without providing alternative employment opportunities, algorithmic bias, and a lack of transparency, which can lead to discrimination and barriers. Additionally, technologies like DeepFake pose threats of fraud and misinformation. The widespread use of AI can exacerbate issues related to data security, privacy, and the spread of fake news, disproportionately affecting children, youth, and vulnerable populations.

**Solution**

To foster the development of human-centered AI, it is essential to implement principles of transparency and algorithm auditing, which will build trust in technology and promote inclusivity. Legal regulations should incorporate ethical considerations in AI applications to prevent bias and unfair outcomes. Creating educational programs on AI, training qualified specialists, and supporting initiatives that focus on creative and socially meaningful projects will contribute to the sustainable and secure use of technology.

**Potential**

The integration of human-centered AI will help bridge digital divides, open new horizons for humanity, and enhance the quality of life across nations. AI can automate routine tasks, freeing people for more creative endeavors. This will lead to increased productivity through robotic process automation (RPA), in-depth analytics, and simulation modeling. Safe and equitable use of AI will strengthen societal trust, create comfortable working conditions, and enable innovative approaches across various sectors. Expanding educational programs and training specialists in AI will generate a multiplier effect, boosting the economy and fostering sustainable development.

**3. Challenge: Security in the Digital Environment and Enhancement of Cybersecurity**

The rise in cybercrime, including account breaches, fraud, and data leaks, poses threats not only to businesses but also to users worldwide. The vulnerability of digital infrastructure and low levels of digital literacy make these cyber threats particularly real for youth, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups. Cybersecurity plays a fundamental role as many economic and social processes rely on digital technologies.

**Solution**

Addressing cybersecurity challenges effectively requires a comprehensive approach that includes implementing multi-layered data protection through encryption, authentication, and regular checks, testing, and updates to threat response systems. Advanced solutions, such as machine learning for real-time threat detection and blockchain for data protection, are also critical. Companies and government institutions should invest in security systems and standardize processes by conducting regular audits and vulnerability tests. Collaboration with international organizations to combat global cybercrime remains essential. Educational initiatives aimed at improving cyber literacy should be prioritized, beginning with school and university curricula.

**Potential**

Strengthening cybersecurity will increase user trust in digital technologies, encouraging more active use of online services and higher volumes of electronic transactions. Companies that maintain high data protection standards become more attractive to clients and partners, improving their reputation and competitiveness. The development of security infrastructure will create new jobs in cybersecurity and enable the effective use of digital technologies for innovation and growth. Reliable cybersecurity reduces the risks of data leaks and attacks, protecting the population from cyber threats and cybercrime, ultimately enhancing societal resilience and supporting the long-term development of businesses and the economy.

**4. Challenge: Connectivity in Remote Regions**

Limited access to high-speed internet and technology in remote regions (mountainous and rural areas, hard-to-reach locations, and regions with low population density, including areas inhabited by indigenous communities) deprives users of equal opportunities for access to socio-economic benefits, education, employment, and essential services, exacerbating digital inequality and isolation.

**Solution**

We call for investments in the expansion of modern telecommunication technologies, including 5G, 6G, and satellite internet, to ensure stable coverage in remote locations and the implementation of advanced technologies in these areas. It is essential for government bodies to prioritize the connectivity of remote regions within their digital transformation agendas. Additionally, involving other stakeholders, including the private sector, community organizations, and support programs, will help build adapted infrastructure and provide accessible services to residents of remote areas.

**Potential**

Expanding infrastructure and technology will enable populations, particularly youth, in all parts of the world to gain equal access to education, healthcare, and job opportunities. This will accelerate innovation, enhance inclusivity, and increase business flexibility, driving economic growth and improving the quality of life.

**5. Challenge: Development and Modernization of Digital Ecosystems for Online Services**

Youth face challenges related to the accessibility and efficiency of digital ecosystems, including online commerce, electronic payments, crowdfunding, and digital documentation. Infrastructure shortcomings and data protection issues limit the availability and trust in these services.

**Solution**

We advocate for the development of digital infrastructure and the adoption of advanced technologies to ensure the reliable operation of online services. This includes enhancing productivity in key industries and stimulating GDP growth through active use of digital solutions and strengthened data protection measures.

**Potential**

An effective digital ecosystem will boost competitiveness, accelerate economic growth, and ensure the availability of online services for everyone. Improved digital services will empower youth to develop initiatives and projects more easily, enhancing overall productivity and fostering innovative potential.

**6. Challenge: Integration and Compatibility of Systems and Rapid Technological Obsolescence**

Youth face challenges related to the integration of various technologies and systems, as well as the rapid obsolescence of solutions that were cutting-edge only a few years ago. Incompatibility between standards and technologies creates barriers to efficient interaction and complicates system management, especially on an international scale.

**Solution**

To address these challenges, it is essential to promote infrastructure modernization and support new technologies such as 5G, fiber-optic networks, and satellite internet. Developing timely standards that align with current needs and advanced technologies is crucial. Embracing open standards and APIs will facilitate smoother integration and improve system compatibility. International cooperation on standard unification, the use of cloud platforms for integration, and approaches such as DevOps will expedite system updates and testing. Investing in the training and retraining of specialists will also enhance readiness for innovation.

**Potential**

Resolving system compatibility and integration issues will unlock new opportunities for businesses and society. Companies will be able to operate more quickly and efficiently, saving time and facilitating the transition from outdated solutions. Customers will benefit from more convenient and responsive services, while businesses will become more flexible and adaptive to changes. Overcoming these barriers will accelerate the adoption of AI and automation, boost competitiveness, and foster an environment for innovative growth and the implementation of new technologies.

**7. Challenge: Human Adaptability to Rapid Technological Advancements**

The fast pace of digitalization presents challenges related to decreased attention span, internet addiction, and negative impacts on mental and physical health. A lack of digital adaptation and awareness of advanced technologies exacerbates these issues and creates barriers to the safe and beneficial use of technology.

**Solution**

It is necessary to implement information campaigns to raise awareness and acceptance of advanced technologies. Launching digital literacy programs focused on safe internet usage, generative AI, and data protection is also crucial. Free online courses and educational programs can help people adapt to new technologies. To minimize internet addiction, tools for time management and interface designs that reduce user engagement and attention manipulation should be developed. Additionally, age restrictions and training on the proper use of digital resources, emphasizing digital hygiene and source verification, are important.

**Potential**

Digital literacy education and support will cultivate a generation capable of effectively using technology and adapting to new challenges. Increased awareness of digital safety and mental health will build trust in digital platforms, improve productivity, and enhance quality of life. This will foster a positive attitude toward digital development and reduce risks of social isolation and addiction, promoting a balance between real and digital life.

**8. Challenge: Decentralization of Digital Resources and Harnessing Web 3.0 for Societal Advancement**

The centralization of digital resources and the use of confidential data by large IT companies without adequate transparency pose threats to user security and privacy. This results in increased control over internet traffic and potential abuses, limiting the freedom and autonomy of digital communities.

**Solution**

Youth advocate for research and the development of decentralized solutions, including the creation of decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) and intelligent routing of internet traffic. The expansion of 5G networks and the integration of intelligent load distribution systems can support the resilience and equity in the use of digital resources. Additionally, the implementation of decentralized data storage and management systems is crucial to minimize centralization risks and provide users with greater control over their information.

**Potential**

Transitioning to decentralized models of data and internet traffic management will build user trust and enhance data privacy and security. This will foster a freer and more equitable digital environment, supporting innovation and protecting user rights. The development of decentralized systems will also increase network adaptability and ensure efficient resource distribution, positively impacting the digital ecosystem and reducing reliance on digital monopolies.

**9. Challenge: Shortage of Qualified IT Specialists**

Limited infrastructure and a shortage of skilled IT professionals present significant barriers to digital development. The rapid obsolescence of technologies further increases the need for continuous knowledge updates and skills to remain competitive in the job market.

**Solution**

We propose systematic development and updating of educational programs, including retraining and continuing professional development, to ensure specialists meet modern labor market demands. The creation and expansion of IT educational programs, along with the support of internships, scholarships, and government grants, will attract more specialists to the industry.

**Potential**

Enhancing education and training new specialists will create a strong workforce capable of adapting to the rapidly changing market and driving innovation, which will boost economic productivity and strengthen digital infrastructure. The development of IT talent will enable countries to adopt advanced technologies more swiftly, improving overall productivity and the resilience of the digital ecosystem.

**10. Challenge: Legal Frameworks for Digital Development and Human Rights**

The rapid advancement of technologies often outpaces the development of legal frameworks, creating challenges and hindering human-centered implementation of innovations. The lack of modern legal norms related to digital human rights exacerbates digital challenges (digital divide, AI misuse, online child protection, privacy, and surveillance), undermining trust in technology and restricting access to socio-economic benefits.

**Solution**

We call for continued development of national and international law in the field of digital human rights, aligning with the Global Digital Compact to address digital challenges. A key step is the harmonization and adoption of a Declaration on Digital Human Rights. Bridging the gap in legal regulation requires the implementation of norms focused on ensuring digital human rights, enabling societies to overcome new digital challenges and achieve sustainable development. Regulatory norms should balance user rights protection with innovation support, addressing many ethical and legal concerns. The evolution of digital law will ensure that technology serves citizens’ best interests, increases public trust in digital systems, and minimizes abuses, such as excessive data collection.

**Potential**

Human-centered legal regulation will lay the foundation for safe and sustainable digital development. The implementation and protection of digital human rights will build user trust in technology and government structures, strengthening the digital economy and ensuring equal access to socio-economic benefits enabled by digital technologies. Consequently, countries will be better positioned to respond to the challenges of the digital era, unlocking the potential of all individuals through access to technology and promoting sustainable development on a global scale.

**11. Challenge: Supporting and Developing the Startup Ecosystem**

Youth, often the initiators of startup creation, face limited access to funding and support for developing startups using advanced technologies. The shortage of venture investments and mentoring opportunities slows down innovation and restricts access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to essential resources.

**Solution**

We see the importance of systematic development of an innovative startup ecosystem through the collaboration of key stakeholders to boost economic productivity: entrepreneurs, academic community members, entrepreneurship support networks, investors, private sector representatives, and government bodies. Establishing educational and training programs is crucial for building a sustainable pool of qualified specialists to support startup growth. Creating clear legal frameworks will also provide guarantees for business angels and venture funds. It is essential to develop programs aimed at expanding access to funding for startups and SMEs and support projects that foster sustainable digital development.

**Potential**

Developing the startup ecosystem will enable the integration of new technologies into services and products. This will lead to reduced financial risks, resource savings, and minimized expenses related to data breach recovery. It will stimulate economic growth and foster an innovative environment, unlocking the potential of citizens, especially youth, and ensuring the stable and sustainable growth of the digital economy.

**12. Challenge: Environmental Impact of Digital Technologies**

The growth of digitalization and technology usage on a global scale lead to increased energy consumption and a negative impact on the environment. Data centers and communication networks require substantial energy resources, exacerbating the carbon footprint and threatening ecosystem sustainability.

**Solution**

To mitigate environmental impact, it is essential to implement energy-efficient technologies, use cloud solutions with low energy consumption, and actively develop the use of renewable energy sources. Governments and companies should collaborate on strategies to enhance environmental sustainability, including electronic waste recycling and improving server cooling technologies. Integrating digital technologies for resource monitoring and management can minimize energy consumption and optimize production processes.

**Potential**

Reducing environmental impact through sustainable technology usage will create “smart” resource management systems, supporting the transition to a green economy. Implementing these measures will ensure long-term sustainability of digital development, decrease the carbon footprint, and strengthen countries’ positions in combating climate change. Additionally, it will enhance the reputation of environmentally responsible companies and draw attention to digital solutions that balance progress with environmental preservation.

**Conclusion**

Overcoming the challenges of digital development will create a more balanced and equitable society, enhance quality of life, and contribute to economic prosperity while addressing socio-economic inequalities. Addressing these challenges will improve the lives of many groups in various countries, particularly those who previously lacked full access to the internet and essential services like telemedicine or e-governance. Minimizing cybersecurity issues can increase public trust in digital technologies, an essential factor for the wider adoption of technology. Overcoming the impacts of internet dependency will lead to the development of healthier digital habits and promote ethical digital consumption, reducing cybersecurity risks for vulnerable groups, especially children.

The active involvement of young people—startup founders, scientists, young professionals, users, and developers alike—is crucial for achieving a balanced approach that supports sustainable digital ecosystem development. We, the youth, call for a comprehensive and systematic effort involving all stakeholders to advance infrastructure, skills, funding, education, and governance. This will build an ecosystem that fosters advanced technology development in the interest of all social groups.

We urge the inclusion of youth in shaping digital transformation strategies and the implementation of youth-driven ideas in areas such as AI, data analytics, digital inclusion, and more. Our participation can contribute to creating more inclusive and effective solutions that reflect the needs and interests of future generations, aligning with the United Nations' global goals.

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