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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **30th Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 19-23 June 2023** | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | **Document** **TDAG-2****3/27-E** |
|  | **29 May 2023** |
|  | **Original:** **English** |
| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| Proposal for the Organization of a Global Youth Summit  prior to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2025 | |
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| **Summary:**  The BDT proposes the organisation of a Global Youth Summit (GYS) to be held prior to WTDC-25 aiming at providing an open platform for young people to voice their concerns and contribute to the decision-making process on critical issues related to equal and equitable digital inclusion and empowerment of global youth in particular disadvantaged youth within the work of the Development Sector of the ITU.  As part of the implementation of the ITU Youth Strategy, the first Generation Connect Global Youth Summit was held on 2-4 June 2022, in Kigali, Rwanda.  At each Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) to WTDC-25, a Youth Segment will be held leading to the Global Youth Summit. The components/declarations provided by the Youth Segments to each RPM will constitute the background documents for the Global Youth Declaration at the GYS.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to endorse the proposal in this document.  **References:**  WTDC Resolution 76 (complemented by WTDC Resolutions 11, 37, 45, 46, 55, 58, 67) and PP-22 Resolution 198 (complemented by PP Resolutions 70, 175, 179, 184), ITU Youth Strategy, Generation Connect Initiative. | |

1. **Objective**

To organize a Global Youth Summit (GYS) preceding the 2025 World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25), to engage global youth and encourage their participation as equal partners alongside the leaders of today’s digital change, empowering young people with the skills and opportunities to advance their vision of a connected future. The GYS will be organized well before the WTDC-25 and its declaration submitted before the deadline for submission of contributions to WTDC to allow membership to study in preparation of the Conference (WTDC-25). The GYS declaration will address the needs and priorities identified by young people into to be considered within the conference's agenda and ensure digital inclusion and empowerment for all young people globally, technological ability, education level, or geographical location.

1. **Background**

The ITU Youth Strategy was adopted in TDAG-20, in June 2020, with the aims to improve and have a real impact on the lives of young people around the world and to ensure meaningful participation of youth in ITU as key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Generation Connect is, so far, the main initiative of the ITU Youth Strategy.

As part of the implementation of the ITU Youth Strategy, the first Generation Connect Global Youth Summit was held on 2-4 June 2022, at the Intare Conference Arena, in Kigali, Rwanda. It was in a hybrid format, with physical participation, as well as virtual youth engagement. The Summit brought together young leaders, entrepreneurs, social change-makers, engineers, policy specialists, students, and others. Business leaders, influential decision makers, and community advocates also joined the event.

The first Generation Connect Global Youth Summit addressed the digital divide and related topics, including digital skills, gender, climate change, online safety, the future of work, entrepreneurship, digital dependencies, and more.

In the context of an exponential increase of ICTs, and the coming age of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies, the digital divide becomes a big concern for all of us, more particularly for the younger generation. Many aspects of our lives take part in the digital space.

The labour global market anticipates a structural labour market *churn of 23% of jobs in the next five years with relevant impact of knowledge and skills, and the workforce transformation strategies businesses plan to use, across the 2023-2027 timeframe that predict over 80% of jobs to be transformed[[1]](#footnote-1)*. At the Youth Forum ECOSOC 23 it was highlighted that youth from around the world want to have a seat at the decision-making table and the opportunity to engage with all relevant stakeholders. They stressed the “*lack of relevant skills, and limited access to resources such as finance, technology, and infrastructure, impede youth in pursuing innovative ideas and solutions to advance SDG 9. Access to education, internet and digital technologies are crucial for youth”.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

In this context, it is critical that ITU Member States consider within their digital transformation process and work on digital inclusion appropriate policies, strategies, and actions to ensure that all young people have equal and equitable access to technology and the opportunities it offers in terms of education, employment, and personal growth to become active participants in the digital societies and economies.

Recognizing the importance of this topic, as reflected in the WTDC Resolution 76 (complemented by WTDC Resolutions 11, 37, 45, 46, 55, 58, 67) and PP22 Resolution 198 (complemented by PP Resolutions 70, 175, 179, 184), relevant to all youth (women and men, including with disabilities, or from remote and indigenous communities) and their respective concerns related to their inclusion and participation in the digital age, BDT proposes the organization of a Global Youth Summit (GYS) prior to the World Telecommunication Development Conference WTDC-25.

The GYS will serve as a platform for young people to express their opinions, needs, and priorities, related to the access and use of the technologies, including emerging technologies, which will further considered and incorporated into the WTDC's agenda and reflected in the relevant resolutions and workplan.

As also practiced for the first Generation Connect Global Youth Summit preparations, at each Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) to WTDC-25, the ITU Regional Offices will facilitate a Youth Segment, to be held prior to the Global Youth Summit. The components/declarations provided by the Youth Segments to each RPM will constitute the background documents for the Global Youth Declaration at the GYS.

1. **Activities**

To organise the GYS relevant to the purpose and goals of the WTDC-25, as the main platform for the global community to address key telecommunication and ICT development issues, with the ultimate goal of fostering digital inclusion, socio-economic development, and sustainable growth for all people including young people, the following activities are proposed to ITU Members for consideration:

1. Establish under the BDT Secretariat a Steering Committee, led by the BDT Director and composed of representatives from ITU Member States, ITU-D Sector Members, ITU Academia, and other stakeholders, including global youth organizations, other youth such as Generation Connect regional youth envoys and NGOs representatives. The Committee would aim at overseeing the planning, organization and execution of the GYS as well as considering the needs relevant to the empowerment of youth through technology of all relevant youth groups such as young women, youth migrants, youth from remote and/or indigenous communities, or youth with disabilities among others.
2. Develop a comprehensive agenda for the GYS, focusing on key areas such as digital access, digital skills development, digital skills for jobs/digital economy, youth empowerment and leadership, online safety, digital entrepreneurship, and the role of technology in addressing global challenges, based on the WTDC-25 RPM outcomes and co-design activities with youth.
3. Identify a diverse group of youth delegates including from among Generation Connect regional youth envoys, aged 18-24, in coordination with the Member States and Regional Telecommunication Organisation, to be invited to participate in the Regional Youth Segments of the WTDC-25 RPMs, and further to GYS, to ensure diverse and inclusive representation from recognised national, regional, and global youth organisation with particular emphasis from marginalized and underrepresented groups.
4. Hold panel discussions and interactive sessions to facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices among youth, enabling them to co-create the final Global Youth Declaration.
5. Produce a comprehensive report to reflect the outcomes and recommendations contained in the Global Youth Declaration, to be submitted to the WTDC-25 within the deadline of document submission for inclusion in the discussions during WTDC-25 for incorporation in the BDT work priorities and resolutions as appropriate.
6. Develop a post-GYS strategy to be considered by ITU Membership, outlining the actions and related implementation, including resources, requirements.
7. **Budget**

A detailed budget would be prepared, with costs associated to the organization of the event, including logistics, venue rental, delegate travel and accommodation, promotional materials, and other related expenses. As part of the Kigali Action Plan enabler: “Partnerships, international cooperation and resource mobilization”, ITU membership will be invited to support fund raising activities, facilitate covering of the extra-budgetary costs of this undertaking.

1. **Timeline**

It is proposed for the GYS to take place in 2025, after the last WTDC-25 RPM and before the deadline to submit WTDC-25 contributions, allowing sufficient time for the final Youth Global Declaration outcomes and recommendations to be incorporated into the agenda of the World Development Conference later that year.

1. **Conclusion**

The BDT proposes the organisation of a Global Youth Summit (GYS) preceded by Regional Youth Segments at the WTDC-25 RPMs, to provide an open platform for young people to voice their concerns and contribute to the decision-making process at regional and global level on critical issues related to equal and equitable digital inclusion and empowerment of global youth in particular disadvantaged youth within the work of the Development Sector of the ITU.

By incorporating the insights and priorities identified by young people within the six Regional Youth Segments to RPMs into the WTDC-25, BDT aims to ensure a coordinated approach with ITU members, and to provide clear outcomes from the youth at regional and global level for ITU members’ consideration and to increase operational potential through linkage to WTDC regional initiatives implementation.

As a result, Member States will be better positioned to understand the specific needs and requirements of young people, tailored for each region. The Regional Youth Segments’ components/declaration will enable ITU Members to further incorporate these within the regional initiatives including by developing appropriate policies, strategies, and actions at regional and national level to respond to these identified specific needs and requirements.

Furthermore, the GYS will provide an intergenerational bridge between the key decision makers from among the Member States and the voice of all youth, enabling them to make the necessary steps towards ensuring that all young people be equally and equitably empowered through technology.

The ultimate goal of GYS is to help younger generations to drive global digital transformation as future leaders of the digital world.

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1. [The Future of Jobs Report 2023 | World Economic Forum](https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023?gclid=CjwKCAjw9pGjBhB-EiwAa5jl3KVILJaFLELFZLbpn33Mih_jxTAXjwDxhQKRulJpK_5K_1x7nUs-6BoCoPoQAvD_BwE)  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [ECOSOC Youth Forum 2023 | Economic and Social Council](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/2023-ecosoc-youth-forum) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)