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|  | **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **32nd Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 12-16 May 2025** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document TDAG-25/****18-E** | |
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| Chair, TDAG-WG-DEC | | | |
| Report on the work and outcome of the TDAG Working Group on the Declaration | | | |
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| **Summary:**  This document contains the draft final report of the TDAG Working Group on the Declaration (TDAG-WG-DEC), including a proposed draft Baku Declaration based on its terms of reference. The report will be finalized at the last TDAG-WG-DEC meeting.  The current draft Baku Declaration proposed by the group Chair is contained in Annex 1 (an annotated version in track changes is contained in [TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/)). The final version of the draft agreed by the last meeting of the group will serve as input for members to consider in their preparation in the lead up to and at the conference.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to examine this report, further consider the proposed Chair’s draft and submit it as input to WTDC-25.  **References:**   * Terms of Reference of TDAG-WG-DEC ([TDAG-24/DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-240520-TD-0004/en)) * Report of the TDAG-WG-DEC first meeting ([TDAG-WG-DEC/2](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0002/)) * Report of the TDAG-WG-DEC second meeting ([TDAG-WG-DEC/6](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0006/)) * Report of the TDAG-WG-DEC third meeting ([link](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0010/en)) * Mapping of topics in the Kigali Declaration and new and emerging topics (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/INF/](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-INF-0001/)1, 27 November 2024) * Revised annotated outline of the Baku Declaration 2025 ([TDAG-WG-DEC/7](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0007/), 13 December 2024) * TDAG-WG-DEC Chair’s revised and annotated draft proposal for the Baku Declaration ([TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/), 27 March 2025) * [Website of TDAG-WG-DEC](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/2024/TDAG_WG_DEC.aspx) | | | |

1. **Introduction**

TDAG Working Group on the Declaration (TDAG-WG-DEC) was set up during [TDAG-24](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/2024/default.aspx) (20-23 May 2024). Mr Abdulkarim Oloyede from Nigeriawas appointedto chair this group, with Mr Ahmed Abd El-Aziz from Egypt and Ms Ke Wang from China serving as Vice-Chairs.

TDAG-WG-DEC was entrusted with the task ‘to propose elements and make recommendations to ITU membership for the future draft Declaration’ of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25) (Document[TDAG-24/DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-240520-TD-0004/en)). TDAG-WG-DEC was open to all ITU Member States and Sector Members of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D). The output of TDAG-WG-DEC will serve as input for members to consider as they work on the WTDC-25 Declaration in the lead-up to and at the conference.

TDAG-WG-DEC held three meetings over the period December 2024 – March 2025 and a fourth meeting will be held on 15 April 2025. The reports of the individual meetings are available on [the group’s website](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/2024/TDAG_WG_DEC.aspx).

1. **Approach and process for the development of the Chair’s proposed draft of the WTDC-25 Declaration**

Throughout its work, TDAG-WG-DEC ensured close coordination on key topics for the Declaration, particularly with the TDAG working group on ITU-D Priorities (TDAG-WG-ITUDP).

During its first meeting, the group agreed to retain a structure similar to the Kigali Declaration and be concise, simple, with clear and actionable language, and speaking to both the challenges of global digital development and potential solutions.

Based on discussions during the first meeting of TDAG-WG-DEC and informal consultations, the Chair made a proposal to the second meeting for the title of the Declaration, ‘Universal and meaningful connectivity for an equitable digital future’, as outlined in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/4(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0004/). Following discussions during the second meeting, the group agreed to revise the title of the Declaration to ‘Universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future’. Some Member State representatives expressed their preference for a shorter title, while others were in favor of a more comprehensive one.

Also during the second meeting of the group, the TDAG-WG-DEC Chair presented a draft annotated outline of the Baku Declaration (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/4(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0004/)) comprising four main sections: Introduction, ‘We declare,’ ‘We commit,’ and Call to Action, to stir the discussion on the structure and possible topics of the Declaration. He also highlighted the rationale and thinking process behind the document, explaining that the draft outline was informed by the original mapping of topics in the Kigali Declaration and new and emerging topics as contained in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/INF/](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-INF-0001/)1.

Building on the feedback received during the second meeting of TDAG-WG-DEC, the Chair prepared and presented an initial proposal of a narrative for the Baku Declaration to the third meeting (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/9](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0009/en)), inviting input from the group while noting general comments and suggested revisions. Based on the substantive discussion, the Chair prepared a revised draft proposal (Annex 1 here below and Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/)), which will be open for discussion and finalized at the group’s fourth meeting.

1. **Consultations and way forward**

Regional Telecommunication Organizations were invited to provide progress reports on their preparations for WTDC-25 during each group meeting.

The TDAG-WG-DEC Chair provided progress reports of the group’s work to the Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPMs) in the lead-up to WTDC-25.

The next TDAG-WG-DEC meeting will be held virtually on 15 April 2025.

The final version of the narrative agreed upon by TDAG-WG-DEC at its last meeting will be presented for further consideration to TDAG-25 and submission as input to WTDC-25.

**ANNEX 1**

**TDAG-WG-DEC CHAIR’S DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR THE BAKU DECLARATION 2025**

We, the representatives of ITU Member States endorse the present Declaration at the ninth World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25), which took place in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 17 to 28 November 2025 under the theme ’Universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future’.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the global development community and to advancing our shared objective of driving sustainable and equitable digital transformation and inclusive growth globally, building on the outcomes of WTDC-25 and recent United Nations processes and conferences as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We recognize the tremendous progress made in advancing ICT and digital development across all regions; however persistent challenges and disparities continue to hinder universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity, particularly in developing countries. We therefore remain resolved to address these through enhanced international cooperation and continued engagement in the work of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector.

Mindful of the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation, we declare the following:

1. **We are cognizant that telecommunication/ICTs, new and emerging technologies are drivers of economic prosperity and sustainable development across national, regional, and global digital ecosystems.** Universal and meaningful connectivity stands as a critical priority towards the achievement of all SDGs. Networks, platforms, tools, data, and digital innovation create opportunities for enhancing governance, supporting entrepreneurship and improving livelihoods. Digital inclusion for youth is especially important for unlocking opportunities for learning and civic participation and preparing youth for future employment in the digital economy.
2. **We are deeply concerned that the digital world remains inaccessible for one-third of the global population** and those who have never connected online are disproportionately concentrated in developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs). Digital divides, such as limited access to broadband networks, persist in rural areas, across income, gender and age groups and for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities. Among those connected, affordability and accessibility of digital services and devices, digital skills and reliable, secure online experience remain key barriers to digital inclusion.
3. **We acknowledge that at the backdrop of global challenges, rapid technology developments present unprecedented opportunities for building economic and ecological resilience.** Climate change, natural hazards, economic downturns, energy transition issues and supply challenges have adverse impacts that are disproportionately felt by developing countries, particularly LDCs, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). These challenges risk impeding inclusive and sustainable digital transformation, further deepening inequalities.
4. Guided by the principles of shared responsibility, solidarity and equity, **we urge for multi-stakeholder catalytic actions driven by collaboration** among governments, the private sector, academia, civil society and other relevant stakeholders both regionally and globally to multiply the impact of development partnerships and assistance and achieve our shared objectives.
5. **We reaffirm the importance of leaving no one behind in digital transformation.** It is therefore necessary to urgently and systematically address equality and ensure equal opportunities for all, while promoting broad digital inclusion through holistic and adaptive policies and targeted ecosystem initiatives and the use of intersectionality approaches.

Laying the foundation for a concerted collective action during the 2026-2029 development cycle, we commit to the following:

1. **We will support the advancement of universal and meaningful connectivity, which includes accessible, affordable, high-quality, interoperable and secure telecommunication/ICT and digital infrastructures, devices, services and applications. Building extensive energy and digital infrastructure such as for high-speed fibre backbones and last-mile connectivity solutions using a mix of technologies is crucial to bridge development gaps. Robust infrastructure promotes trade, economies of scale and new business opportunities, strengthening the foundation for economic development. Beyond the economic benefits, digital public infrastructures and digital public goods are a strategic investment that creates positive spill-over effects across society in terms of education, health, gender equality and inclusion, among others.**

**We underscore the importance of investment in and funding for environmentally sustainable infrastructure, e-waste and circular economy projects, clean and renewable energy and green technologies** to support inclusive, long-term economic growth while reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy security and using digital technology. Supported by robust data collection and monitoring, these efforts will play a role in climate change mitigation, adaptation and climate-resilient digital development. Moreover, **we believe that a well-integrated, multi-channel approach to emergency communications** – including mobile early warning systems – is essential to ensuring that universal connectivity enables effective and timely outreach to all people at risk of natural hazards.

1. **We call upon all stakeholders to adopt people-centric, risk-informed and ethical approaches to digital transformation and emerging technologies.** We will advocate for the development of adaptive and well-aligned frameworks for ICT and digital markets and emerging technologies governance. Digital transformation requires a new level-playing field, increased investment flows and guardrails for responsible and sustainable digital, emerging and space technology development. An adequate policy response to rapid technological transformation requires strengthened institutional capabilities, agile and collaborative governance and the mainstreaming of evidence-based decision-making.

Tostrengthen both national policy frameworks and implementation capabilities, **we will foster human and institutional capacity-building initiatives across all ITU-D Priorities. Key areas of focus remain** upskilling governments and key national and regional stakeholders, building national ICT data and statistics capacities and cybersecurity resilience.

1. **We recognize the need to fast-track investment in science, technology and innovation, acknowledging that digital innovation ecosystems are essential to re-energizing economies, supporting structural transformation and addressing critical sustainability challenges.** A strategic approach to creating enabling policy and business environments is necessary to scale digital innovation, entrepreneurship and the digitization of economies.Strengthening digital and innovation capacities across sectors and government can improve productivity, economic diversification and competitiveness of national industries, promoting equitable participation of all countries in the global digital economy and the achievement of SDGs.

**We pledge to support digital skills development initiatives for diverse demographics to ensure that all people have the abilities needed to engage effectively in the digital economy,** reducing inequalities**.** Such initiatives may include digital skills development centres and training, specialized capacity-building programmes and knowledge transfer initiatives that assist governments, businesses and entrepreneurs to engage with digital technologies and support value creation. National and regional innovation centres can be further leveraged as institutional capacity-building mechanisms for research, training, co-creation on specific problems and the incubation of agile solutions by governments and ecosystem stakeholders.

1. **We will create synergies, strengthen collaboration and uphold existing commitments while building inclusive global and regional partnerships between public and private sectors, international funding agencies and other stakeholders** to pool resources, knowledge and good practices across stakeholder groups and regions. **We will further leverage regional, international, South-South and Triangular Cooperation** as means to accelerate the speed and scale of action across the UN development system and partners along with nationally designed and led initiatives towards the achievement of SDGs.

**Together with regional telecommunication organization, regulatory associations and other partners, we will support the harmonization of regulatory regimes** in key areas driving digital transformation to enable coordinated response to cross-border issues and enhance regional connectivity, market integration and sustainable digital transformation.

1. **We will strive to address the special challenges facing developing countries,** in particular LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and countries with special needs, through tailored technical assistance, resource mobilization, impact-driven projects and matchmaking.

We welcome the steadfast efforts of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector and its contribution towards building an inclusive and sustainable digital future for all.

**We further commit to amplifying the impact of the work of the Sector to accelerate global digital development and call upon Member States, development partners and the private sector to scale up relevant programmes and initiatives while prioritizing the needs of developing countries for the full and rapid implementation of the Baku Action Plan, Regional Initiatives, and WTDC Resolutions, as well as the advancement of the commitments of the Baku Declaration.**

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