|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Telecommunication DevelopmentAdvisory Group (TDAG)****32nd Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 12-16 May 2025** | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
|  |  |
|  | **Document TDAG-25/****18(Rev.3)-E** |
|  | **16 May 2025** |
|  | **Original: English** |
| Chair, TDAG-WG-DEC |
| Report on the work and outcome of the TDAG Working Group on the Declaration |
|  |
| **Summary:**This document contains the 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 draft Baku Declaration prepared by the group under the leadership of the Chair is contained in Annex 1 (it reflects the third revised version prepared by the group, contained in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-250514-TD-0001/en) in track changes). This draft was agreed by the last meeting of the group and is intended as input for Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) and Member States to consider in their preparation for WTDC-25.**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 ([TDAG-WG-DEC/10](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0010))
* Report of the TDAG-WG-DEC fourth meeting ([TDAG-WG-DEC/16](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0016/))
* Report of the TDAG-WG-DEC fifth meeting ([TDAG-WG-DEC/23](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0023/))
* 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)
* Chair’s original draft proposal ([Document TDAG-WG-DEC/9](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0009/en), 19 February 2025)
* 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)
* Chair’s second revised draft proposal for the Baku Declaration ([TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/), 22 April 2025)
* Chair’s final revised draft proposal for the Baku Declaration ([TDAG-WG-DEC/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-250514-TD-0001/en), 15 May 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 four meetings over the period December 2024 – April 2025. The reports of the individual meetings are referenced in the Summary above and 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,’ (later amended to ‘We affirm’) 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 and annotated draft proposal (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/)), for discussion at the group’s fourth meeting.

At the group’s fourth meeting, further revisions were made and a second revised draft proposal published for discussion at the group’s fifth meeting, to be held during TDAG-25 (Annex 1 here below and Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/)).

Building on these foundations as well as TDAG-WG-DEC discussions and informal consultations, the Chair elaborated the revised draft and annotated proposal (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/)) and following the additional input provided during the fourth meeting of the group, the Chair prepared his second revised proposal for the draft Baku Declaration (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/en)).

Under the leadership of the Chair, the fifth meeting of the group agreed on the final revised draft proposal (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-250514-TD-0001/en)), which is annexed to the present report.

To support the preparatory processes of the Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) in advance of WTDC-25, Member States requested that the following discussions be reflected in the present report:

* **Length of the Declaration**: Several Member States reiterated the view that the Declaration should remain concise, as is appropriate for a high-level statement.
* **Technology neutrality:** Some regions and ITU-D Sector Members expressed a preference for maintaining general language, while others advocated for the inclusion of references to specific key technologies.
* **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** There was no agreement during the TDAG-WG-DEC meeting on inclusion of AI in the Declaration.  Delegates agreed to include a more general reference to ‘new and emerging technologies’.  Some regions and Member States were of the view that AI should be specifically highlighted due to its potential to accelerate ICT development. It was further suggested that if any language is incorporated into the Declaration, it must adhere to PP Resolution 214 on Artificial Intelligence (such as ‘AI related to telecommunications’). TDAG-25 agreed to include an amended reference in the draft in Annex 1.
* **Space-based infrastructure**: While some members supported referring to ‘satellite communications’ as more closely aligned with ITU-D’s mandate, others emphasized the importance of new space technologies in advancing the objectives of the Sector.
* **Transfer of technology**: divergent views were also expressed on this topic.
* **Comprehensive view of challenges** – some ITU-D Sector Members would like to refine the language on addressing challenges related to ICT access and affordability, including issues concerning relevant applications and service continuity.
* **Commitment language**: Some Member States proposed the use of softer, non-binding language in the second part of the draft Declaration (e.g. replacing ‘we commit’); however, the group did not reach consensus on this proposal.

In addition, the following positions were expressed during the meeting:

* **The United States supports** a succinct, high level WTDC-25 declaration focused on ITU-D's mandate in connecting the unconnected and promoting digital transformation. With reference to the draft Declaration, the United States proposes deletion of language affirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals. The United States also opposes references to climate change throughout the document and addition of any text promoting diversity, equity and inclusion policies.
* **A number of Member States** opposed the modifications to the text of the draft Baku Declaration suggested by the United States, recalling PP and WTDC Resolutions and affirming their support for ITU-D’s work in those areas.
* **Brazil** **and the League of Arab States (LAS)** requested the inclusion of the phrase ‘technology transfer’ in paragraph 3 of the text in Annex 1, before ‘knowledge transfer initiatives’, as it constitutes a relevant instrument to foster development and is enshrined in many ITU resolutions. Although this was not reflected in the text at this stage, Brazil and LAS strongly suggest incorporating this important concept in the Baku Declaration.
* **The African Telecommunication Union (ATU)** stressed orally the importance for the Deceleration to include a commitment to ensuring the affordability of both telecommunication/ICT devices and services.
* **LAS** and the **Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC)** emphasized the critical role of new and emerging technologies and AI in particular in the context of digital development and expressed their preference for specific language reflecting it.

When preparing proposals for WTDC-25, ITU-D membership is invited to consider the **general views of individual Member States** discussed during TDAG-25 and expressed in the following contributions:

* [Document TDAG-25/56](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG32-C-0056/en) ‘Initial U.S. Views in Advance of WTDC-25’ from the United States, and
* [Document TDAG-25/48](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG32-C-0048/en) ‘Reflections and Recommendations on the Active Participation of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in Achieving the Digital Future’ from China.
1. **Consultations**

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.

1. **Outcomes and next steps**

At its last meeting, TDAG-WG-DEC agreed to retain the title of the Declaration: ‘*Universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future*’. In line with past practice, this title will also serve as the theme of WTDC-25.

The final draft Baku Declaration agreed upon by TDAG-WG-DEC at its last meeting is presented for further consideration to TDAG-25 (see Annex 1). The draft is intended as input for RTOs and Member States to consider in their preparation for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25). The language of the Baku Declaration will be aligned, as appropriate, with the Baku Action Plan once the ITU-D Priorities have been finalized.

As per past practice and upon the request of the group, the Chair recommends the submission of this preliminary draft as input to WTDC-25.

**ANNEX 1**

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

***Universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future***

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.

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, within countries and across countries, particularly in developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS). We therefore remain resolved to address these through enhanced international cooperation and continued engagement in the work of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D).

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

1. **We are cognizant that telecommunications/ICTs, new and emerging digital technologies are drivers of socio-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 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the outcomes of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). 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 one-third of the global population** remains offline and those affected are disproportionately concentrated in developing countries, including LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, where there is a pressing need for investment in connectivity infrastructure. 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 that are covered by broadband networks, there is a vast ‘usage gap’ determined by barriers such as limited affordability and accessibility of digital services, Internet-enabled devices, lack of digital skills and relevant local content, and challenges to a reliable, safe and secure online experience. The advancement of new and emerging technologies, if not accompanied by investments, capacity building and knowledge-sharing initiatives, risks further deepening digital divides.
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, LLDCs, and SIDS. In this context, telecommunication/ICT and new and emerging technology development can support countries in building resilience and tackling challenges in dynamic and innovative ways.
4. Guided by the principles of shared responsibility, solidarity and equity, **we urge for multi-stakeholder catalytic actions driven by collaboration** among public and private sectors, 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, innovative and adaptive policies and targeted ecosystem initiatives.

Laying the foundation for concerted collective action during the 2026-2029 development cycle, affirm the following:

1. **We support the advancement of universal and meaningful connectivity, which includes accessible, affordable, high-quality, resilient, interoperable and safe and secure telecommunication/ICT and digital infrastructures, devices, services and applications.** Building extensive energy and digital infrastructures such as for high-speed backbones and last-mile connectivity solutions using a mix of technologies is crucial to bridge development gaps, leveraging fiber-optic networks, IMT systems, satellite and terrestrial communications. Robust infrastructure promotes economies of scale, new opportunities, and long-term development. Moreover, we underscore the need for innovative investment models to support the sustainable deployment of telecommunications/ICTs and digital infrastructure. In light of persistent financial challenges in underserved areas, we encourage the development of inclusive policy and regulatory approaches that enable public-public and public-private partnerships, government-wide collaboration, and long-term digital growth.

**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, informed by best practices, and leveraging new and emerging technologies, 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.

**We acknowledge the critical role of space radiocommunications in advancing connectivity and economic growth** and underscore the shared responsibility to ensure the efficient and rational use of resources through continued international cooperation, inclusive dialogue, and capacity building to promote the long-term sustainability of space services.

1. **We call upon all policy makers and stakeholders to adopt human-centric, risk-informed and responsible approaches to digital transformation and new and emerging technologies,** and implement policies to promote affordability of telecommunication/ICT services and devices to support closing digital divides. Digital transformation requires a new level-playing field, increased investment flows and guardrails for responsible and sustainable emerging, terrestrial, submarine and space radiocommunication 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 and regulatory frameworks and implementation capabilities, **we recognize the need to foster human and institutional capacity-building initiatives across all ITU-D Priorities. Key areas of focus remain** upskilling governments, regulators and key national and regional stakeholders, building national ICT data and statistics capacities and cybersecurity resilience, and enabling the adoption of new and emerging technologies.

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 support the implementation of digital skills development initiatives for all 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 coordinated 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 to assist developing countries, in particular in promoting inclusive access to new and emerging technologies. **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 organizations, regulatory associations and other partners, we will support the harmonization of policy and regulatory environments** 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 capacity building, tailored technical assistance, exchange of best practices, resource mobilization, impact-driven projects, matchmaking initiatives and know-how to leverage new and emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence related to telecommunications/ICTs.

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

**We are committed 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, particularly LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS 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.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_