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| CEPT Com-ITU Project Team on ITU-D Issues | | | |
| CEPT’s Vision for Engagement with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Development Sector | | | |
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| **Abstract:**  The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) is committed to advancing the shared goals of the ITU and strengthening its development efforts worldwide. CEPT’s vision for the development sector of ITU aligns with the broader goals of promoting global connectivity, enhancing the accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and fostering sustainable development. Europe contributes largely to ITU development projects globally by funding diverse digital development initiatives. CEPT aims to strengthen the ITU Development Sector in terms of capacity building and executing critical projects that facilitate the digital development for countries in need.  **Action required:**  Invite the participant to review this document.  **References:**  N/A | | | |

**An inclusive, sustainable Development Sector**

The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) is committed to advancing the shared goals of the ITU and strengthening its development efforts worldwide. CEPT’s vision for the development sector of ITU aligns with the broader goals of promoting global connectivity, enhancing the accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and fostering sustainable development. Europe contributes largely to ITU development projects globally by funding diverse digital development initiatives. CEPT aims to strengthen the ITU Development Sector in terms of capacity building and executing critical projects that facilitate the digital development for countries in need. By reinforcing the ITU’s role in implementing impactful digital solutions tailored to local needs, we can ensure that these resources generate sustainable outcomes which, in turn, can support empowerment of individuals and communities, strengthening their digital capacity.

We support an active ITU Development Sector that:

* Builds effective development **partnerships** with other stakeholders to support developing countries in using telecommunications/ICTs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
* Contributes to advancing the whole Union, through **inclusive** **working methods** for industry and developing countries, and in pursuit of One ITU with impactful outcomes for its members; and
* Takes a leadership role on **inclusivity and sustainability** both within its practices and within its objectives for telecommunication/ICT development for the next four years.

**Partnerships for effective development**

A wide range of organisations engage in development work, including organisations working in the private sector, the public sector, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations. Each organisation can contribute to greater resources overall and by adding new specialist expertise that can benefit developing and least developed countries.

The ITU can play a valuable role in promoting cooperation, building partnerships, and sharing best practice to maximise the impact of those resources. The ITU is uniquely placed to benefit from its close relationships with governments and regulators to ensure that development programmes are meeting the needs of Member States as effectively as possible by fostering local technological capabilities and expertise and to identify and raise awareness of strategic challenges and opportunities. The ITU’s unique combination of multilateral collaboration coupled with the involvement of all parts of society is a unique strength which is clearly demonstrated by initiatives such as Partner2Connect. Through this unique strength, the ITU can generate renewed commitment to development support and raise awareness of the impact that telecommunications/ICTs can have in delivering the Sustainable Development Agenda.

These partnerships extend to how the ITU positions itself within the United Nations system as one of a constellation of agencies and efforts -- each with their own resources, mandates, and expertise.

**Alignment with the UN Processes to enhance the critical role of the ITU within the UN system**

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are fundamental to the sustainable development of every nation. CEPT recognizes that ICTs are indispensable tools for progress in today’s interconnected world, influencing nearly every aspect of economic and social development. CEPT envisions a world where ICT services are meaningfully accessible to all. CEPT aims to ensure that digital inclusion is prioritized and that efforts are made to reduce the digital divide, ensuring access to technology for all people, regardless of their geographical location or socioeconomic status. Our vision is to enhance the role of ITU in providing guidance for its Member States that integrates digital transformation into sustainable development initiatives. The ITU’s efforts should contribute within its mandate and align with strategic goals within UN-led frameworks, including the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact (GDC), and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This alignment will ensure ITU’s actions support and amplify international development efforts, fostering a cohesive approach to global digital transformation. CEPT supports fully the UN Development System, enabling efficient coordination on digital matters and ensuring respect for ITU’s unique mandate. We advocate for a collaborative approach in which ITU, particularly its Development Sector, alongside other specialized organizations, facilitates robust, collaborative responses to the evolving digital landscape by harnessing digital innovation and driving progress in SDG-aligned projects. CEPT will work closely with ITU to implement effective, measurable initiatives, accelerating progress toward shared global targets. To reach that goal, CEPT will continue to advocate for a sound, transparent and effective governance of ITU-D projects, based on results-based management and accountability of ITU regional presence.

In this regard CEPT recognizes in particular the WSIS Action Lines as the primary framework for harnessing the potential of telecommunications/ICTs to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CEPT believes that the ITU Development Sector plays an essential role in achieving these objectives by harnessing digital innovation and driving progress in SDG-aligned projects. CEPT will work closely with ITU to support effective, measurable initiatives, accelerating progress toward shared global targets.

**Governance and working methods**

**Approach in collaboration for development initiatives**

CEPT believes in the importance of the participation of industry, civil society, the technical community, and academia within the ITU’s development activities. An inclusive approach can help ensure that diverse perspectives and expertise are integrated into the decision-making process, fostering innovation and addressing the needs of all stakeholders. By engaging these groups, we can create a more collaborative and effective environment with greater potential for global impact towards the Union’s objectives of universal and meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation.

**Sustainable use of resources by One ITU**

CEPT also believes the ‘One ITU’ concept should keep guiding ongoing changes within the Development Sector, as ITU could do more to increase efficient cooperation and closer working between its three Sectors to avoid any possible duplication of work, and to ensure that work is appropriately allocated to Sectors. The Development Sector has a unique and valuable role within the Union, for which it should be proud, and its impact should be maximised by reducing duplications and pooling resources where appropriate.

In addition, we commend the continued efforts to apply results-based management (RBM) techniques to monitoring and evaluating the Development Sector’s impact. The development and adoption of key performance indicators – and their regular reporting to TDAG – are an essential step in creating accountability and evidencing the Development Sector’s value to current and new members.

**Thematic leadership**

**Empowering Women and Youth for a co-created Digital Future**

Gender equality remains a cross-cutting priority issue for ITU. We encourage the ITU to improve gender balance, and also put more of a focus on gender issues in its work, including all efforts to bridge digital divides and achieve the SDGs. We recognize that the ICT sector continues to face significant gender-related challenges. Building digital skills is essential for nations to thrive in the digital age. CEPT emphasises on the importance of capacity-building programs within the ITU Development Sector, providing member states with the tools, training, and resources to develop digital competencies. By investing in these areas, we aim to cultivate a workforce equipped to lead and sustain digital transformations globally. Accordingly, CEPT supports the efforts taken through Generation Connect as well as the Empowering Women Leaders Mentorship initiative.

CEPT envisions a more inclusive sector where gender equity is the standard. The ITU Development Sector is uniquely positioned to drive global gender equity by supporting member states in policies and programs that foster women’s inclusion, leadership, and empowerment.

**Human-centric approach**

CEPT understands ITU’s work as essential for telecommunications/ICTs development based upon a human-centric approach and international human rights and is committed to supporting the ITU in this regard.

A core principle of CEPT’s vision is ensuring that digital transformation is human-centric. CEPT envisions a future where digital technologies foster inclusivity, equity, and improved quality of life. The ITU Development Sector should embed a human-centric approach in all digital projects to prioritize social equity and accessibility, and promote cooperation between countries, ecosystems and talents to foster local technological capabilities.

**Sustainable telecommunications/ICTs**

We urge the Development Sector – and commit ourselves to contributing – to intensify its efforts in promoting sustainable telecommunications/ICTs. As the world faces unprecedented environmental challenges, it is imperative that the ITU leverages its global influence to consider the environmental impacts of telecommunications/ICTs and the sustainable development potential within. A bold green digital transformation, which involves leveraging telecommunications/ICTs for climate monitoring as well as climate mitigation and adaptation across the economies and societies, while addressing the environmental impact of digitalization, is needed more than ever.

Developing countries in particular, where the effects of climate change are already very visible and affect daily lives of the populations, thus increasing their vulnerability, require enhanced capacity building efforts to not just tackle but adapt to climate change. Recent climate-related disasters highlight the need for resilient communication systems. CEPT calls for increased ITU support for emergency communications, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate impacts, so that the ITU can ensure communities remain connected and informed during critical times.

Connecting the unconnected will require more infrastructure and devices, which will further increase demand for scarce energy and resources, and drive emissions and e-waste generation even higher if targeted interventions are not implemented. By encouraging the development of energy-efficient networks and devices, the ITU can play a pivotal role in helping to reduce the ecological footprint of the telecommunication/ICT sector. Furthermore, we call on the ITU to facilitate greater collaboration among Member States to share best practices and innovations that contribute to environmental sustainability within our sector.

We believe that the ITU’s commitment to sustainability should include promoting the recycling and responsible disposal of electronic waste and ensuring that telecommunications infrastructure is resilient to climate change and climate-related disasters. By prioritising these initiatives, the ITU can help create a more sustainable future, where telecommunication/ICT development goes hand in hand with environmental stewardship.

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