**ITU’s activities in relation to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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| **Council Working Group on theWorld Summit on the Information Society****31st meeting – Geneva, 19-20 September 2017** |  |
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1. **Update on the global follow-up and review to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The 2017 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, was held from 10-20 July, 2017, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The HLPF is the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. The event held over 8 days, was attended by 77 Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Ministers, 2458 registered stakeholder representatives, and included 36 sessions, 3 special events and over 147 side events.

The 2017 edition of the HLPF, held under the theme of “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”, reviewed in depth: Goal 1 (no poverty); Goal 2 (zero hunger); Goal 3 (good health and well-being); Goal 5 (gender equality); Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); Goal 14 (life below water) and Goal 17, on means of implementation and partnerships, and included a high-level Ministerial segment, a General Debate and the presentation of the following 43[[1]](#footnote-2) Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

[Afghanistan](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=499&menu=3170)

[Argentina](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=348&menu=3170)

[Azerbaijan](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=520&menu=3170)

[Bangladesh](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=467&menu=3170)

[Belarus](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=440&menu=3170)

[Belgium](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=412&menu=3170)

[Belize](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=483&menu=3170)

[Benin](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=522&menu=3170)

[Botswana](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=487&menu=3170)

[Brazil](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=491&menu=3170)

[Chile](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=336&menu=3170)

[Costa Rica](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=328&menu=3170)

[Cyprus](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=392&menu=3170)

[Czech Republic](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=387&menu=3170)

[Denmark](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=378&menu=3170)

[El Salvador](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=475&menu=3170)

[Ethiopia](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=368&menu=3170)

[Guatemala](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=356&menu=3170)

[Honduras](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=432&menu=3170)

[India](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=507&menu=3170)

[Indonesia](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=479&menu=3170)

[Italy](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=380&menu=3170)

[Japan](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=420&menu=3170)

[Jordan](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=344&menu=3170)

[Kenya](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=372&menu=3170)

[Luxembourg](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=370&menu=3170)

[Malaysia](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=375&menu=3170)

[Maldives](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=374&menu=3170)

[Monaco](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=366&menu=3170)

[Nepal](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=495&menu=3170)

[Netherlands](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=332&menu=3170)

[Nigeria](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=524&menu=3170)

[Panama](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=340&menu=3170)

[Peru](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=408&menu=3170)

[Portugal](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=464&menu=3170)

[Qatar](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=456&menu=3170)

[Slovenia](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=396&menu=3170)

[Sweden](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=384&menu=3170)

[Tajikistan](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=539&menu=3170)

[Thailand](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=428&menu=3170)

[Togo](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=400&menu=3170)

[[Uruguay](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=400&menu=3170)](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=360&menu=3170)

[Zimbabwe](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=503&menu=3170)

Three dedicated sessions were also programmed around this year’s theme on the following:

* “Eradicating Poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world-taking forward the SAMOA Pathway”
* “Leveraging interlinkages for effective implementation of SDGs”
* “Eradicating Poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world- how it affects countries in special situations: LDCs and LLDCs”

The need to harness technology, including ICTs, as a key driver was stressed in most sessions, in particular during the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) which featured ICTs more prominently this year. The majority of the 43 countries presenting their reports made references in their full reports or orally in various areas, not only to demonstrate how ICTs cut across issues, but how they are increasingly relying on ICTs to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. A non-exhaustive examples of references as follow: Digital literacy (e.g., India, Italy); smart cities (e.g., Benin, Brazil, Sweden; Thailand), digital infrastructure (e.g., Luxembourg, Maldives, Togo), cybersecurity (e.g., Belgium, Slovenia), digital entrepreneurship (e.g., Cyprus, Malaysia), data collection (e.g., Malaysia, Qatar), health (e.g., Botswana, Zimbabwe), youth (e.g., Nigeria), agriculture (e.g., Togo), gender (e.g., Azerbaijan; Bangladesh, Belgium, Costa Rica, Chile, India, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Nigeria); financial inclusion (e.g., Bangladesh, Kenya, Maldives).

A number of countries outlined the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships in their VNRs to help transition to a digital future (e.g., Botswana, Indonesia, Sweden, Thailand; Turkey), implementing measures to attract private investment (e.g., Bangladesh, Portugal). Others have made digital tools an integral part of their development cooperation strategies, be it trying to facilitate Internet access in least developed countries (Monaco) or designing gender-based projects in war-torn regions (Belgium). Countries like Costa Rica, Brazil, India, Maldives and Tajikistan emphasized the need to reach people living in remote regions, while Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Thailand to reduce differences between communities in urban and rural areas. Digital inclusion of the population has become a priority for Malaysia, Portugal and Uruguay. Some countries like Botswana, made clear that inadequate ICT infrastructure is “a significant impediment to economic growth and poverty alleviation”.

The main outcome of the HLPF was the Joint Ministerial Declaration of the HLPF and ECOSOC High-level Segment, adopted as a whole, without a vote[[2]](#footnote-3), which addresses a number of 2030 Agenda-related issues, touching upon the 17 Goals. The Declaration recognizes the role that infrastructure, industry and innovation could play in transforming and improving the quality of life for millions. Of particular interest paragraphs 18 and 22 underline the fact that more than half of the world’s population is still offline and the poor access to infrastructure, including information and communications technology, and emphasizes that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, and to develop knowledge societies, as does scientific and technological innovation across diverse areas. The Declaration also recognizes that the creation, development and diffusion of innovations and new technologies and associated know-how are powerful drivers of economic growth and sustainable development, and acknowledges both the transformative and disruptive potential of new technologies.

1. **Update on ITU input to and activities at the High Level Political Forum 2017**

**Inputs:**

* ITU’s main input to the HLPF consisted of the [ITU Council contribution to the 2017 HLPF](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14295ITUCouncil.pdf);
* In addition, the ITU coordinated report “[Fast-Forward Progress: Leveraging Tech to Achieve the Global Goals](http://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Pages/report-hlpf-2017.aspx)”, a collective effort of the UN system to articulate how ICTs are being applied to achieve the 17 Goals, was presented as a contribution to this year’s HLPF, [officially launched](http://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Pages/report-hlpf-2017.aspx) on the 13 of July 2017 in Geneva and New York;
* ITU Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director joint letter of 1 May 2017, addressed to the 44 Member States presenting VNRs, encouraging to highlight in the reports the important role of ICTs in developing both gender equality and gender empowerment, policy measures, including universal service funds, that the countries have undertaken to bridge the gender divide.
* The [outcomes of the WSIS Forum 2017](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2017/#outcomes), were also submitted to the President of ECOSOC as input to the HLPF, including the action-oriented partnership with UNIDO, that aims to build coalitions and drive collaboration that will help accelerate the advancement of SDG9 of the 2030 Agenda;
* ITU also contributed by means of the following inter-agency activity:
* Thematic background notes provided by members of Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA Plus) as a coordinated contribution by the UN system to the 2017 HLPF:
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 1: End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14379SDG1format-final_OD.pdf)
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14371SDG2_format.revised_FINAL_28_04.pdf)
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14367SDG3format-rev_MD_OD.pdf)
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14383SDG5format-revOD.pdf)
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14363SDG9format-revOD.pdf) (co-lead by ITU, WIPO, UNCTAD, UNIDO and the World Bank)
* [2017 HLFP Thematic Review of SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14375SDG14format-revOD.pdf)
	+ “[Thematic review of the SDGs at HLPF: Input of cross-cutting issue of information and communication technologies (ICT) for development](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14826ict.pdf)” by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development;
	+ [Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects, Report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development 2017](https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/Report_IATF-2017.pdf);
	+ [Outcome document of the Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLPF/2017/4&Lang=E) (STI-Forum held annually), where ITU contributed to the discussions and organized a side event on Innovation strategies: Designing national policies that use innovation to meet the SDGs, together with UNCTAD, WIPO and the World Bank, as well as a speaker at side event organized by Finland and UNIDO on the “Implications of Technology and Innovation for the future of Manufacturing".
* An [Open Letter from the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development to the 2017 HLPF](http://broadbandcommission.org/events/Documents/BBCom-HLPFOpenLetter2017-E.pdf) was also submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of ECOSOC.

**Statements:**

ITU provided oral and written statements under agenda items covering the reviews of Goal 5, Goal 9 and Goal 17 during the deliberations, highlighting the role of ICTs as an enabling tool to meet the respective goal. ITU delivered its main statement on behalf of the Secretary-General during the General Debate to reaffirm its commitment to leverage the power of ICTs to fast-forward progress on the SDGs and to work with all to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity in today’s changing world. The statement also highlights and takes note of the increased emphasis on ICTs in this year’s VNRs.

**Special events and side events with ITU collaboration:**

* [ITU organized the side event: “ICT for sustainable development- How digital solutions can drive progress towards the SDGs](https://www.dropbox.com/s/xgfu3l3zr02p2tm/HLPF%20ITU%20GeSI%20Side%20event%20Concept%20Note.docx?dl=0)” held on 13 July, with the participation of [ITU](https://www.dropbox.com/s/l6ht3tag5d7zv8u/Fast-Forward%20Progress_rev.pptx?dl=0), [GeSI](https://www.dropbox.com/s/80xmen2v64sjou3/GeSI%20presentation%20for%20HLPF%20%28NYC%2C%2013%20July%202017%29_DRAFT.pptx?dl=0), [Nokia](https://www.dropbox.com/s/nzex7saw8r6gf5x/UN-HLPF%20Presentation_NOKIA_ERL.pptx?dl=0) (Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development WG on Digital Health), [UNIDO](https://www.dropbox.com/s/3vpds8zpkibq4z2/UNIDO%20NYO%20Patrick%20Gilabert%20-%20ITU%20side%20event%20at%20HLPF%202017.pptx?dl=0) and Bangladesh. The event was attended by over 60 participants and served to launch the ITU “[Fast Forward Progress: Leveraging Tech to Achieve the Global Goals”](http://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Documents/Fast-forward_progress_report_414709%20FINAL.pdf).
* ITU was invited to participate in the [Partnership Exchange Special Event](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14254Partnership_Exchange_2017_Concept_Note_and_Programme_13_July_web.pdf) held on 17 July to announce the EQUALS: Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age;
* ITU was a co-organizer of the side event “High-Level Panel Discussion on ICTs and Poverty Eradication”, held on 17 July, together with Vietnam, Italy, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and UNDP
* ITU was invited as a panellist in the side event “Accelerating Women’s Economic Empowerment to Achieve the 2030 Agenda” held on 17, hosted by UN Women, ICC, Costa Rica and UK side event (17 July, 13:15-14:30).
* ITU organized a working meeting of focal points of the partners for Equals on 18 July, with over 50 participants attending from the hub in NY (held in WIPO), the hub in ITU Geneva, and several others joined remotely. ITU SG joined the meeting at the closing to thank all members to their support to bridge the growing digital gender gap.

**Other side events where ITU participated:**

* “Science- technology- innovation: Closing the gender gap to meet the SDGs” hosted by WIPO, UNESCO and UN WOMEN, held on 12 July;
* “G-STIC 2017: the first in a series of Global Science, Technology & Innovation Conferences” hosted by Belgium and G-STIC -VITO Flemish Institute for Technological Research, held on 12 July;
* “Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World: the use of space-based technologies and applications for Sustainable Development” hosted Austria, UNOOSA and Ethiopia, held on 18 July;
* Locals2030: Hub for Sustainability Solutions special event where a presentation of KPI’s of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative was made by Kari Aina EIK / John Smiciklas, Chairman of the working group on key performance indicators;
* “The SDGs in Action – Eradicating poverty & promoting inclusive prosperity in a changing world” organized under the aegis of the Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace Results Group, co-chaired by UNDP and PBSO, held on 18 July;
* “ICT Integrated Innovative Education for Global Citizenship to Eliminate Poverty”, organized by the Baha’I International, held on 19 July.

**ii. ITU activities towards High Level Political Forum 2018**

ITU will continue to provide inputs and participate actively during the 2018 HLPF with similar contributions as in 2017. The 2018 HLPF will be convened under the theme “**Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies**” and will provide the opportunity to focus on the following SDGs:

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems,

 sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land

 degradation and halt biodiversity loss

and

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for

 sustainable development (reviewed annually)

To date, the following 20 countries have announced they will be presenting their VNRs during the 2018 HLPF (the list is expected to grow):

Armenia

Bahamas

Bahrain

Bhutan

Greece

Hungary

Iceland

Ireland

Jamaica

Lao

Latvia

Niger

Paraguay

Poland

Congo (Rep. of)

Senegal

Singapore

Spain

Switzerland

Vietnam

1. **ITU contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**
* Comprehensive reporting on detailing the activities, actions, and engagements that the Union is undertaking in context to the WSIS Implementation and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was presented during Council in Doc. [C17/47](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0047/en).
* As of Council 2017, reporting on the contribution of ITU to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has also become an integral part of the ITU Annual Report (please refer to the Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan and Activities of the Union / ITU Annual Progress Report [C17/35](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0035/en), also available online at [www.itu.int/annual-report-2016](http://www.itu.int/annual-report-2016)). In this latest version of the report, every activity of the ITU, includes a reference to the SDG and the specific Target this activity contributes to. Reference to Resolutions of the World Conferences and the WSIS Action Lines have also been incorporated in the document.
* All updated information from this report has also been reflected in the ITU SDG Mapping tool (see Section C below).
* Planning on the way forward, ITU activities contributing to the 2030 Agenda are all incorporated in the Four-year rolling Operational Plans of the 3 Sectors and the GS ([Resolution 1385](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0125/en) - Four-year rolling Operational Plans for the ITU-R, ITU-T, ITU-D and the General Secretariat for 2018-2021:
	+ Radiocommunication Sector, as presented in Document [C17/28(Rev1)](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0028/en);
	+ Telecommunication Standardization Sector, as presented in Document [C17/29](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0029/en);
	+ Telecommunication Development Sector, as presented in Document [C17/30(Rev.1)](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0030/en),
	+ General Secretariat, as presented in Document [C17/31](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0031/en)).
* The Internal preparations of ITU secretariat’s input to the work of the Council Working Group on Strategic and Financial Plans have also endeavoured to ensure that the ITU strategic plan for 2020-2023 gives due consideration to the SDGs and highlights the catalytic role of ICTs on the implementation of the SDGs.

Notable activities of ITU collaborating with other UN Agencies within the SDG framework include:

* ITU/UNIDO collaboration through the signing of a Joint Declaration on the 25th of April is focused on the implementation of the SDGs and the mandate focus of both Agencies on SDG 9. This is a broad collaboration with country-focused activities and thematic partnerships. Examples of collaboration with UNIDO to date:
	+ The first public visibility of this partnership was the co-organization by both agencies of the Special SDG9 Session at this year’s WSIS.
	+ UNOG event with UNIDO and the World Bank at the Informal SDG Group,
	+ Co-organization of a session at the WTO Global Review 2017 of Aid for Trade conference.
	+ Side event at HLPF (see HLPF section for more details)
	+ Detailed discussions on further collaboration are ongoing.

ITU/FAO Collaboration Agreement: ITU is to sign a Collaboration Agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), considering both, i) that WSIS designated ITU and FAO as co-Facilitator of WSIS Action Lines c7 on ICT Applications (including e-agriculture) and, ii) whereas FAO and ITU wish to jointly support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, recognising the relevant role and great potential that connectivity, information systems, devices and digital content have into promoting progress in the social, economic and cultural sectors of humankind, reducing inequality and for the democratization of knowledge.

1. **Update on the roadmap on SDGs**
* The [ITU SDG Mapping Tool](https://www.itu.int/sdgmappingtool) (<https://www.itu.int/sdgmappingtool>) has been updated with the latest information from the ITU Annual Report ([C17/35](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0035/en)), providing a more comprehensive visual overview of the ITU contribution to the SDGs.
* The [SDG Mapping Tool](https://www.itu.int/sdgmappingtool) is being further developed, including:
	+ Significant improvements in the storage of data;
	+ Development of a more user-friendly data entry interface;
	+ Development of an interactive world map to demonstrate coverage of ITU activities
	+ Integration with the WSIS Stocktaking database
	+ Communications heavily highlight the SDGs.
	+ [ITU News](http://www.itu.int/en/itunews/Pages/default.aspx) dedicated an edition of the magazine entirely on ICT4SDG entitled “[How ICTs are accelerating the SDGs](http://www.itu.int/en/itunews/Documents/2017/2017-03/2017_ITUNews03-en.pdf)”. Includes many articles based on a fact-finding mission to South-East Asia to highlight the role of ICTs in achieving the SDGs with concrete examples from the field.
	+ The [ICT4SDG microsite](http://www.itu.int/ict4sdg) includes regular updates on the ITU activities on the SDGs and other relevant content on the SDGs
	+ The blogs: Depending on events, trends and content availability 40 to 80% of blog entries directly reference the SDGs.
	+ All ICT4SDG posters are available for members to use and adapt to their needs.
	+ Social media The hashtag #ICT4SDG has had since February 9966 tweets from 4447 contributors, reaching 44,106,324 accounts
1. Originally programmed 44 countries (Iran did note present its VNR). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Prior to adopting the Declaration, the Forum decided, by separate recorded vote, to retain two paragraphs. (By a recorded vote of 104 in favour to 8 against with 48 abstentions, the Forum decided to retain paragraph 4, which called for further effective measures and actions to remove the obstacles to full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continued to adversely affect their economic and social development and their environment; With 112 in favour, 1 against, and with 46 abstentions, the Forum decided to retain paragraph 21. That paragraph stated that efforts would continue to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization as well as meaningful trade liberalization). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)