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| **Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans 2024-2027 Third meeting – 21 and 22 February 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-SFP-3/9-E** |
| **21 January 2022** |
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| Contribution by Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates | |
| Contribution to the third Council Working Group for the strategic and financial plans (CWG-SFP) meeting | |
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1. **Introduction**

We have been engaged since the first meeting of CWG-SFP and we are pleased to provide this multi country contribution, to this very important process of our Union.

We acknowledge with good note, the proposal made by the secretariat towards enhancing the ITU’s strategic framework, built upon, the principals developed in the first meeting of CWG-SFP. We believe that the 2024-2027-time frame is a very important in achieving, reviewing and following-up, various UN agendas, we therefore see, adapting the strategic plan accordingly, is timely relevant.

1. **Comments on Section 2.5 of the Secretariat’s input to annex 1 to resolution 71 draft ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027**
   1. **General observations:**

* ITU has a leading role in the WSIS process where, as a lead facilitator, it coordinates the multi-stakeholder implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action. Notably, ITU is the sole facilitator for three different WSIS action lines: C2 (Information and communication infrastructure); C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs); and C6 (Enabling environment).
* The draft Strategic plan for 2024-2027 as presented in [Document CWG-SFP-3/4-E](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CWGSFP3-C-0004/en)shows two strategic goals with associated targets, besides the six thematic priorities with associated outcomes. Nevertheless, the draft Strategic Plan does not provide clear mapping/linkage between the outcomes and targets on one side with the relevant WSIS Action Lines on the other side. Hence, it’s very challenging to decide wither the draft Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 is inclusive and cover ITU’s responsibilities without such mapping.
* It’s also desirable to harmonize and link all components of the draft Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 together (i.e. products and services, thematic priorities, …etc ).
* Most of the suggested targets in the draft Strategic concerned with connectivity and expanding the broadband coverage while not mentioning other important targets such those related to building confidence and security.
* The draft Strategic Plan should benefit form Draft annex 2 to resolution 71: Situational Analysis ([Document CWG-SFP-3/5-E](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CWGSFP3-C-0005/en)) by leveraging both strengths and opportunities and mitigating weakness and threats.
* It is also relevant, to include, along with references to WSIS and SDGs, other UN agendas, such as, UN Digital Cooperation and UN Our Common Agenda.
  1. **Some suggested enhancements:**

We suggest to further **enhance** the proposed targets for Goal 1: Universal connectivity – by 2030, and further enhance the proposed targets for Goal 2: Sustainable digital transformation – by 2030. It is also suggested that the current proposed targets for **Goal 2** are relevant to be included, as targets for **Goal 1.**

Proposed targets, can be as follows:

**Goal 1: Universal connectivity – by 2030:**

1.1: Affordable, reliable or secure and resilient Broadband services for all

1.2 broadband connectivity for education and other areas of life

1.3 All digital gaps to be bridged (in particular, countries, gender, age, urban/rural)

**Goal 2: Sustainable digital transformation – by 2030:**

2.1: Digital transformation strategy

2.2: All digital gaps to be bridged (in particular, countries, gender, age, urban/rural)

2.2: Artificial intelligence strategy and readiness

2.3: Artificial intelligence usage in government, private sector, academia

2.4: Big Data usage in government, private sector, academia

2.5: Improved cybersecurity preparedness, with key capabilities: presence of strategy and policies, national computer incident/emergency response teams and legislation

1. **Comments on Section 2.6 Thematic priority of the Secretariat’s input to annex 1 to resolution 71 draft ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027**
2. **Enabling environment**

We suggest to include enabling innovation in telecommunications/ICT under this thematic priority. The ITU needs to play a key role in the development of an environment that is conducive to innovation, where new and emerging technologies contribute in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, particularly at country level.

1. **Cybersecurity**

As we have expressed during the 2nd meeting of CWG-SFP, that this thematic priority needs to be as, standalone. We believe that considering the digital transformation as a strategic goal**,** would be greatly rational to be followed by a standalone thematic priority on cybersecurity.

Moreover, considering the ITU as the UN organization for telecommunications/ICTs, the sole facilitator of the WSIS Action Line C5 on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, the revised guidelines on the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) and the significant development of cybersecurity at the UN, where the ITU needs to contribute in a way or in another to the UN processes, are valid arguments, in keeping cybersecurity as a standalone thematic priority.

On §35, we suggest that the focus of the work the thematic priority on cybersecurity need to be within the ITU’s Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA), and its associated 5 pillars, namely**;** legal, technical, organizational, capacity building, cooperation.

Recognizing cybersecurity as one of three priority topics or goals and as a key element of the United Nations Secretary General’s digital roadmap, in which ITU is fully committed, reaffirms the relevance to consider the cybersecurity as a standalone thematic priority.

1. **Comments on Secretariat’s input to annex 2 to resolution 71: Situational Analysis**

Regarding the developments since the ITU 2018 plenipotentiary conference, we would like to include development related to the UN Digital cooperation Agenda and its associated roadmap, UN Our Common Agenda, in which we believe that they contain several areas where ITU can get engaged in, but also, it opens up a range of opportunities for joint partnerships with different organizations. This can be reflected also in the SWOT analysis as an opportunity.

We also suggest the following aspects to be reflected in the “**Weakness**” part of the SWOT analysis:

1. Unclear mandate of regional and area offices leading to inefficient service delivery to members and a value proposition for stakeholders.
2. significant decrease on the revenue side while additional demands are being made on the expense side

We also suggest the following aspects to be reflected in the “**Threats**” part of the SWOT analysis:

1. The ability to compete and remain relevant at the international and regional levels is of great concern.
2. Insufficient funding - risk of imbalance to the financial plan
3. Other UN organizations are stepping up their engagement on digital cooperation and ICT
4. issues, where they can deploy capabilities that could exceed ITU's capabilities at the regional level.
5. The current Telecom events business model is not financially viable and the event's value proposition shows clear signs of weakness.
6. Low UN-wide engagement, coordination and collaboration in joint strategic planning,

We also suggest the following to be reflected in the “**Opportunities**” part of the SWOT analysis:

1. Utilizing the competitive advantages of the ITU, including its products and service, to increase the revenue of the Union or developing additional new financial mechanisms

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