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| PROPOSALS TO INCLUDE INNOVATION AND SECURITY IN THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE ITU STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2024–2027 |
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# Introduction

At present, the well-beings of individuals, organizations and countries all depend on the application and security of digital technologies. Promoting the development of the digital economy while at the same time safeguarding cybersecurity is a common challenge the world is facing. As a specialized agency within the UN system responsible for telecommunication matters, the ITU reaches, covers and represents all regions in the world and plays an important role in driving the transformation of the global digital economy and addressing systemic cybersecurity challenges.

Emerging digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, Big Data and related trends are catalysts for the transformation of the global digital economy. As a specialized UN agency for ICTs, the ITU is well positioned to lead the innovations in emerging digital technologies for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the area of AI, for example, the ITU is strengthening its work in this area by convening intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder dialogues, developing international standards and frameworks, and organizing the AI for Good Global Summit, which aims to connect innovators in AI with decision-makers of the public and private sectors to develop AI solutions that can contribute to the achievement of SDGs. In addition, the 6th World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21) adopted five Opinions on the theme of "Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development" and reached consensus on five areas: (1) Enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development; (2) Affordable and secure connectivity in mobilising new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development; (3)Digital literacy and skills for inclusive access;(4) New and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development; (5) Use of telecommunications/ICTs in COVID-19 and future pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response.

A prerequisite for achieving SDGs is the need to enhance cyber security and ensure that digital solutions are secure, reliable and trustworthy. Cybersecurity has become a global development issue. The United Nations adopted the resolution on "Advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security"[[1]](#footnote-1) at its 75th session, which emphasises the importance of maintaining a secure and peaceful ICT environment and stresses the need for international cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. ITU's research and practice on cybersecurity in the telecommunication/ICT sector are also expanding. The Union is expanding its influence on Member States through the continuous update of the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI)[[2]](#footnote-2) and the Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy[[3]](#footnote-3).

# Analysis

The ITU Strategic Plan is a strategic document developed in accordance with the Constitution and Convention of the Union and is important in guiding the relevant activities of the ITU over the next four-year period.

We appreciate that the efforts of the draft of Annex 1 to Res.71: Draft ITU Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 to define the Strategic Goals in a more streamlined manner. However, in view of the key role that telecommunications/ICTs play in the digital transformation of society and the great potentials of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs to achieve the UN SDGs, it is proposed to add "Innovation" as a separate Strategic Goal and include the latest consensus of WTPF-21 on "*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development*" in this Goal.

Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) addresses cybersecurity in "Goal 3" of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2020-2023[[4]](#footnote-4), but does not explicitly show the latest developments and implications of cybersecurity. We appreciate that the efforts of the draft of Annex 1 to Res.71: Draft ITU Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 to define the Strategic Goals in a more simplified manner and consider cybersecurity as a separate thematic priority.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, given the cross-cutting nature of cybersecurity issues, it is proposed that cybersecurity be considered at a higher level.

# Proposal

In summary, we propose that the ITU consider innovation and security in its medium to long-term strategic planning. The proposed modifications are as follows:

* Consider adding "Innovation" as a separate Strategic Goal and include the latest consensus of WTPF-21 on "*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development*" in this Goal.

**Option: Goal 3 - Innovation: Promote innovation in telecommunications/ICTs to support the digital transformation of society.** The Union recognizes the crucial role of telecommunications/ICTs in the digital transformation of society. The ITU seeks to create an enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development; promote affordable and secure connectivity in mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development; foster digital literacy and skills for inclusive access; promote the use of new and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

* Consider adding "Security" as a separate Strategic Goal to help Member States build confidence, trust and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs from technical and organizational aspects.

**Option: Goal 4 - Security: Manage cybersecurity issues resulting from the rapid growth of telecommunications/ICTs.** The Union focuses on enhancing the quality, reliability, sustainability and resilience of networks and systems as well as building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs. Accordingly, the Union will work to make it possible to seize of opportunities presented by telecommunications/ICTs while working towards minimizing the negative impact of undesired collaterals.

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1. See [A/RES/75/32](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3895436?ln=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See <https://www.itu.int/epublications/publication/D-STR-GCI.01-2021-HTM-E/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See [The NCS Guide 2021](https://ncsguide.org/the-guide/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Annex 1 to Res.71: ITU Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, Goal 3 – Sustainability: Manage emerging risks, challenges and opportunities resulting from the rapid growth of telecommunications/ICT. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See [S22-CWGSFP2-C-0002!!MSW-E](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.itu.int%2Fdms_pub%2Fitu-s%2Fmd%2F22%2Fcwgsfp2%2Fc%2FS22-CWGSFP2-C-0002!!MSW-E.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)