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| **Agenda item: PL 2** | **Document C24/31** |
| **9 April 2024** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND INITIATIVES AT ITU |
| **Purpose**The objective of this document is to inform the ITU Council about youth engagement across several initiatives and existing programmes at ITU.**Action required by the Council**The Council is invited to **take note** of the report and the creation of the ITU Youth fund. Member States are kindly invited to contribute to this fund for supporting the Young Professional Programme (YPP).**Relevant link(s) with the Strategic Plan**Diversity and inclusion; excellence in human resources and organizational innovation.**Financial implications**Current activities are implemented within the allocated budget 2024-2025. It is proposed to allocate 300 000 CHF from previous years’ savings to the ITU YPP fund, as indicated in Document [C24/19.](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0019/en)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[*Resolution 198*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-198-E.pdf) *(Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference* |

**1. Background**

Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on empowerment of youth through telecommunication/information and communication technology, instructs the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that the youth perspective is incorporated in the work programmes, management approaches, and human resources development activities of ITU, and to submit an annual written report to the ITU Council on progress made.

**2. Progress report on the implementation of Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)**

**A. Fostering Youth Empowerment and Advancement at ITU**

**Overview of ITU staff of youth group 35 (<=35) and under 30 (<=30)**

As of February 2024, **12.2 per cent of ITU Staff** with Permanent/Continuing/Fixed-term/Short-term contract holders is under the age of 35 (<=35).

**1.8 per cent of ITU staff** with Permanent/Continuing/Fixed-term contract holders is under the age of 30 (<=30).

Several incentives took place to empower youth at ITU and to bring new talent to ITU.

**Empowerment of ITU staff** through the Youth Task Force. The Youth Task Force was established in 2023 as a mechanism to consult young people in ITU and ensure that youth perspectives are well reflected and well represented. The Youth Task Force is a young, staff-led initiative comprising some 20 staff members from all Sectors and the General Secretariat (GS). The Task Force meets on a regular basis (at least once per month) and reports to the Executive Office every two months. The outcomes of the Youth Task Force group are also shared with the inter-sectoral group. The Task Force is also working to improve young staff representation, including at ITU meetings and strategic discussions (example: management retreat).

**Bringing new talents to ITU:**

**Internship programme.** In 2023, ITU welcomed 142 interns from 44 different countries. ITU would like to thank Germany (Carlo Schmid Programme) and China (China Scholarship Council) for their sponsored internship programmes.

**Junior professional officers (JPOs)**. The JPO programme is dedicated to junior level positions. A JPO is recruited at P2 grade, where 3 years of work experience is required. In February 2024, ITU had 8 JPOs. JPOs are fully funded by a Member State for 2 years of assignment in ITU Headquarters (HQ) or in an ITU field office. The ITU secretariat would like to thank the Administrations of Australia, China, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America for their support for the JPO programme. This programme benefits all ITU Sectors and the General Secretariat.

**Increasing P1 level in the organization**. Currently there are only 5 staff at the P1-level on fixed-term contracts. The Plenipotentiary Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) on “Empowerment of youth through telecommunication/information and communication technology” resolves to accord high priority to the incorporation of young professionals in the human resources and operations of ITU. In response to this Resolution, the ITU Young Professionals Programme (YPP) was launched. ITU received over 3,500 applications, generating high interest from young experts worldwide. The ITU YPP is a recruitment initiative for the next generation of global ICT experts and leaders to help shape the future of the tech sector and contribute to strengthening ITU, including by bringing new perspectives, skillsets, and experiences to the organization. It’s focus is on countries that are unrepresented or under-represented among the ITU staff, especially the least-developed countries. Over this 2-year programme, talented and qualified individuals will gain opportunities to further their comprehension of technology, regulatory, and policy issues, and acquire practical insights into their functioning, as well as obtain professional experience at the international level. The ITU YPP will support emerging talent to work across ITU’s three Sectors and the General Secretariat at HQ and in the field. More information about this initiative is available [here](https://www.itu.int/en/action/youth/Pages/YPP.aspx). The ITU secretariat would like to thank the Administrations of Japan and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for their support for ITU-YPP.

**B. Advocacy and strategic engagement.**

**The ITU Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Board** was established as a dynamic and forward-thinking initiative that empowers young individuals to shape the future of global connectivity. This advisory board will offer practical advice to the ITU Secretary-General and will provide concrete recommendations to enhance worldwide cooperation in bridging the digital divide “connecting the unconnected” and aligning ITU’s programmes with the Sustainable Development Goals. At the heart of this initiative is the goal of giving young people a direct voice within ITU and bringing fresh, innovative, and inclusive perspectives to the table.

ITU has partnered with Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd on a 3-year project to deliver the **Generation Connect Young Leadership Programme (GCYLP).** GCYLP is an exciting leadership programme designed to empower and inspire young digital changemakers. Through the GCYLP, guidance, training, and financial support will be provided to 30 young fellows each year, enabling them to practically implement their own digital development projects in their diverse communities across the world.

**Generation Connect and its activities.** In 2023 and 2024, ITU increased youth participation in ITU events and initiatives such as AI for Good Summit, Regional Development Forums, Study Group sessions, the EQUALS in Tech Awards, Girls in ICTs Day, and more.

The Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) created a new cohort of Generation Connect Youth Envoys in collaboration with Member States to increase engagement with ITU Member States in the Generation Connect initiative.

BDT is working on co-designing and leading the development of the 2024 ITU Global Youth Summit which will provide a platform for a global dialogue to enable youth, ITU Member States, Private Sector, Academia, United Nations (UN) Agencies, and decision-makers from other involved parties and stakeholders to turn youth-identified ICT requirements and aspirations into impactful actionable steps forward, towards building a more inclusive digital society for present and future generations at national, regional, and global levels. More information on preparation for ITU Global Youth Summit could be found in the document [C24/32](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0032/en).

BDT continues to lead the development of Generation Connect podcast episodes to amplify youth voices on issues concerning the global digital development dialogue and its relation to the SDGs.

BDT and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) championed meaningful youth engagement and co-creation through an intersectional lens across the UN System through ITU’s joint organization of a session on AI with UN Women at the April 2024 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum and coordinated with the UN Youth Envoy’s Office to deliver interventions at UN consultations such as the informal stakeholder consultations for the February 2024 Global Digital Compact. Achievements include:

* Created an AI for Good-Generation Connect Consultation Group,
* Developed jointly the Neural Network webinar: [How ChatGPT will change the classroom – teachers and students discuss](https://aiforgood.itu.int/event/how-chatgpt-will-change-the-classroom-teachers-and-students-discuss/), 2023,
* Co-created AI for Good and Generation Connect [Global Survey on AI and Youth](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmailchi.mp%2Faiforgood%2Fjoin-the-global-dialogue-on-ai-and-youth-take-the-survey&data=05%7C02%7CRegina.Valiullina%40itu.int%7Ca7fc921605564aa1a39108dc39facd96%7C23e464d704e64b87913c24bd89219fd3%7C0%7C0%7C638448996546030370%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=4HovNRJl7HwKI%2FZYsfWY%2F8yd9WAHQTtyu6T4EbGkWjw%3D&reserved=0) currently in circulation,
* Co-created the session titled: [The impact of AI on youth: opportunities and challenges](https://aiforgood.itu.int/event/replay-the-impact-of-ai-on-youth-opportunities-and-challenges/) at the AI for Good Global Summit 2023,
* Organized joint AI for Good x Generation Connect session on *AI for Good and Prompt Engineering* delivered at the Misk Global Forum 2023 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

TSB continues to empower students through several activities such as the Open Source in AI/ML Challenge and Focus group through a build-a-thon.

The ITU secretariat is also working to strengthen relations with academic institutions in terms of research support and student engagement.

**3. Set-up of the YPP FUND**

The YPP Fund was established to financially support the ITU Young Professional Programme, underlining the commitment of the organization to fostering diversity, inclusion, and the development of young, skilled professionals to contribute significantly to the ITU mission.

The Council is invited to take note of the creation of the YPP FUND.

The funding will be based on voluntary contributions, but also on allocations that the Secretary-General will make as part of the budget implementation. The initial plan for funding includes the contributions shown in the table below.

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| Source of funding | Amount in 2024 | Amount in 2025 | Total |
| ITU budget implementation savings | 250’000 CHF | 450’000 CHF | **700’000 CHF** |
| Proposed allocation of previous years savings \* (reference to doc. C24/19) | 150’000 CHF \* | 150’000 CHF \* | **300’000 CHF \*** |
| Contribution from Japan | 150’000 CHF | 150’000 CHF | **300’000 CHF** |

\* Transfer to the fund only upon a decision of the Council

On this regard, Member States are kindly invited to contribute to this fund.

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