|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-WSIS&SDG-41/10-E** |
| **30 August 2024** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |
| Report by the Secretariat | |
| Outcomes from the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2024 | |
| **Purpose**  Inform on the outcomes, participation and the International Telecommunication Union’s (ITU) contributions to the HLPF 2024.  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs is invited to take note.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*CWG-WSIS&SDG website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx)*; Document* [*C24/INF/3*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0003/en) | |

Overview of HLPF 2024

The [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024](https://hlpf.un.org/2024), convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 18 July 2024. This session included the ministerial segment, which took place from 15 to 17 July 2024, and concluded with the High-level Segment of ECOSOC on 18 July 2024.

Under the guiding theme of "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: The Effective Delivery of Sustainable, Resilient, and Innovative Solutions," the forum sought to galvanize international efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus was particularly on the in-depth reviews of SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In addition, thematic sessions were dedicated to financing and investment in the SDGs, science, technology, and innovation (STI), and the special challenges faced by countries in special situations (African countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and Middle-Income Countries (MICs)). [The annotated programme and speakers can be consulted at this link.](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/2024%20HLPF%20and%20HLS%20Annotated%20Programme_8.pdf)

A cornerstone of the HLPF 2024 was the presentation of [36 Voluntary National Reviews[[1]](#footnote-2) (VNRs)](https://hlpf.un.org/countries?f%5B0%5D=year%3A2024), showcasing the diverse and dynamic ways in which countries are striving to integrate the SDGs into their national development plans and offering valuable insights into the progress made and the hurdles encountered on the path to sustainability amidst challenging times. Presenters of VNRs showcased national initiatives aimed at harnessing digitalization for the SDGs. These included efforts to provide access to digital tools and training, the use of digital data for decision-making, combatting digital divides, and leveraging digital platforms and technologies to facilitate international cooperation and partnerships.

The Forum hosted 276 events, which included [13 special events](https://hlpf.un.org/2024/other-events), [13 VNR Labs](https://hlpf.un.org/2024/vnr-labs), [14 exhibitions](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/HLPF%202024%20List%20of%20Exhibits.pdf), and [236 side events](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/HLPF%202024%20SIDE%20EVENTS%20SCHEDULE_10.pdf), some of which specifically highlighted the importance of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and data issues. This emphasis showcased the critical role of STI and digital technologies in achieving the SDGs. The focus on digital transformation during several side events underlined the necessity for collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts to address broad development challenges and demonstrated the potential of digital technologies to contribute to sustainable solutions. Engagement at the HLPF 2024 was exceptionally high, with the participation of 90 high-level delegates, among these Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Vice-Ministers, and other officials at the ministerial level. This robust turnout underscored the forum's critical role as a platform for high-level political dialogue, policy discourse, and international cooperation.

Outcomes of HLPF 2024

The [Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report of the Secretary-General](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/SG-SDG-Progress-Report-2024_05062024.pdf) revealed we are at a critical juncture in the global journey towards achieving the SDGs, particularly in the face of challenges magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, and climate change. A sobering assessment revealed that only 17 per cent of SDG targets are on track, with more than a third showing regression. This trajectory threatens significant setbacks in combating poverty, hunger, and displacement, and exacerbates financial disparities. Forecasts warn that, if these trends continue, 2030 could see millions more people living in extreme poverty, facing lack of access to basic services, and an escalation in fossil fuel production. Amid these challenges, the HLPF 2024 underscored the importance of swift and decisive action across several fronts, including Peace and Diplomacy —highlighting the foundational role of resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy in sustainable development; Financial Support —stressing the urgent need for increased resources and reforms to better support developing countries; and Implementation Surge —advocating for massive investments and partnerships in critical areas to propel SDG achievements forward.

Notably, the discussions highlighted recognizing the ubiquity of digital technology discussions across diverse domains —from poverty eradication to climate change and human rights. This shift towards a matured approach to digital integration in sustainable development was evidenced by over 30 references to digital/ICTs during the [General Debate](https://hlpf.un.org/2024/programme/general-debate-1), highlighting a broad acknowledgment of digital policy issues among member states, ranging from digital technologies and connectivity to the digital divide, digital literacy and digital transformation

The [Ministerial Declaration](https://hlpf.un.org/2024/outcomes) adopted highlighted upcoming opportunities for global cooperation and action, including the Summit of the Future, the Financing for Development Conference, and the World Summit for Social Development in 2025, marking crucial moments to push the sustainable development agenda on a global scale. Key paragraphs from the Ministerial Declaration on digital include:

– Paragraph 32: Commitment to increasing access to and benefits from science, technology, innovation, and digital transformation for everyone.

– Paragraph 34: Emphasis on the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls for achieving sustainable development, promising to eliminate discrimination and violence against them, and ensuring their equal access to education, economic resources, and political participation.

– Paragraph 87: Pledge to reduce digital divides and enhance digital participation for all, especially developing countries, by improving digital infrastructure, literacy, and partnerships for technological innovations. Affirmation of protecting rights online as offline and anticipation of a Global Digital Compact to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

– Paragraph 88: Acknowledgment of technology's role in enabling swift progress towards closing digital divides and fostering inclusive, sustainable development, with a call for investment in digital public infrastructure.

These commitments reflect a collective determination to harness digital transformation as a key lever for achieving the SDGs, ensuring that the advancements in digital technology benefit all and contribute to a sustainable and equitable future.

ITU contributions to HLPF 2024

ITU actively contributed to the HLPF 2024 through a range of inputs, statements, organized side events, participation in partner side events, and a strong delegation presence. These contributions underscored ITU's commitment to leveraging ICTs for the advancement of the SDGs.

Inputs

– [ITU Council](https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/international-telecommunication-union-0)

– [Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development](https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/broadband-commission-for-sustainable-development-1)

– [WSIS Forum](https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/world-summit-on-the-information-society-wsis-forum-2)

– [UNGIS](https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/united-nations-group-on-the-information-society-1)

– [Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/partnership-on-measuring-ict-for-development-2).

Session participation

– **ECOSOC High-level session on** [**“Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow: the role of ECOSOC towards a sustainable and resilient path by 2030”**](https://hlpf.un.org/2024/programme/multilateral-solutions-for-a-better-tomorrow-the-role-of-ecosoc-towards-a) – ITU Secretary-General invited as a panelist, together with the Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, President of the UN Foundation and Executive Director of Center on International Cooperation.

Statements

**General debate:** ITU Secretary General’s [statement](https://ituint.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/UNAffairsDivision/Shared%20Documents/HLPF%202020/2024%20HLPF/ITU%20statements/07172024_HLPF%202024%20General%20Debate%20Statement_v6_CLEAN.docx?d=wa40bedad2ef94605a8326e1997516de1&csf=1&web=1&e=WgrjuP) (17 July)

– **Partnerships for the Goals – STI: Triggering transformation and sustaining science-driven solutions** – [Statement](https://ituint.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/UNAffairsDivision/Shared%20Documents/HLPF%202020/2024%20HLPF/ITU%20statements/HLPF%202024%20STI%20ITU%20statment.docx?d=wf4530121d9d54d438b77178129c5ce8a&csf=1&web=1&e=TDE3sS) from the floor(8 July)

– **Global Multi-Stakeholder Small Island Developing States Partnership Dialogue** – [Statement](https://ituint.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/UNAffairsDivision/Shared%20Documents/HLPF%202020/2024%20HLPF/ITU%20statements/ITU%20Statement%20delivered%20by%20Ida%20at%20SIDS%20Global%20Multi-stakeholders%20Dialogue%20New%20York%20july%2010%202024.docx?d=w31ab62b2b3d447fe9ac7e3ee2821e4ad&csf=1&web=1&e=JIJfaW) from the floor (10 July)

– **Special event on the High Impact Initiatives (HII) – Keeping the SDG Promise: Pathways for Acceleration** – [Statement](https://ituint.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/UNAffairsDivision/Shared%20Documents/HLPF%202020/2024%20HLPF/ITU%20statements/HII%20event%20ITU%20statement.docx?d=w24883d22672a43eeb9be024226c3b90e&csf=1&web=1&e=lwJum1) from the floor (15 July).

ITU side events

– [**Rights, Resilience, and Readiness: Harmonizing Standards, Green Digital Practices, and Early Warning Systems for a Sustainable Future**](https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:f08c5489-028f-30a5-a64a-d160f01155d4):Organized by: ITU in collaboration with OHCHR, UNDRR, WMO, AccessNow, Microsoft, Nokia and Orange; Format: physical; Date and time: 9 July (1315-1430 hours).

– [**WSIS towards Summit of the Future and Beyond**](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.itu.int%2Fnet4%2Fwsis%2Fforum%2F2024%2FAgenda%2FSession%2F534&data=05%7C02%7Cdesa-hlpf%40un.org%7Cae8f7f3e910045538b1308dc9b3675cd%7C0f9e35db544f4f60bdcc5ea416e6dc70%7C0%7C0%7C638555905416839045%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=H5JUSsrPsTYnHpJjxnBijUq6C3WB1iuVZOhE5WNhPKE%3D&reserved=0): Organized by: United Nations Group on Information Society (UNGIS)/WSIS; Format: physical; Date and time: 10 July (1300‑1400 hours).

Partner side events

– **Adaptation, Mitigation and Monitoring: Innovative Science-based Climate Action Solutions**; Organized by IAEA, with ITU speaker (8 July)

– **Unity as a Pathway to Achieving a Thriving Planet**; Organized by NGO Major group, with ITU speaker (10 July)

– **Partnership to End Global Poverty in the Era of Digital Intelligence: Social Digital Entrepreneurship**; Organized by the Blue Tree Foundation with ITU speaker (10 July)

– **South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Building Regional Capacities for STI: Regional Exchange on Global South Models and Approaches**; Organized by UNOSSC and UN DESA, with ITU speaker (15 July).

ITU Delegation

– Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General (Head of Delegation)

– Mr Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General

– Ms Ursula Wynhoven, Director and ITU Representative to the UN

– Mr Mario Castro-Grande, Senior External Affairs Officer

– Ms Ida Jallow, Senior Liaison Officer

– Mr Gary Fowlie, Advisor

– Mr Rui Wan, Junior Liaison Officer.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The thirty-six countries which presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) were: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belize, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Congo (Republic of the), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Palau, Peru, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zimbabwe. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)