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| Contribution by China (People’s Republic of) |
| SUGGESTIONS ON ITU LEVERAGING ITS ADVANTAGES AND ENHANCING ITS SYNERGY IN PROMOTING AI FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS |
| **Purpose**In order to further leverage the advantages of ITU, and enhance its synergy in promoting artificial intelligence (AI) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this contribution proposes suggestions to the General Secretariat of ITU, with consideration of the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in 2025.**Action required**The Council Working Group on WSIS&SDG is invited to **consider** this contribution and **take actions** where appropriate.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References***Plenipotentiary Resolutions* [*140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-140-E.pdf) *and* [*214 (Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-214-E.pdf)*; Council Resolution*[*1332 (C11, last amended C24)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0141/en)*; Council Documents* [*C24/35*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0035/en)*,* [*C24/67*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0067/en) *and* [*C24/INF/15*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0015/en)*; UNGA Resolutions* [*A/78/265*](https://www.undocs.org/A/RES/78/265) *and* [*A/78/311*](https://undocs.org/en/A/78/311) |

Background

Promoting artificial intelligence (AI) in facilitating sustainable development has become an indispensable part of achieving a better digital future. The discussion on the Global Digital Compact organized by the United Nations also includes international cooperation on AI as a pivotal part in promoting inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all.

Capacity building of AI has become one of the themes for the system wide cooperation of United Nations. In 2024, the UNGA adopted two resolutions on AI (Resolutions A/78/265 and A/78/311), urging agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen cooperation in capacity building in AI, including through appropriate inter agency mechanisms for research, mapping and analysis, reporting on progress and challenges in this field, and providing tailored assistance.

AI has also become an important part of the ITU's strategic initiatives. According to the report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the ITU's Strategic Plan (Doc. C24/35) and on AI (Docs C24/67 and C24/INF/15), ITU’s relevant thematic activities include (1) standardization, (2) deployment and capacity building, (3) assistance in AI governance, policy, and regulatory, and (4) development of partnerships, under the guidance of the overall strategic goal of "sustainable digital transformation" and Resolution 214 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference.

Resolution 140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference states that ITU needs to continuously develop and respond to the changes brought about by the constantly evolving new and emerging digital technologies and new regulatory circumstances. ITU members are requested to support the establishment of synergy between the WSIS and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through relevant United Nations processes, in order to continue strengthening the impact of ICT on sustainable development and its contribution to the development of the digital economy. At the same time, the role of ITU in WSIS and SDGs should focus on telecommunications/ICT, efficiently deploy the human and financial resources of the Union, and avoid duplication.

Resolution 214 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference invites members of ITU to contribute to discussions, information-sharing, capacity building and studies on AI related to international telecommunications/ICTs, and on how it may contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the mandate of the Union.

At its 2024 session, the Council revised its Resolution 1332 (C11, last amended C24), requesting CWG-WSIS&SDG "to provide guidance to ITU on how its future and ongoing activities can help facilitate capacity-building related to the use of Artificial Intelligence in achieving the SDGs" and "to monitor the actions taken by ITU with respect to AI with a view to enhance inter-sectoral coordination, regional empowerment, and membership engagement". Therefore, this working group is a suitable occasion for ITU members to feature on promoting AI in facilitating sustainable development.

Discussion

1 The international community has put forward new demands for promoting inclusive development of AI and advancing a sustainable digital future. As the United Nations specialized agency for digital technology, ITU can play a unique role in promoting AI for the achievement of SDGs. Among others, the Global Digital Compact and the G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Declaration address strengthening global cooperation on AI as an important catalyst for achieving the SDGs.

2 AI for SDGs is of crucial importance to developing countries. ITU has implemented multiple activities around AI, including standardization, capacity building, and partnership development. It is necessary to further strengthen the overall layout and mobilize resources to better help developing countries to bridge the "intelligence gap" and share the benefits of AI.

3 Considering that AI is an emerging technology, which is of common concern in the fields of both digital transformation and digital governance, the 20-year summary report of ITU and the WSIS vision beyond 2025 should present the ITU’s reflection about AI for SDGs, highlighting the contribution of WSIS to achieving SDGs.

Proposal

It is proposed that the Secretary-General, through collaboration with the Directors of the three Bureaux, draft an overall work plan on promoting AI for SDGs, report to the CWG‑WSIS&SDG on the progress, and seek approval by the Council at its 2025 session.

The plan should include the following contents:

1 The positioning, vision, and goals of ITU in the United Nations system’s initiatives that are relevant to AI for SDGs. This part should indicate how ITU participates in the relevant initiatives of United Nations system in the field of AI for SDGs, including mechanisms of cooperation, and key expected outcomes along with timelines, taking into consideration the relevant outcomes of high-level meetings such as UNGA and Summit of Future.

2 ITU's initiatives about promoting AI for SDGs. This part should include: (1) directions and key areas of standardization of AI; (2) identifying the needs of developing countries, which should be incorporated into regional development initiatives, when it is appropriate, towards the end of bridging the "intelligence gap"; (3) a plan of capacity building for Member States, especially for developing countries, in acquiring, developing, using, and governing AI systems; and (4) mechanisms for ITU to strengthen its cooperation with Member States on AI towards achieving SDGs, and to encourage Member States to make contributions.

3 A roadmap to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination on AI for SDGs. This part should clarify the roles and responsibilities of each Bureau, as well as regional offices in promoting AI for SDGs, with the aim of improving allocation of resources and enhancing synergy across the Union, while fitting the diverse conditions of different countries and regions.

Considering that the overall work plan involves resolutions of the PP and Council, it is recommended that the General Secretariat extensively consult with Member States during the drafting process, and when necessary, establish a communication group for discussions among Member States.

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