General Secretariat (GS)

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- ITU Member States
- Permanent Missions in Geneva
- ITU Sector Members
- ITU Associates and Academia
- UN agencies

Subject: Invitation to attend the high-level roundtable on COP29 Digitalization Day and endorse the COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action

Dear Madam/Sir,

In preparation for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), ITU, the Azerbaijan COP29 Presidency and the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan invite ministers, high-level officials and key stakeholders to join a high-level roundtable discussion on COP29 Digitalization Day on 16 November 2024.

Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia and other stakeholders are in parallel invited to endorse the COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action attached as an annex to this letter.

The Green Digital Action (GDA) initiative aims to harness the transformative power of digital technologies in our collective fight against climate change and calls on the technology industry to take responsibility for its environmental impact. The GDA initiative was launched by ITU and over 40 stakeholders from government, international organizations, business and civil society worldwide in the context of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28).

ITU Council 2024 subsequently invited Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia to promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs across all economic sectors through its Resolution 1429 on ITU's role in facilitating the contribution of ICTs to sustainability and climate action. The ITU Council additionally instructed the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Directors of the three Bureaux, to raise ambitions for ITU efforts, within its mandate, in matters related to this resolution; to enhance collaboration with other United Nations entities and stakeholders in this regard; and to promote the adoption of new and emerging ICTs across economic sectors to enhance their environmental sustainability.

We are therefore extremely grateful to the Azerbaijan COP29 Presidency for organizing the inaugural Digitalization Day at the forthcoming COP29. The Declaration on Green Digital Action affirms the vital role of digital technologies in climate action and outlines a collaborative framework for advancing

sustainability and ensuring that digital growth does not deepen environmental decline. The text is the result of extensive consultation and has been circulated by the Azerbaijan COP29 Presidency for endorsement. Further information can be found in the COP29 Presidency's Declarations and Pledges Letter.

To endorse the declaration, you may submit an official letter or note verbale to the COP29 Presidency, or alternatively send an email to digitalisation@cop29.az with any additional statement you may wish to include as part of your endorsement.

To register for the roundtable, please contact us at green@itu.int.

Thank you for your support and commitment to the Green Digital Action initiative. Together, we can make COP29 a milestone event in our ongoing journey towards sustainable digital transformation.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary-General

Annex: COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action (English version only)

COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action

We, national governments and other stakeholders, including international organisations, financial institutions, philanthropies, private sector entities, academia, and civil society organisations;

Recognising the imperative to mitigate and adapt to climate change and underscoring the important role of digital technologies in achieving these objectives, the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the goals of the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Pact of the Future;

Highlighting that digital innovations can have enabling and systemic effects in reducing GHG emissions across various economic sectors and adapting to climate change impacts when properly used and governed;

Noting with concern the adverse climate impacts associated with the full life cycle of digital technologies and related tools, devices and infrastructures, including with regard to the energy and water consumption of the digital sector, notably in the case of data processing centres, artificial intelligence development and deployment**,** coupled with the carbon footprint and pollution of producing digital tools and devices, as well as the unsustainable disposal of obsolete digital infrastructure, that need to be addressed;

Acknowledging that more consistent, technically rigorous and comprehensive data on GHG emissions and energy consumption from the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector can significantly enhance our progress towards accurately assessing its climate impacts and setting more effective climate targets;

Underlining the various digital divides as substantial impediments to achieving equitable, inclusive, just and digital transitions, and cognisant that disparities in digital access, capacities and resources can deepen inequalities and obstruct global climate efforts;

Expressing deep concern about the potential effects that disinformation and misinformation may have on the credibility of scientific knowledge and on the global perception of the causes and potential impacts of climate change, as well as on public awareness, mobilisation and collective action to prevent and combat these impacts;

Reaffirming the imperative to address these disparities to fully leverage digitalisation for global sustainability, ensuring that all benefit from a meaningfully connected world while leaving no one behind, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities;

Emphasising the importance of stronger collaboration between governments, the private sector, academia, technical communities, civil society and other stakeholders - in conformity with their roles and responsibilities, as well as synergy building among international organisations, and collective action and strengthened partnerships as a way to leverage digitalisation for climate action effectively;

Affirm within our respective mandates the following common objectives:

I. **Leveraging Digital Technologies and Tools for Climate Action:** Encourage the development and adoption of sustainable digital technologies to accelerate GHG emissions abatement, reductions, and removal and energy efficiency across sectors and to support climate-resilient communities, including through the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism. Additionally, enhance climate monitoring and forecasting and strengthen emergency response and preparedness capabilities through the broader use of digital technologies, including mobile early warning systems. Encourage improvement of digital technologies for energy modelling and forecasting to make grids more resilient to climate change's impacts and support clean energy initiatives that are adopting digital solutions.

II. **Building Resilient Digital Infrastructure:** Emphasise the importance of designing digital infrastructure resilient to climate change impacts, ensuring the continued functionality of critical digital systems in adverse conditions.

III. **Mitigating Digitalisation's Climate Impact:** Develop policies and technical advancements to contribute to achieving net-zero emissions and minimize the resource intensity of digital technologies. This includes powering digital infrastructure with clean energy, promoting energy-efficient practices, reducing emissions embedded in digital infrastructure and supply chains, extending product lifecycles, and improving recycling and e-waste management systems. It also includes establishing metrics and indicators to measure climate impacts of ICTs and to monitor the impact of digital actions on climate.

IV. **Promoting Digital Inclusion and Literacy:** Promote the accessibility of digital technologies for climate action to developing countries, including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. This involves supporting digital skills, digital literacy and capacity-building initiatives, especially for young people and women. Foster local digital ecosystems by providing support and resources for startups, small and medium-sized enterprises, and research institutions working on sustainable digital solutions.

V. **Data-driven decision-making:** Deploy assessment methodologies to estimate the net climate impact of green digital solutions, implement effective systems to accurately track and standardise climate-related data and energy usage and effectively monitor regulatory adherence and data quality and integrity.

VI. **Fostering Sustainable Innovation**: Mobilise existing climate funds and invest across all channels in innovation, research and development and implementation of environmentally sustainable digital technologies and resilient infrastructure,

encouraging collaboration across sectors to integrate climate considerations early in and throughout the technological development process. Recognise the importance of protecting intellectual property rights to incentivise innovation while also enhancing cooperative action to facilitate the widespread adoption of digital and green technologies. Promote policies that account for the protection of intellectual property and the need for open access to technologies that contribute to global climate goals.

VII. **Encouraging Sustainable Consumer Practices:** Promote awareness and education on sustainable digital consumption and practices among consumers.

VIII. **Facilitating the Sharing of Best Practices:** Leverage existing mechanisms and develop and implement new mechanisms that facilitate the sharing of best practices, including both good policy practices and effective technology applications, among countries in using digital technologies to reduce GHG emissions and enhance adaptation and resilience. By creating platforms for knowledge exchange and fostering international collaboration, we can ensure that successful initiatives, both in policy and technology, are replicated and adapted to diverse contexts, thereby accelerating global progress toward achieving climate and environmental goals.

Implementation Framework

We intend to incorporate these objectives into policies that address both digital and low-emission transition pathways, ensuring mutual support among digital, energy and climate policies and goals. This includes, amongst others, when and where applicable, integrating digital environmental sustainability into national climate strategies and policies, investing in environmentally sustainable digital technologies, using science-based methodologies that demonstrate the net positive contribution of digital solutions, and strengthening the role of digital technologies as enablers of climate solutions in countries' Technology Needs Assessments, Technology Action Plans and technical assistance provided by the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), which help inform countries in the development, updating and implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

Collaboration

We intend to convene, when necessary, with stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and international organisations through the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism and the ITU Green Digital Action initiative to enhance collaboration.

National governments and other stakeholders can endorse this Declaration through:

Any official written communications (letter and note verbale) to the COP29 Presidency or email to **digitalisation@cop29.az**