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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| REPORT ON THE GLOBAL STANDARDS SYMPOSIUM (GSS-24) AND THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION ASSEMBLY (WTSA-24) |
| **Purpose**This document provides a summary of the 2024 Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) and the 2024 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24).**Action required by the Council**The Council is requested to **note** the report. **Relevant link(s) with the Strategic Plan**Universal Connectivity; Sustainable Digital Transformation**Financial implications**KCHF 1414 for the 2025-2028 period (see section 2.2 of the Report, and Documents [C25/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0013/en) and [C25/43](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0043/en)) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[*https://www.itu.int/wtsa/2024/*](https://www.itu.int/wtsa/2024/)*;* [*https://gss.itu.int/*](https://gss.itu.int/)*; Report of the Budget Control Committee ([WTSA Doc. 119](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T22-WTSA.24-C-0119))* |

# 1 Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24)

1.1 The [Fifth Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24)](https://gss.itu.int/), held on 14 October 2024, in New Delhi, India, served as a pivotal forum for global leaders in standardization, policy-making, and industry. The symposium centred on “Charting the Next Digital Wave: Emerging Technologies, Innovation, and International Standards,” emphasizing the critical role of technical standards in fostering innovations across domains such as artificial intelligence (AI), smart cities, virtual worlds, and digital infrastructure.

1.2 GSS-24 concluded with an [outcome document](https://www.itu.int/md/T22-WTSA.24-C-0043/en), which was adopted by WTSA-24, and which has shown the importance of standards to drive technological innovation, promote sustainability, and accelerate global digital transformation.

1.3 GSS-24 witnessed unprecedented engagement, with over 2 600 participants from various sectors. The event brought together more than 1 800 in-person attendees and 800 remote participants, facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas. Among the distinguished attendees were over 70 industry leaders serving as speakers, alongside more than 20 heads of regulatory authorities and an equal number of ministers and deputy ministers. Additionally, the symposium welcomed over 10 representatives from research and standardization organizations, reflecting a broad and inclusive dialogue on international standards and emerging technologies.

1.4 The High-Level Segment on Catalysing Change: Industry and Ministerial Leaders Crafting the Future of Innovation featured communications ministers, industry leaders, and technology experts. This High-Level Segment explored the role of international standards in driving innovation and the adoption of emerging digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse. It focused on fostering a unique dialogue on innovative ecosystems and the importance of international cooperation to harness these technologies for digital transformation and to implement the Global Digital Compacts.

1.5 On the occasion of World Standards Day under the theme “Achieving industry, innovation and infrastructure through AI”, leaders from ITU, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) underscored the vital role of international standards in shaping emerging technologies, driving innovation, and guiding the next wave of digital transformation.

1.6 Launched during GSS-24, the International AI Standards Summit convened leading standardization organizations and global digital leaders to discuss the frameworks necessary for responsible AI development and featured a keynote speech from Amandeep Singh Gill, Under-Secretary-General and the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, United Nations.

1.7 The symposium addressed a variety of critical topics, including AI, metaverse, and emerging technologies, where discussions focused on establishing guidelines for AI governance, ethics, and safety. It also explored smart cities and sustainability, recognizing the cities that implemented the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on Recommendation ITU-T Y.4903. Additionally, the symposium also focused on financial and digital inclusion, open source and standards, delving into how open-source fosters collaboration, transparency, and wider access to technology and standards.

1.8 GSS-24, recognizing the crucial role played by international standards in supporting countries, cities and industries in driving innovation and the adoption of emerging digital technologies, invited ITU to: continue to shape the landscape of emerging digital technologies; continue efforts towards bridging the standardization gap between developed and developing countries, through initiatives like the ITU Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG) programme; support the activities of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC), particularly in facilitating the implementation of the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Recommendation ITU-T Y.4903); to continue to support AI for Good; collaborate closely with open source software (OSS) developers in fostering the creation of global open-source projects and nurturing the growth of open-source ecosystems worldwide; recognize the importance of the Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI – Discovering the Citiverse in leveraging the convergence of AI and the metaverse; and continue the Blockchain Secure Authentication (BSA) application challenge.

# 2 WTSA-24

## 2.1 Overview

WTSA-24 was held from 15 to 24 October 2024 in New Delhi, India. It was preceded by GSS-24 (14 October 2024) and followed by the Leadership training, which was offered to newly appointed chairs and vice-chairs. The Assembly welcomed His Excellency, Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi to its opening ceremony. The Assembly was chaired by Mr Ritu Ranjan Mittar (India). It was attended by 3700 delegates from 164 countries. It showed good female participation (27%). It also showed the highest number of Member States represented with 37 ministers. More than 20 side events were held during WTSA-24.

The outcomes of WTSA-24 include:

– consolidated ITU-T SG9 and SG16 as New Study Group 21 “Technologies for multimedia, content delivery and cable television”;

– appointed chairs and vice-chairs for the ten ITU-T study groups, TSAG, and SCV;

– updated the mandate (Resolution 2) and Questions of the ten ITU-T study groups; and

– Adopted eight new resolutions, revised 44 resolutions, suppressed one resolution, and revised ITU-T Recommendation (A.25), complemented by 15 actions (see [WTSA-24 Proceedings](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-REG-LIV.1-2024) for more information).

Related information:

– WTSA-24 website: <https://www.itu.int/wtsa/2024/>;

– [WTSA-24 Proceedings](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-REG-LIV.1-2024) (final version now published in six languages);

– WTSA-24 related events: <https://www.itu.int/wtsa/2024/related-events/>.

## 2.2 Budget impact

WTSA-24 adopted some decisions on new activities, studies, and workshops to enable the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) to respond in a timely manner to membership demands and address strategic issues that will require the attention of the next Assembly (WTSA-28). WTSA-24 identified activities (described in the new WTSA-24 resolutions and actions, such as artificial intelligence (AI), Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), and Sustainable Digital Transformation (SDT)) as priority areas for the ITU-T. TSB is mandated to implement these activities and report to WTSA-28. These decisions and their financial impacts are addressed in Documents [C25/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0013/en) and [C25/43](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0043/en).

# 3 Network of Women (NoW) for WTSA-24

The Network of Women in ITU-T (NoW in ITU-T) aims to advance the participation of women in the standardization sector. The Network of Women (NoW) for WTSA-24 ([NOW4WTSA24](https://www.itu.int/wtsa/2024/now/)) encouraged ITU Member States to embrace gender inclusivity at WTSA-24. The call to action was to:

1 Nominate women for key ITU-T leadership positions: (Chairs, Vice-chairs of TSAG, study groups, and the Standardization Committee for Vocabulary)

2 Encourage the appointment of women as heads of delegation

3 Promote the active participation of women in country delegations

4 Support achieving 35 per cent overall female participation at WTSA-24.

Concerted efforts to achieve the campaign goals resulted in 26 per cent female representation at the Assembly, the highest recorded for a WTSA outside Geneva. The number of women in leadership roles increased by 24 per cent compared to the past study period. Women now hold about one-quarter of all key ITU-T leadership positions. Significant progress was also made in female leadership at the Assembly itself, where twice as many women held leadership positions, doubling the number from WTSA-20.

The campaign culminated in a [special event at WTSA-24](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/NoW/events/20241017/Pages/default.aspx) on 17 October 2024, which included panel discussions on bridging the gender gap in standardization and standards for inclusive AI. The eventconcluded with a recognition ceremony honouring achievements related to the campaign’s objectives and contributions to gender equality.

# 4 Side events and exhibitions

In parallel with WTSA-24, more than 20 events were held representing over 80 hours of content, providing the importance and impact of ITU’s work and engaging India’s thriving tech ecosystem. The Assembly was also enriched by more than 85 exhibitors and demos.

# 5 Media coverage

WTSA-24 held the biggest opening ceremony ever, with over 300 000 views online, and stimulated global technical conversations like never before with key figures such as the honourable His Excellency, Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and other influential technology leaders adding their voices to ITU’s on social media.

Additionally, the Assembly had the highest number of media registered, capturing global attention and covering the assembly across new and traditional media. Statistics related to media coverage include:

– 100M+ social media reach

– 300k+ opening ceremony views

– 182 media registered

– 3.6B global media reach

– 1 290 ITU mentions in media

– 99% of positive or neutral coverage.

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