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|  | **Document CWG-WSIS&SDG-42/10** |
| **22 January 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT |
| **Purpose**The objective of this document is to provide information on the ITU’s action plan, outlining its ongoing activities that support the implementation of the Global Digital Compact.**Action required**Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs is invited to **note** this document.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References** [*CWG-WSIS&SDG website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx)*; UNGA Resolutions* [*A/RES/76/307*](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/307)*,* [*A/77/L.109*](https://undocs.org/en/A/77/L.109) *(Decision 77/568),* [*A/77/L.63*](https://undocs.org/en/A/77/L.63)*,* [*A/78/L.77*](https://undocs.org/en/A/78/L.77) *(Decision 78/555),* [*A/79/L.2*](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F79%2FL.2&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False) *and* [*A/79/L.3*](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F79%2FL.3&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)*, Documents* [*C19/INF/8*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-INF-0008/en)*,* [*C20/INF/3*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-INF-0003/en)*;* [*C21/INF/2*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-INF-0002/en)*;* [*C22/INF/2*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0002/en)*;* [*C23/INF/8*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0008/en)*,* [*C23/INF/9*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0009/en)*;* [*C24/55*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0055/en) *and* [*C24/INF/9*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0009/en) |

The ITU is committed to playing our role in the leadership of the global digital transformation, in alignment with the objectives outlined in the Global Digital Compact (GDC), adopted by Member States at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, as an Annex to the Pact for the Future.

As the UN’s specialized agency for digital technologies, ITU plays a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration, driving innovation, and ensuring that digital technologies contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This action plan outlines ITU’s strategic approach to supporting the implementation of the GDC, focusing on enhancing universal connectivity, closing the digital divide, advancing responsible artificial intelligence (AI) standards, and promoting digital inclusion, among others. By leveraging ITU’s existing mandates, partnerships, and expertise, this plan sets the course for a future where digital technologies empower people, promote sustainability, and address the urgent global challenges outlined in the Global Digital Compact (GDC), alongside the Pact for the Future.

# 1 Integration of GDC Objectives into ITU mandates

The objectives, principles, and commitments of the GDC are directly aligned with ITU’s existing mandates. As the UN agency for digital technologies, ITU is actively supporting Member States in implementing the GDC. During the ITU governing body meetings, including the Council Working Group (CWG) on WSIS & SDG and the Council Working Group (CWG) on the Strategic and Financial Plan in early October 2024, Member States emphasized ITU’s key role in GDC follow-up, ensuring alignment with WSIS, its Action Lines, and the upcoming WSIS+20 review. Furthermore, at the recent World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) in New Delhi, ITU members prioritized Artificial Intelligence (AI) standards aligned with the GDC to promote responsible, inclusive, and impactful AI for sustainable development.

ITU will focus on directly supporting Member States in the implementation of the GDC by facilitating access to digital technologies, expertise, and resources. This includes initiatives that promote universal connectivity, close digital divides, and ensure that no one is left behind in the digital age. ITU’s efforts will also address key challenges such as digital literacy, inclusivity, and online safety, providing tailored support for national strategies to align with global digital goals. By integrating the GDC objectives with existing or new initiatives, ITU will support Member States and other stakeholders in achieving sustainable digital transformation.

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| ITU will play a crucial role in supporting Member States in achieving[[1]](#footnote-1):**GDC Objective 1: Closing all digital divides accelerating progress across the SDGs**– ITU is working with all stakeholders to close the digital divides and accelerate SDG progress by developing metrics, collaborating with the World Telecommunication/ ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) and UNESCO, enhancing resilience through standards and policies, supporting satellite sustainability, connecting schools via the Giga initiative with UNICEF, promoting sustainability through Green Digital Action, bridging the gender digital divide through the EQUALS Global Partnership, addressing the skills gap through ITU Academy and ILO partnerships, and advancing Digital Public Infrastructure and Investment Initiatives.**GDC Objective 2: Expanding inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all**– ITU’s country ICT regulatory reviews and guidelines will foster global digital economy access, while the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) will facilitate exchanges among regulators. The ITU Academy and digital skills training will enhance knowledge sharing and capacity building for digital transformation, and various initiatives will drive innovation, especially among marginalized populations.**GDC Objective 3: Fostering an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights**– ITU and OHCHR will enhance collaboration to advance human rights, with TSB developing related standards. At AI for Good, multistakeholder collaboration on AI watermarking, multimedia authenticity, and deepfake detection was announced through the World Standards Cooperation. The WSIS Forum will serve as a key platform, and member states will be engaged through Council Working Groups on Child Online Protection and CWG-Internet. Additionally, guidelines, training, online safety tools, research, and reports will promote a safe online environment for children.**GDC Objective 4: Advancing responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches** – ITU's work on ICT Development Index (IDI) indicators, Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), and other statistics, along with the Broadband Commission's collaboration with UNESCO—particularly its Working Group on Data Governance -and TSB's data interoperability efforts will all contribute to this initiative. **GDC Objective 5: Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefits of humanity** – ITU’s GSR and the inter-agency working group on AI will build upon their critical work, while the World Standards Cooperation—a collaboration between ITU, ISO, and IEC—will enhance standards exchange; TSB currently has over 100 AI standards and 150 more in development, leveraging its unique membership composition to engage with key technical community members and strengthen collaboration with UN sister agencies, including WGO, FAO, WMO, IAEA, UNEP, and others.A detailed mapping of the implementation of the GDC objectives and follow-up through the WSIS process and ITU activities can be found in the Annex. |

# 2 Advancing AI standards and collaboration

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes a central pillar of digital transformation in the GDC, ITU is committed to developing and promoting international standards that ensure AI is used responsibly, inclusively, and sustainably. This includes collaborating with global stakeholders to foster ethical AI development and creating frameworks that mitigate risks such as bias and inequality. Through initiatives like AI for Good, ITU will empower countries and communities to harness AI for social and economic progress.

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| In particular, ITU is poised to support Member States on Artificial Intelligence, through [**the AI for Good Initiative**](https://aiforgood.itu.int)**:**– [**The AI for Good Neural network**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/neural-network/), comprising global AI experts, academia, and research institutions, can contribute to the **Scientific Panel on AI** and other AI-related GDC mandates. Drawing from its extensive experience in connecting with leading AI professionals worldwide, ITU stands ready to engage with this important panel. – ITU has also taken the lead, together with UNESCO, in facilitating the UN's efforts to advance AI development by coordinating activities through [**the UN Interagency Working Group on AI**](https://unsceb.org/inter-agency-working-group-artificial-intelligence), which operates under the UN Secretary-General’s Chief Executive Board (CEB). – [**The AI for Good initiative**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/) is a premier platform within the UN, actively collaborating with over [40 UN agencies](https://aiforgood.itu.int/about-ai-for-good/un-ai-actions/) to tackle global challenges through innovative AI solutions. [**The annual AI for Good Summit**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/summit25/)is a dynamic four-day event, in addition to a series of workshops throughout the year, that not only showcase successful AI applications but also foster meaningful dialogues among key stakeholders. – **The AI for Good Governance Day,** held during the Summit, is particularly significant, offering a vital platform for policymakers, regulators, and thought leaders to collaborate with AI experts, leading institutes, and UN agencies. Backed by leading global AI experts and institutions, AI for Good can serve as a platform for **the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.**– Through the AI for Good initiative,[**the AI Skills Coalition**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/ai-skills-coalition/) has been established as a transformative movement aimed at empowering individuals and communities -particularly women and marginalized groups - with essential AI expertise. By providing access to high-quality AI training, the Coalition seeks to bridge the AI divide and ensure inclusive participation in this technological revolution. This initiative can serve as a foundation for Member States in fostering **international partnerships focused on AI capacity building.** – Recently, ITU expanded this initiative by launching [**the Young AI Leaders Community**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/young-ai-leaders-community/), inviting AI experts aged 18 to 30 to develop six regional hubs aimed at building a strong, diverse community of AI leaders. – The AI for Good initiative also includes flagship programs such as the Global AI Challenges, the AI for Good Innovation Factory and Startup Acceleration Programme, and the Robotics for Good Youth Challenge, which engages young innovators worldwide and will culminate in a global competition at the AI for Good Summit in 2025. These programs, alongside the newly released [**AI for Good Impact Report**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/newsroom/publications-and-reports/) (developed in partnership with Deloitte), underscore ITU's commitment to bridging the AI divide, fostering international partnerships, and supporting sustainable development goals through AI capacity building.– As a global leader in technical standards development, ITU oversees numerous expert and study groups dedicated to AI. Currently, ITU is leading the development of over 100 AI-related standards with an additional 150 in progress. Together with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), ITU hosted the first [**International AI Standards Summit**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/ai-standards/)at WTSA-24, which is committed **to enhancing collaboration and promoting the creation and adoption of interoperable AI standards**. This Standards Summit, part of the broader 'AI for Good' initiative, also launched a new series of regional events and kicked off collaborations, including [**the AI and Multimedia Authenticity Standards**](https://aiforgood.itu.int/multimedia-authenticity/)effort, focusing on challenges like AI watermarking and deepfake detection. In addition, ITU, ISO, and IEC are developing an AI standards database to support cohesive standards development, aligning with priorities from the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.– Additionally, ITU, in cooperation with UNDP, is leading UN agencies in **facilitating** [**the Joint SDG Fund’s Digital Transformation Window**](https://www.jointsdgfund.org/article/digital-transformations), which focuses on enhancing digital connectivity, building capacity, and addressing pressing digital issues. |

# 3 Strengthening UN-wide digital cooperation

ITU plays an active role in strengthening coordination within the UN system to foster cross-sector digital cooperation. For example, by participating in the UN Steering Committee for Pact Implementation, chaired by the UN Secretary-General, and by co-chairing the Working Group on Digital Technologies with the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (formerly the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (OSET)), ITU will seek to ensure digital issues are addressed cohesively and collaboratively within the UN system. This alignment should promote collective ownership of the GDC and embed digital cooperation across UN processes. The Working Group is to have Sub-Groups, including one for each of the objectives in the GDC. ITU will co-lead the sub-groups on GDC Objectives 1 (digital divides) and 5 (AI). A key task for the Working Group overall will be to develop the GDC Implementation Map referred to in paragraph 71 of the GDC.

The inaugural meeting of the Working Group on Digital Technologies on 21 October focused on defining the group’s scope, with plans to finalize strategies and action points. The Working Group has since met two further times at the working level to share information on GDC implementation and develop its draft Terms of Reference. Representatives of the Chairs (ITU and ODET) have also briefed various parties on progress regarding GDC implementation plans, including Member States in New York through the Group of Friends of Digital Technologies; companies during an event hosted by USCIB and ICC BASIS; civil society during the IGF Annual Meeting in Riyadh; and UN agencies in the UN Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation.

Additionally, [the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)](https://unsceb.org/high-level-committee-programmes-hlcp#:~:text=HLCP%2C%20established%20on%2027%20October,facing%20the%20United%20Nations%20system.), under the umbrella of the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB), acknowledging the importance of [the Inter-Agency Working Group on AI (IAWG)](https://unsceb.org/inter-agency-working-group-artificial-intelligence), co-chaired by ITU and UNESCO, requested alignment of its work to support GDC implementation. ITU and UNESCO are now working with IAWG on AI member agencies, providing inputs to the Working Group on Digital Technologies, alongside an updated 12-month IAWG work plan.

ITU also regularly hosts “Let’s Talk Digital” gatherings with Geneva-based UN and international agencies – our “Geneva Digital Kitchen” network - to discuss emerging digital trends, share initiatives, and strengthen collaboration. Its recent meetings have focused on how these collaborations can create valuable synergies to address the diverse needs of Member States and stakeholders, especially in following up on the GDC. The group has developed a 'Geneva Contribution Plan' to support the GDC and foster this collaborative spirit.

# 4 Align with the WSIS, including preparations for the WSIS+20 Review

The WSIS+20 Review in 2025 will be a critical milestone for assessing progress in digital transformation and aligning global efforts with the GDC. ITU is playing a leading role in the preparations for this review, undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of contributions from all stakeholders. In particular, the GDC encourages the WSIS+20 Review to explore how the WSIS process can support stakeholders' contributions to the Compact's implementation. Leveraging existing UN coordination mechanisms, particularly those addressing digital issues, the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), supported by ITU, is well-positioned to enhance system-wide digital cooperation within the UN system. Building on the mapping of the WSIS Process, the 2030 Agenda, and the GDC developed by UNGIS, the WSIS+20 Review will showcase best practices, identify gaps, and outline new priorities to ensure that the WSIS process remains relevant and effective, including in advancing the GDC’s objectives.

To ensure transparency and accountability, ITU will establish mechanisms to track the progress of the GDC’s implementation in alignment with the WSIS process. Regular monitoring and evaluation will assess the effectiveness of ITU’s initiatives, providing timely insights into successes and areas for improvement. This will help refine strategies and ensure that the commitments outlined in the GDC are realized on a global scale, driving positive outcomes for digital inclusion and sustainable development.

# 5 Capacity building and knowledge sharing

ITU will continue to play its pivotal role in building capacity for Member States by providing training, resources, and technical support in key areas such as AI, digital infrastructure, and cybersecurity. Through partnerships with international organizations and the private sector, ITU will establish robust knowledge-sharing networks to enhance digital skills and empower nations to participate fully in the digital economy. These efforts will support Member States in implementing the commitments of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and driving sustainable digital growth. Looking ahead, ITU’s leadership in capacity building and knowledge sharing will remain central to advancing universal connectivity, bridging digital divides, and promoting responsible AI. By fostering inclusive digital transformation, ITU will contribute significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient global future.

Annex

GDC Objectives implementation and follow-up through WSIS process and ITU activities

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| GDC Objective | WSIS process  | ITU activities |
| **All GDC objectives** | Implementation of WSIS Action Lines (examples provided per GDC objective below). Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development (current Steering Committee is made up of ITU, UNCTAD, and UN DESA)United Nations Group on the Information Society - UNGIS (current Chair: UNESCO, Vice-Chairs: ITU, UNDP, UNCTAD, UNECLAC)WSIS Forum (hosted by ITU, co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD)WSIS&SDG Matrix (coordinated by all WSIS Action Lines Facilitators) to map WSIS action lines to Sustainable Development GoalsWSIS Stocktaking, WSIS Prizes (maintained and coordinated by ITU) | ITU Statistics Spectrum managementStandards Policy and regulatory guidelinesProject implementationCapacity building |
| **1. Closing all digital divides, accelerating progress across the SDGs** | **C2**: ICT infrastructure (ITU sole lead) – Lays the foundation by addressing connectivity gaps**C4**: Capacity Building (ITU lead with UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UN DESA, FAO, UNIDO as co-leads) – Empowers people with the skills to leverage ICTs effectively**C6**: Enabling Environment (ITU lead with UNDP, UN Regional Commissions, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNIDO as co-leads)– Ensures affordability and inclusivity through sound regulatory and policy frameworks**C11**: International and Regional Cooperation (UN-DESA with ITU, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP, UNESCO as co-leads) - Fosters multistakeholder collaboration in policymaking, resource mobilization, and implementation, ensuring inclusive, sustainable efforts to close the digital divide | World Telecommunications/ICT Indicators SymposiumBroadband Commission World Telecommunication / ICT Policy Forum ITU-R: satellite orbital slots allocationSpace sustainabilityGIGA initiative to connect schools (ITU and UNICEF)Green Digital Action, including E-waste workEQUALS to empower women and girls in ICTITU academy partnershipsDigital Skills Training, Digital Transformation CentersDigital Public Infrastructure activitiesDigital Infrastructure Investment Initiative |
| **2. Expanding inclusion and benefits from the digital economy for All** | **C4**: Capacity Building (ITU lead with UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UN DESA, FAO, UNIDO as co-leads) – Equips individuals and communities with the skills needed to participate in and benefit from the digital economy**C6**: Enabling Environment (ITU lead with UNDP, UN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNIDO as co-leads) – Establishes the policy and regulatory conditions for equitable digital economic growth**C7**: ICT Applications (e-Business) (UNCTAD lead with ITU, ITC, UPU as co-leads) – Directly empowers individuals and businesses by providing tools, platforms, and knowledge to engage in the digital economy**C3**: Access to Information (UNESCO lead with ITU, FAO, UNIDO as co-leads) - Promotes open access to data and digital resources, empowering individuals and businesses to innovate and succeed in the digital economy | ITU-D Regulatory work: country ICT regulatory reviews and assessments, guidelines, GSRITU academy – global exchangesSupporting countries on digital transformation journeysITU-T: standards development with a human rights lensChild Online Protection - guidelines, training, online safety with Sango for kids, research and reports,Member state engagement: CWG-COP, CWG-Internet, collaborating with governments, particularly on Child Online Protection policiesStandards collaboration on AI watermarking, multimedia authenticity and deepfake detection World Standard Cooperation (ITU, IEC, ISO) |
| **3. Fostering an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital space that respects, protects, and promotes human rights** | **C5**: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs (ITU sole lead) – The most directly relevant Action Line, addressing cyber threats, privacy, and safety**C10**: Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society (UNESCO sole lead) – Fosters trust by embedding ethical principles in digital governance**C6**: Enabling Environment (ITU lead with UNDP, UN Regional Commissions, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNIDO as co-leads) – Provides a stable foundation through policies and regulations that protect users and promote trust**C11**: International and Regional Cooperation (UN-DESA with ITU, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP, UNESCO as co-leads) - Promotes international cooperation on cybersecurity, data sharing, and responsible technology use to address global digital security and stability challenges | ITU-OHCHR collaboration on human rightsITU-T: standards development with a human rights lensChild Online Protection guidelines, training, online safety with Sango for kids, research and reports,Member state engagement: CWG-COP, CWG-Internet, collaborating with governments, particularly on Child Online Protection policiesStandards collaboration on AI watermarking, multimedia authenticity and deepfake detection (ITU, IEC, ISO)AI for Good Summit sessions on digital inclusion and rights |
| **4. Advancing responsible, equitable, and interoperable data governance approaches** | **C6**: Enabling Environment (ITU Lead) – The most directly relevant, focusing on legal and regulatory frameworks for responsible data governance**C5**: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs (ITU Lead) – Essential for ensuring trust in data systems and equitable use.**C10**: Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society (UNESCO Lead) – Addresses fairness, inclusivity, and respect for human rights in data governance**C7**: ICT Applications: e-Environment (UNEP, with ITU as co-lead) - promotes responsible data use to monitor environmental conditions, ensuring equitable access to data and fostering global collaboration for sustainability | ITU Statistics: IDI indicators, Global Cybersecurity IndexBroadband Commission WG on Data GovernanceITU-T: data interoperability efforts |
| **5. Enhancing international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity** | **C10**: Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society (UNESCO Lead) – The most directly aligned, addressing fairness, transparency, and human rights in AI**C5**: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs (ITU Lead) – Ensures trust and security in AI systems**C6**: Enabling Environment (ITU Lead) – Provides regulatory and policy support for international AI governance**C7**: ICT Applications: eHealth (WHO lead with ITU as co-lead) - supports the ethical deployment and regulation of AI in healthcare to ensure safety, equity, and global health improvements | AI for Good multistakeholder platformGlobal Symposium for RegulatorsInter-agency working group on AI World Standards Cooperation (ITU, ISO, IEC collaboration mechanism) + collaborative efforts with other SDOs+100 standards on AI; 150 more in developmentCollaboration with UN agencies (WHO, FAO, WMO, IAEA, UNEP)Technical community- ITU membersAI Skills Coalition and other AI capacity-building and similar initiatives |
| **Follow-up and review** | **C11**: International and Regional Cooperation (UN-DESA with ITU, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP, UNESCO as co-leads) - Facilitates dialogue among governments, international organizations, civil society, and private sector actorsUNGIS: fosters multistakeholder collaboration, monitoring progress, and ensuring alignment of digital initiatives with objectivesWSIS Forum, including sessions on the Review: Provides an annual platform for stakeholders to discuss progress on GDC objectives. Facilitates the exchange of ideas, reporting, and updates on implementationWSIS Stocktaking Process: Monitors global progress through a repository of projects and initiatives. Highlights successful examples that align with SDGs and GDC objectivesWSIS Prizes: Recognizes innovative practices that advance SDGs and GDC objectives. Encourages replication of successful initiatives globallyPartnership on Measuring ICT for Development: Ensures that data collection and review processes are consistent across initiativesInternet Governance ForumWSIS&SDG Matrix: aligns WSIS Action Lines with the SDGs, tracking progress, and ensuring accountability through regular monitoring and reportingUN CSTD, including the WSIS Forum outcomes as inputsImplementation at the Regional LevelWSIS+20 Preparatory Process: roadmaps, reviews and updates ECOSOC and UNGA reviews incorporating WSIS data | UN System-wide coordination mechanisms, including but not limited to the Digital Technology Working Group.AI for Good multistakeholder platform |

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1. “An overview of the Global Digital Compact – including ITU’s related actions”, presented to the CWGs, is available [here](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Documents/2024/InfoSession%20on%20GDC_2Oct2024V2.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)