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| Contribution by the Secretariat |
| OUTCOMES FROM THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) 2025 |
| **Purpose**Inform on the outcomes, participation and the International Telecommunication Union’s (ITU) contributions to the HLPF 2025.**Action required**The Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs is invited to **take note** of this document.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References** [*CWG-WSIS&SDG website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx)*; Document* [*C25/INF/5*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-INF-0005/en) |

Overview of HLPF 2025

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the 14th - 23rd of July. This session included the ministerial segment, which took place from the 21st – 23rd of July, and concluded with the High-level Segment of ECOSOC on the 24th of July 2025.

Under the guiding theme of "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind," the Forum sought to galvanize international efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus was particularly on the in-depth reviews of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In addition, thematic sessions were dedicated to financing for science, technology, and innovation (STI), localizing SDG implementation, 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/2025-07/2025%20HLPF%20and%20HLS%20Annotated%20Programme_21.pdf)

A key feature of HLPF 2025 was the presentation of [**35 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs),**](https://hlpf.un.org/2025/vnrs) which provided updates on national progress and strategies towards SDG achievement. Several countries emphasized efforts to mainstream digital transformation into development strategies—highlighting the expansion of digital public infrastructure, use of open data for policy innovation, and targeted measures to bridge the digital divide and promote digital literacy. The VNRs also reflected a growing commitment to inclusive digitalization, with attention to gender, youth, and rural communities. [[1]](#footnote-1)

The Forum hosted 223 events, comprising 12 High Level Special Events, 13 VNR Labs, 8 Exhibitions, and 190 Side Events. Many sessions explored the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, data governance, and digital public goods, and their relevance for achieving the SDGs. Discussions highlighted the growing role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in designing inclusive digital ecosystems and in supporting digital capacity-building in developing countries.

HLPF 2025 had participation from more than 100 high-level delegates, including Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, and other senior officials.

Outcomes of HLPF 2025

The 2025 [*Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report*](https://docs.un.org/a/80/81%26i%3DA/80/81_1748035261784) by the Secretary-General launched at the Forum painted a dual picture of the world's digital progress. On one hand, it celebrated a 70% increase in internet connectivity since 2015 as a major achievement, connecting millions to new opportunities. On the other hand, the report underscored the stark reality of a persistent digital divide, with a significant portion of the global population, especially in developing nations, remaining offline. Critically, digital transformation was identified as one of six priority areas requiring urgent action to rescue the SDGs. The report called for a concerted push to close the digital divide and ensure that technologies like artificial intelligence are harnessed responsibly and inclusively to accelerate progress across all goals.

Throughout the Forum, digital transformation remained a core focus across policy areas—from inclusive education systems and climate data tracking to e-governance and digital health. Numerous Member States referenced digital strategies in their national statements, reinforcing the recognition of digital technologies as critical enablers for sustainable development. These interventions frequently emphasized equitable access, safe and inclusive digital environments, and the importance of global digital governance frameworks.

The [**Ministerial Declaration**](https://docs.un.org/E/HLPF/2025/L.1) adopted at the close of the Forum outlined a set of key priorities. Key digital references from the Declaration include:

– **Paragraph 9:** Stresses that adequate international action is needed to "bridge digital divides and technological disparities, through a responsible, accountable, transparent and human-centric approach to the life cycle of digital and emerging technologies." It also includes a commitment to "connect the remaining 2.6 billion people to the Internet and to improve the quality and affordability of connectivity."

– **Paragraph 49:** Recognizes the "transformative potential of digital health technologies, including assistive technologies," in advancing health goals but also notes the need to ensure "digital health equity and foster digital health literacy."

– **Paragraph 63:** Commits to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, "in public and private spaces, both in person and in digital contexts."

– **Paragraph 64:** Focuses on ensuring the right to education for women and girls, including by supporting them in "acquiring digital skills" to thrive "especially in the digital era."

– **Paragraph 76:** Commits to including youth in developing sustainable development strategies that ensure their education and skills, "including digital skills."

– **Paragraph 117:** Commits to promoting "equitable and inclusive access to and development of artificial intelligence" and supporting developing countries in building "artificial intelligence capacities and adopting safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems." It also acknowledges the importance of the "Global Digital Compact."

The 2025 HLPF laid groundwork for upcoming global processes, including the High-Level Meeting of 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30), World Summit for Social Development, and WSIS+20 High-level Meeting of the UNGA. The Forum concluded with a call for coordinated global action, equitable financing, and inclusive innovation to turn the tide on SDG progress and deliver on the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

ITU Contributions to HLPF 2025

ITU actively contributed to the HLPF 2025 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/sites/default/files/vnrs/2025/Inputs%202025%20ITU.pdf)

– [Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2025/Inputs%202025%20BBCOM.pdf)

– [WSIS Forum](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2025/Inputs%202025%20WSIS.pdf)

– [UNGIS](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2025/Inputs%202025%20UNGIS.pdf)

Session Participation

– **ECOSOC High-level session on “**[**UN at 80: The Role of ECOSOC in Leading Action for a Stronger Multilateral System**](https://hlpf.un.org/2025/programme/un-at-80-the-role-of-ecosoc-in-leading-action-for-a-stronger-and-more-effective)**” –** ITU Deputy Secretary-General invited as a panelist, together with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy, ILO Director-General and UNICEF Deputy Executive Director.

– **Qatar side event:** On the Road to Doha, the Second World Social Summit – ITU Deputy Secretary‑General provided a video message.

Statement

– **General Debate:** ITU [Statement](https://estatements.unmeetings.org/estatements/30.0010/20250723100000000/nLfJmYSMUjLgS/DMUQxJoMetYQ_nyc_en.pdf) (23 July)

ITU Side Event

– **Outcome and Highlights: AI for Good Summit, WSIS+20 High Level Event and IGF;** Organized by the ITU in collaboration with Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, Norway, France, UNDP, UNESCO, and UNDESA; Format – physical; Date and Time 24 July (0815-0930 hours)

ITU Delegation

– Mr Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General (Head of Delegation)

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

– Ms Riefqah Jappie, Senior Liaison Officer

– Mr Rui Wan, Junior Liaison Officer

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1. The list of presenting countries includes Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Sudan, Suriname, and Thailand. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)