



General Secretariat (SG)

Geneva, 27 May 2026

Ref: **CL-26/25**

Contact: Ms Monika Gehner

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To:

- Member States
- Sector Members
- Academia
- Associates
- United Nations

Subject: WTISD report launched “When digital systems fail – An expert report on the hidden risks of our digital world”

Dear Madam/Sir,

ITU is pleased to share the [report](#) “*When digital systems fail – An expert report on the hidden risks of our digital world*”, which was released ahead of [World Telecommunication and Information Society Day](#) (WTISD) 2026, in line with the theme “*Digital lifelines: Strengthening resilience in a connected world.*”

Digital technologies are transforming societies, creating unprecedented opportunities for economic growth, innovation, and inclusion. At the same time, as modern societies become increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure – from energy and finance to transport, healthcare, and public services – the risks associated with these deeply interconnected systems are growing yet remain largely underestimated and do not appear in risk registers.

Disruptions rarely remain isolated events. They cascade. What begins with a local failure can rapidly spread across sectors and borders. The report describes three scenarios of critical digital failures – space, terrestrial and undersea – which translate abstract risk into concrete terms.

Co-published by ITU, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po, the report examines risks to digital infrastructure on Earth, under the sea, and in space. Drawing on real-world examples and the expertise of 12 senior experts from international organizations, national authorities, academia, and the private sector, it highlights the fragility of our interconnected systems and outlines a roadmap for collective preparedness.

We hope this report will serve as a useful resource in supporting national efforts and international cooperation to strengthen digital resilience.

Should you have any questions, please contact wtisd@itu.int.

Yours faithfully,

(signed)

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary-General