

IAGDI-CRO CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

TECH TALK under the theme of Study Group 2: Digital Transformation

Virtual, 19 February 2025

ITUWebinars

Tech Talks series



The Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (IAGDI-CRO) group organized two Tech Talks in February 2025, each aligned with the themes of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2, respectively.

The objective was to foster stronger collaboration between ITU-D Sector Members and ITU-D Study Group management and ITU-D membership and to inspire forward-thinking discussions on cutting-edge digital trends and technologies that could shape future ITU-D work, including the development of new Study Group Questions to be adopted at WTDC-25.

For more information on the **Tech Talks Series**:

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/MembersPartners/Pages/tech-talks.aspx>

This report summarizes the main interventions and the IAGDI-CRO Chair conclusions for the TECH TALKS held on 19 February 2025 focusing on the main theme of ITU-D **Study Group 2: Digital Transformation**, which was attended by more than 110 participants representing **25 member states, 18 ITU-D Sector Members**, and BDT staff with **38 % female participation**.



In her opening remarks, **Dr. Eun-Ju Kim, Chief Projects, Partnerships, and Digital Skills (PPS), BDT, ITU** welcomed the Chair of TDAG, the Chairs of Study Groups, along with esteemed speakers, delegates and the audience, highlighting that the TECH TALKS provides a collaborative platform for ITU-D memberships to discuss a sustainable future for impact. Dr. Kim addressed the digital divide and the need to connect the unconnected 2.6 billion people, stressing the importance of collaborative efforts. She stated that the **TECH TALKS 2 on Digital Transformation** aligned with ITU's strategic goals and the ITU-D Study Group themes, aims to bring insights on cutting edge technologies such as **AI and quantum** as leapfrogging enablers for **developing countries' digital transformation**.



Mr. Bocar Ba, Chair of IAGDI-CRO, and CEO of SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Chair of the meeting, provided a comprehensive background of IAGDI-CRO and the objectives of the TECH TALKS series. He highlighted the IAGDI-CRO's role in amplifying the **private sector's voice** to the ITU Member States, ensuring their needs are reflected in the ITU-D's agenda. Mr. Ba stated that the **TECH TALKS series** was conceptualized as an engagement dialogue platform exclusively for ITU-D membership to present their technologies and innovative approaches in their respective area.



Ms. Andrea Maia-Reboucas, Head of Memberships and Private Sector Relations, BDT, ITU emphasized the collaboration between the IAGDI-CRO and the ITU-D Study Groups teams, and the focus on forward thinking discussions on digital trends and technologies to shape the potential of questions as we are approaching the **WTDC-25** to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2025. She highlighted that the IAGDI-CRO will also convene on the 2nd of September during the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-25) to be held in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These events are essential in fostering the contributions through

ITU-D platforms where policymakers, ICT regulators, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders can discuss the challenges on digital development and on bridging the digital divide.



Ms. Roxanne McElvane Webber, Chair of the Telecommunications Development Advisory Group, highlighted the impactful outcomes the Development sector has delivered the past years, and invited all stakeholders to take advantage of their membership with ITU as an effective platform gathering ministries, regulatory agencies, private sector and academia to develop the best practices on the issues of digital technologies and communications. The Chair of TDAG urged members to share their views on what is needed from regulators to provide meaningful connectivity and digital transformation, and emphasized the importance of industry participation and collaboration, particularly in the final TDAG meeting before WTDC-25, to ensure ITU Member States understand industry perspectives.

1st Group of Speakers



Mr. Dominic McDonald
CEO
ULAP



Mr. Dayn Amade
Chairman of the Board
Kamaleon



Mr. Guy Tamir
Technology Evangelist
Intel

Mr. Dominic McDonald, CEO of ULAP Networks, stated that as innovations drive rapid change, digital transformation in 2025 demands true agility in navigating evolving landscapes. Advancements in public and private cloud technology introduce new regulatory challenges, making early adaptation crucial for businesses to stay resilient and compliant in a shifting digital ecosystem. He also stressed that the difference between public and **private cloud** is that the private cloud is at customers premises in difference from the public ones being at the large vendors. Mr McDonald also mentioned that **digital transformation jurisdiction** becomes an important point to discuss due to the increasing uses of AI and other emerging technologies which takes up a high volume of energy on the infrastructure.

Mr. Dayn Amade, Chairman of the Board of Kamaleon, pinpointed that a public sector reform through **digitizing administrative services** and create a one-stop ecosystem for government-to-citizen e-services, especially for those left behind in developing countries with significant digital gaps. Addressing complex settings like rural and remote areas, refugee centers, and internally displaced people, who often lack infrastructure and electricity, is crucial. Mr. Amade also commented that if governments can **create additional revenue by using digital transformation methodologies**, it can be useful in privileging digital infrastructures and subsidizing social programmes.

Mr. Guy Tamir, Technology Evangelist at Intel Corporation, highlighted that AI has enormous potential, but for it to truly empower people worldwide, it must be adaptable to different local needs, languages, and infrastructures. He also emphasized that in order to make this possible, we need open and standardized AI solutions that can be used across different platforms, devices, and infrastructures. Mr

Tamir elaborated on how many AI tools nowadays are locked into specific platforms or designed for limited use cases, making them difficult to scale across countries and industries, and that **AI applications should be modular and interoperable**, meaning governments and companies should be able to take AI components from different providers and combine them. He also shared that defining standardized AI building blocks to help governments and developers build robust and scalable systems are essential but for these to succeed, more stakeholders need to adopt, contribute to, and use these open standards, **ensuring AI can serve all communities**, not just those with advanced digital infrastructure.

Floor interventions

The Communications Authority of Kenya echoed Mr. Tamir's point on making AI systems flexible and interoperable, and asked for a feasible advice on implementing such a strategy.

Intel, Mr. Tamir Guy pointed out the Open Programmable Infrastructure (OPI), an open-source project would be a good step forward to make AI systems flexible and interoperable. According to him, open source allows users to store the components locally, which will help users to build their Generative AI operations from all places with any available resources they have.

The Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation of Mauritius, intervened with a question regarding Africa's resources and if the continent is ready for AI and what efforts are being made by the international organizations and partners to make AI accessible in the Global South.

ULAP, Mr. Dominic McDonald indicated that one of the solutions for emerging economies, such as countries in Africa, is to use liquid cooling immersion, by cooling chips for better efficiency. Additionally, he suggested that with the way technology has emerged, it can be accessible for the Global South, in particular Africa, and Mauritius.

A question was raised by **Ms. Sylvester Cadette from ITU**, on what are some of the impactful project initiatives using AI that have been utilized especially in the education and health services sector.

Intel, Mr. Guy Tamir, pointed out examples from the educational experience offered by universities, that examine the students' capabilities by using AI and create the model of the learning paths based on the students' level.

2nd Group of Speakers



Mr. Mirza Asrar Baig
CEO and Founder
CTM360



Mr. Caroline Mutepefa
Director of Skills for Social Impact, Central
Europe, Middle East, and Africa
Microsoft



Mr. Mathieu Rama
Senior Program Manager
ECOS

Mr. Mirza Asrar Baig, CEO and Founder of CTM360, emphasized the central aspect of cybersecurity and its relevance to all sectors discussed by previous speakers. He noted the fundamental change that still needs to occur at the management level: **viewing security as a business enabler**. This change in approach must include everyone. Mr. Asrar Baig additionally distinguished the different types of security: ICT security, information security and cybersecurity. This differentiation is important to enable effective policy making as the stakes keep increasing and financial damage keeps growing. Another crucial part to improving policy stated was collaboration in all directions and at all levels, in which ITU could help convene power. **This collaboration has the power to mitigate attacks and damage, thus improving cybersecurity for the future.**

Ms. Caroline Mutepfa, Director of Skills for Social Impact, Central Europe, Middle East and Africa at Microsoft, noted the need for more skilled labour - especially regarding ICT technology – and the training provided by employers as an example of exactly what is needed now to bridge the current digital divide. Ms. Mutepfa stated that **skilling and education in technology** are part of the **private sector's role** and must be conducted through collaboration. She highlighted the issue of AI of the lack of technology skills and policies across Africa, which exemplifies the hampering effect this has on digital transformation. The need for **alignment and collaboration between government, private sector and non-profit** are key to achieving common goals regarding **digital transformation**.

Mr. Mathieu Rama, Senior Program Manager at the Environmental Coalition on Standards (ECOS), shared that many ICT products fail prematurely due to non-replaceable or missing spare parts, which lead to growing e-waste (62 million tons in 2022 alone) while critical raw materials are extracted under harmful conditions, for both people and the environment. Frequent replacements also place a financial burden on consumers, especially in lower-income regions. Mr. Rama mentioned that to tackle this, the European Union (EU) has introduced eco-design regulations to improve durability and repairability. While a step forward, these policies often overlook challenges outside the EU, where access to spare parts, repair information and appropriate tools will be limited. **A global right to repair**, better cooperation on extended producer responsibility, and stronger international standards are needed to make repair more accessible worldwide. He pointed out that by prioritizing reuse and durability over recycling, we can reduce waste, lower costs, and **make technology more sustainable and inclusive** for the future.

Floor interventions

The Chair of ITU-D Study Group 2, Dr. Fadel Digham, reminded the audience of the Study Group 2's work in the adoption of cybersecurity, digital scales development, smart services and applications, the environment and e-health. He additionally highlighted the importance of future work on AI. The importance of such multi-stakeholder discussions is key to enabling digital transformation all together.

Globe Telecom, Philippines added to Mr. Rama's intervention, stating that durability is also key. The ability of a device to update and run new programs also needs to be addressed when discussing progress in digital transformation.

Closing Statements

As the TECH TALK 2 on Digital Transformation concluded, Mr. Bocar Ba, Chairman of IAGDI-CRO, highlighted that **digital transformation represents a fundamental shift reshaping industries**,

governance, and human interactions. The discussions emphasized that this transformation must be innovative, inclusive, and secure, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital era.

Several key themes emerged from the dialogue that are key in informing ITU-D Study Group future questions:

- **The Expanding Role of AI:**
AI has the potential to revolutionize digital ecosystems, but its impact depends on adaptability, open standards, and interoperability. The need for modular, scalable, and accessible AI solutions was underscored, ensuring AI serves diverse communities and is not confined to advanced digital infrastructures.
- **Cybersecurity as a Strategic Priority:**
The increasing complexity and frequency of cyber threats demand a shift in perception—cybersecurity must be viewed as a business enabler rather than a regulatory obligation. Stronger collaboration across sectors is essential to mitigating risks, reinforcing security frameworks, and ensuring resilience in an interconnected world.
- **Digital Skills & Workforce Development:**
A significant challenge in realizing digital transformation is the lack of technology skills and workforce readiness. The role of public-private partnerships in bridging the digital divide through education, training, and capacity-building initiatives was a recurring theme.
- **Sustainability & Circular Economy in ICT:**
The environmental impact of ICT products and services is an increasing concern, with short-lived devices and e-waste posing significant challenges. The call for stronger international cooperation on repairability, sustainability standards, and extended product lifecycles was emphasized as a way to reduce waste and make technology more accessible.

As WTDC-25 approaches, the insights from this discussion will help shape ITU-D's agenda and the global digital transformation roadmap. The evolving role of AI, sustainable digital practices, and investment in cybersecurity and skills development must remain at the forefront of these discussions.

In closing, Mr. Ba expressed gratitude to all speakers, panelists, and participants, acknowledging their contributions to an engaging, insightful, and forward-looking discussion. He reiterated that the best way to predict the future is to create it—it is vision, leadership, and action that will determine the success of digital transformation.

With that, the session was formally closed.