Information Session:

Enhanced collaboration and partnership between the UNRC/UNCT and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in the Arab Region

18 February 2021 12:00 – 14:00 hrs (Cairo Local Time)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is organizing an information session on enhanced collaboration and partnership between the United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRC)/UN Country Teams and ITU in the Arab region on the 18th of February 2021 online.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Arab region on unprecedented levels as close to five million confirmed cases and around 85 500 deaths were reported across the region by the 9th of February 2021 according to WHO. Moreover, the economic and social impacts were also devastating as according to UNESCWA the Arab region will lose around $42 Billion of income as well as losing around 1.7 million jobs by the end of 2020. It is important to highlight that these numbers impact the most vulnerable segments of societies and evidently the least connected.

The Arab region was fortunate in the past few years to take long strides in deploying information and communication technologies enabling around 91% of the population to be covered by a 3G or higher broadband network and around 100.6% of the population to have a mobile subscription by 2019. However, inspite of these achievements in ICT infrastructure there still remains around half of the population unconnected to the internet (largely due to social and economic factors). This number increases when looking at the situation with Least Developing Countries or even marginalized segments of society across the region. More significantly, it is quite clear that countries who are more connected have reaped great benefits across all sectors of the digital economy, and vice-versa. In addition, countries who were more connected, evidently, were better prepared and were able to efficiently manage the COVID-19 pandemic by handling misinformation, tracking the virus, providing insights to policy makers and sustaining critical sectors such as education.

In recognition of the critical role digital technology and connectivity play in accelerating the achievement of sustainable development and COVID response and recovery, the Secretary-General issued the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation in July 2020 with the aim to facilitate the development of partnerships and cooperation around the identified 8 pillars of the Roadmap.

This information session aims to 1) provide the UNRCs with an overview of ITU's work and activities and 2) discuss with the UNRCs how and where ITU's support and engagement could be strengthened to implement the Roadmap and accelerate the achievement of SDGs.

This online engagement session will be interactive, beginning with the presentation of ITU activities in the region, moving on to discussions with UNRCs on potential areas of support and engagement.

Provisional Agenda	
12:00 – 12:15	**Session Moderator:** Mr. Adel Darwish, *Regional Director, ITU Arab Regional Office* **Welcoming Remarks** ▪ Mr. Adel Darwish, *Regional Director, ITU Arab Regional Office* ▪ Ms. Laila Baker, *Regional Director, UNDCO Arab States* ▪ Mr. Munyaradzi Chenje, *Regional Director, UNDCO Africa Region*
12:15 – 13:00	**Introduction of ITU and ITU Regional Office for the Arab Region** • Who/What is ITU • Sectors of the ITU and their priorities and key highlight work • Overview of ITU activities in the Arab Region • Q&A
13:00 - 13:50	**Discussions on Collaboration with UN Agencies and the engagement of UNCTs** Moderator: Mr. Karim Abdelghani, *Programme Coordinator, ITU Arab Regional Office* • Showcasing current collaboration with UN Agencies and discussing possible coordination or synergies with UNCTs
13:50 - 14:00	**Concluding Remarks** • Mr. Adel Darwish, *Regional Director, ITU Arab Regional Office*

Additional Information

For more information, visit the event page at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Pages/Events/2021/UNRC/mandate.aspx

Who should attend?

This online meeting is by invitation only. Invitees are welcome to extend the invitation to UNRCO.

How to Participate

Registered participants will receive instructions on how to participate via the ITU Restricted Events portal. To register please visit the webpage of the event:
https://www.itu.int/net4/CRM/xreg/web/Login.aspx?src=Registration&Event=C-00009346

The entry point for the virtual meeting room will be on the Restricted Events Portal.

Event Coordinator

Contact **Mr. Karim Abdelghani**, *Program Coordinator, ITU Arab Regional Office* (karim.abdelghani@itu.int) & **Ms Myriam Naguib**, *Senior Administrative Assistant, ITU Arab Regional Office* (myriam.nabih-naguib@itu.int)

We look forward to you joining us for this online meeting.