



# ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific

*Digital transformation and innovation for a sustainable and equitable digital future:*

*Supporting the SDGs*

**13-15 September 2023**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

**Organized by: International Telecommunication Union**

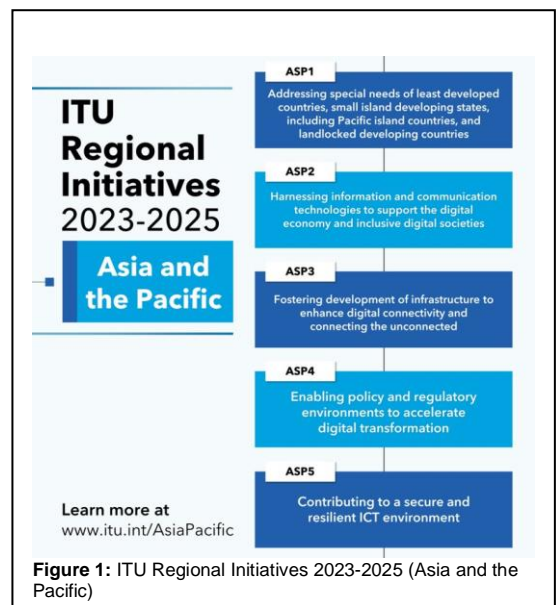
## MEETING REPORT

### 1.0 Introduction

The ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific (RDF-ASP) was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) from 13-15 September 2023 at the W Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. The Forum was co-hosted by the ITU and the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT).

The RDF-ASP reported on the outcomes of the major ITU conferences held since 2022 (Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) and the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22)). It also reported on the implementation status of the outcomes of WTDC-22 in the Asia and the Pacific region with emphasis on the five Regional Initiatives (RI) for Asia and the Pacific (Figure 1) approved by the WTDC-22.

RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023 served as a platform for strategic discussions, information exchange, matchmaking and partnership development, and announcement of financial and in-kind commitments and pledges. In addition to Asia and the Pacific RI implementation, it also highlighted key initiatives and activities such as matchmaking of partner pledges and needs of Member States under the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition framework, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development, GovStack, Smart Villages and Smart Islands (SVSI), Digital Transformation Centres (DTC), Area Office and Innovation Centre in New Delhi, Connect2Recover, Critical Technologies and Cybersecurity, as well as regional contributions to the implementation of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines and United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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The **Partner2Connect Digital Coalition**, which has so far attracted over 770 pledges valued at over US\$ 31.6 billion globally, was a key focus of the RDF-ASP. 113 pledges were received for Asia and the Pacific region<sup>1</sup> with estimated value of over US\$ 2.1 billion from 52 entities. RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023 focused on facilitating the matchmaking between needs of Member States in the Asia and the Pacific region and the pledges from partners. A regional call for contributions was made in preparation for the Forum.

Sponsors of the side and social events of the RDF-ASP included Amazon Web Services, Huawei Technologies, Senko Advanced Components and Welchman Keen.

## 2.0 Contributions and documentation

ITU received a total of 11 contributions for RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023.

### List of Contributions

No	Title	Organisation	Country	Relevant Regional Initiative
1	<a href="#">e-Governance and Citizen Services</a>	Government Technology, Bhutan	Bhutan	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
2	<a href="#">Enabling Sustainable Broadcast and Media Sector in ASP and beyond</a>	Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Malaysia	Asia and the Pacific	1 & 2
3	<a href="#">Samoa's Digital Transformation journey to drive progress and enhance the well-being of all Samoans</a>	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)	Samoa	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
4	<a href="#">Implementation of the UN Early Warnings for All Initiative</a>	World Meteorological Organization	United Nations	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
5	<a href="#">Recommendations from ITU Councilor</a>	Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)	The Philippines	2 & 4
6	<a href="#">Enhancing digital economy ecosystems and AI in Thailand</a>	Digital Economy Promotion Agency	Thailand	2, 3, 4 & 5
7	<a href="#">Child online protection and cybersecurity</a>	GovTech Agency	Bhutan	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
8	<a href="#">Connecting 1 billion underserved people in Asia Pacific with affordable and accessible connectivity in the next 5 years</a>	Kacific Broadband Satellites Ltd	Asia and the Pacific	12 & 3
9	<a href="#">Advancing Digital Inclusion and Innovation: Philippines' Commitment to ICT Empowerment</a>	Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)	The Philippines	2,4 & 5
10	<a href="#">ICT Innovation and Entrepreneurship Engagement with ITU Innovation Centre in the Asia Pacific Region</a>	Centre for the Development of Telematics (C-DOT)	India	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
11	<a href="#">Promoting the construction of Internet interconnection Infrastructure, boosting the equality of digital connectivity</a>	China Academy of Information and Communications Technology	China	3

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/partner2connect/pledges/explore-pledges/> (as at 11 Sep 2023)



All documentation of RDF-ASP is available on the [RDF Asia and the Pacific website](#) along with the presentations, video materials and photographs.

### 3.0 Participation at RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023

A total of 232 participants (158 face-to-face, 74 virtual participants) from Member States, Sector Members, United Nations (UN) agencies, International Organizations and other invitees joined the Forum.

### 4.0 Opening ceremony and Ministerial Roundtable



Figure 2: Group photo of RDF-ASP 2023



Figure 3: RDF-ASP opening ceremony



The opening ceremony of RDF-ASP 2023 was moderated by Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ITU RO-ASP), who welcomed all the participants to the ITU Regional Development Forum, provided an overview of the programme and invited the distinguished speakers to deliver their opening remarks.

The opening session was addressed by:

- Professor (Clinical) Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, Chairman, National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC)
- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU
- Mr Masanori Kondo, Secretary-General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT)
- Dr P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, Telecom Regulatory Authority India (TRAI) (Virtual)

**Professor (Clinical) Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, Chairman, NBTC** welcomed the participants to the Royal Kingdom of Thailand and thanked ITU for the invitation. He mentioned that the Regional Development Forum provides a very good platform for dialogue amongst stakeholders on telecom development and provides an opportunity to share priorities and build partnerships. The NBTC Chairman shared Thailand’s commitment to support the dynamic telecom sector and emphasized on the importance of the enabling environment. He also informed about the NBTC’s efforts relating to 5G and spectrum needs, universal service project in rural and remote areas, providing Wi-Fi for schools, hospitals and remote areas, sandbox for testing new technologies with academia, and supporting tele-health (together with Ministry of Health).

**Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU** in his opening speech welcomed all the participants and thanked NBTC for hosting the RDF as well as the ITU RO-ASP.

Sharing recent ITU statistics, the BDT Director emphasized that while 5.4 billion people are online, there is a need to bring the remaining 2.6 billion online. While acknowledging the diversity of the Asia and Pacific region in terms of geography and economy, he noted that the region is one of the fastest growing economies, where 97% of all people who want to connect can do so.

The BDT Director highlighted that the region is high vulnerability to natural disasters and also expressed his sympathy with Libya and Morocco which are both facing disaster now. In this light, he recalled the UN Secretary General’s Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) initiative that aims to ensure that everyone has access to early warning systems by 2023 to help save lives before a disaster strikes.

He mentioned that the RDF would share the outcomes of WTDC-22, which adopted five global priorities (meaningful connectivity, sustainable digital transformation, enabling environment, international cooperation and resource mobilization, cybersecurity) and five regional initiatives for the Asia and the Pacific.

Recognizing the catalytic role that Parterner2Connect Digital Coalition plays, the BDT Director emphasized the **importance** of this matchmaking platform in accelerating progress towards SDGs. He informed the audience that since its launch in Kigali during WTDC-22, 770 pledges with a value of over US\$ 31.6 billion have been made to date. He highlighted that of these, 192 pledges and contributions worth US\$ 3 billion made by 106 entities are targeted for implementation in the Asia and the Pacific region.

He highlighted the implementation of projects in the region, including emergency telecoms, cybersecurity, skill development and connectivity, as well as the launch of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance, among others, and new flagship Network of Acceleration Centres, with 4 from the Asia and Pacific Region.



He thanked partners including the Government of Australia, the Government of Japan, the Government of Thailand and NBTC, the People’s Republic of China, the Government of India and many industry players, UN agencies and development banks for their support and contribution to ITU.

He also expressed his thanks to Huawei Technologies, Amazon Web Services, Senko Advanced Components and Welchman Keen for their support to the RDF-ASP. While looking forward to reconvening in Bangkok again for WTDC in 2025, he called for leveraging on partnerships to bridge digital divide, bridge skills divide and accelerate digital transformation.

**Mr Masanori Kondo, Secretary General, APT** in his remarks expressed his gratitude to the ITU for inviting APT to this important Forum. He recalled that WTDC-22 set the stage for transformative changes in the region, which has great potential to reshape technological landscape, enhance digital inclusion, and bring about progress in the quest for sustainable development. He also recalled the emphasis on the importance of various topics from results-based management to innovative initiatives including the Area Office and Innovation Center in New Delhi. The APT Secretary General also shared that in spirit of collaboration, APT Symposium on Inclusive Connectivity was organized in collaboration with this RDF. He called for RDF participants to take the opportunity to share vibrant ideas and forge partnerships to move towards shared goals together.

**Dr P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI** shared Digital India’s vision that mirrors the SDGs. He shared the challenge of managing disparity in India and the role played by digital technology in making socio-economic progress, especially in bringing the benefits to the citizens at the bottom of pyramid. In particular, he highlighted the development in connectivity (including 5G) and digital initiatives across various sectors such as governance (National ID, Digital Public Infrastructure, direct benefit transfer), finance (UPI), health (COWIN, Ayushman Bharat, vaccine management), education (Right to Education Act), agriculture (info bazaar), and commerce (open network). Highlighting the importance that recent G20 Meeting has made on bridging the gender gap, he also shared programmes that focus on enhancing female participants and empowering women. The TRAI Chairman emphasized on the important role that digital technology plays in attaining SDGs at faster rate and thanked multilateral organizations such as ITU, FAO, WHO that have supported the progress.

#### 4.1 Appointment of Chair of the ITU RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023

The Regional Director of ITU RO-ASP announced the appointment of Mr Notachard Chintakanond, Executive Director, NBTC to chair the RDF-ASP 2023. The appointment was acknowledged by the participants with a round of applause.

The RDF Chair delivered his remarks and thanked the participants for providing the opportunity. He also conveyed the commitment of NBTC to support ITU and its initiatives aimed at achieving constructive outcomes and collective goals.

#### 4.2 Ministerial Roundtable

The Ministerial Roundtable was moderated by Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU. He started by congratulating the Chair on his appointment. The BDT Director emphasized the five WTDC-22 priorities and the need to leave no one behind in the digital transformation journey. The BDT Director invited the high-level participants on the roundtable to share their thoughts in the progress they were making in their respective country towards digital transformation.



H.E. Ms Jocelle Batapa-Sigue, Undersecretary, ICT Industry Development, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the Philippines shared Philippines' initiatives in growing into a digital nation. Some of the key focus areas highlighted include facilitating meaningful connectivity (e.g. connect the remaining 20% islands not connected, broadband project to focus on geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA) to build a strong and robust ecosystem, free Wi-Fi programme to schools and hospitals), accelerating digital transformation (e.g. launch of super app for digital government), promoting enabling environment (e.g. policy incubator for innovation, digital innovation for women advancement, scaling up of Generation Connect Philippines), implementing Smart Village and Smart Islands (SVSI) in Sacol Islands, cybersecurity (e.g. National Cybersecurity Plan, Child Online Protection), and emergency telecommunication team capacity building. She also mentioned that the Philippines is keen to continue collaboration with ITU in areas including digital inclusion, SVSI, Digital Transformation Centres, COP. In conclusion, H.E. Ms Batapa-Sigue thanked Thailand for hosting the RDF and emphasized on the 7Cs (*Collaboration, digital Competence, Coherence of policy, Citizen-centric approach, international Cooperation, Continuity, and Champions* for digital transformation).

The BDT Director also recalled the major steps taken on disaster risk reduction in Philippines and applauded the efforts.

The BDT Director shared Maldives' concerns on the rising sea levels and impacts of climate change, and invited the Maldives to share their priorities on the digital agenda.



Figure 4: Ministerial Roundtable



**H.E. Mr Mohamed. Shareef, Minister of State, Ministry for Environment Climate Change and Technology, Maldives (virtual)** thanked ITU for inviting the Maldives to the RDF-ASP 2023. On climate change, he mentioned that for the Maldives, which is a large ocean nation, the concerns are a matter of life and death. He informed that as climate change is a reality of today, there is a need to develop strategies for digital development accordingly. He further informed that the technology mandate was brought into the Maldives' Ministry of Environment by institutional integration. H.E. Mr Shareef also shared the progress on connectivity (50% 5G penetration, 100% 4G, 86% population using the Internet, new submarine cables), enabling environment (licensing of SpaceX to bring LEO services), launch of payment gateway, progress on digital ID (60% adult population) and some of the challenges including need to reduce price and improve quality of the Internet and enhancing financial inclusion. H.E. Mr Shareef expressed that the Maldives is keen to continue collaboration with ITU in areas including cybersecurity and protection of privacy. In conclusion, H.E. Mr Shareef emphasized on equity and inclusivity, and the need for reducing overlapping in UN system programmes. He expressed that ITU had a pivotal role and wanted to see ITU expertise being leveraged by UN system.

The BDT Director congratulated H.E. Mr. Shareef on the progress.

**H.E. Mr Timothy Masiu, Minister, Ministry for Communications and Information Technology, Papua New Guinea (PNG)** in his statement thanked the hosts ITU and NBTC. He emphasized on the importance of the RDF and its relevance to the theme which is aligned with the APT Strategic Plan and the SDGs. He emphasized that Papua New Guinea, like other Pacific Island countries, have unique challenges relation to climate change due to natural disasters, and partnerships are critical for their digital development. H.E. Mr Masiu emphasized the important role that government needs to play to realize the digital future and shared Papua New Guinea's progress in various policies, legislations and institutional framework that have been put in place in last three years. He also expressed the financial commitments that the government has put in its mid-term plan to accelerate digital transformation. As the Chair of the Pacific ICT Ministerial Dialogue 2023 on "Smart Pacific, One Voice – Creating a Digital Future together for the Pacific" held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 28 August 2023, he shared the outcomes of the declaration, "The Lagatoi Declaration", which focuses on the six priority areas of digital transformation, digital innovation and entrepreneurship, digital infrastructure, digital security and trust, digital capacity building and skills development, and regional cooperation and representation. He expressed hope that the key outcomes will result in strong voice of the Pacific in APT and ITU.

In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Timothy Masiu expressed PNG's appreciation to ITU, interest in working with ITU and other agencies going forward and emphasized the importance attached to the establishment of ITU sub-regional office in the Pacific.

The BDT Director thanked H.E. Mr Masiu and invited H.E. Mr Sok to deliver his statement.

**H.E. Mr Puthyuth Sok, Secretary of State, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Kingdom of Cambodia** thanked ITU for inviting Cambodia to RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023 and for selecting Cambodia as a pilot country for Partner2Connect. Noting its importance, he hoped that a national Partner2Connect Roundtable for Cambodia could be organized soon. H.E. Mr Sok informed that the newly formed government has introduced a new pentagonal strategy with digital transformation being added as a pillar. He also introduced digital economy and society policy framework (2021-2035) that has adopted whole-of-government approach and the government has appointed a council, which is supported by three committees. He shared Cambodia's



vision to be a high-income country by 2050 and digital transformation is perceived as a key enabler to connect internationally and grow domestically. H.E. Mr Sok emphasized on the importance of ITU as an international platform to look at how it is being progressed across various countries, and its various pros and cons. In particular, he expressed interest in school connectivity and digital village projects and emphasized on the need for sharing best practices on digital transformation and thanked APT and ITU.

The BDT Director expressed ITU’s continued commitment to support Members in meeting the SDGs and work together for impact (BDT4Impact). He thanked all panellists and summarized the key take aways as follows:

- Digitalization and digital transformation should be at the centre of all activities we undertake. To move forward, there is a need to move together, and share experiences and cases.
- Partnership at sub-regional, regional, and global level is critical. It is important for RDFs to provide platform at regional levels and at national levels where needed.
- Cross-sectoral regulatory dialogue is very important at national level to accelerate digital transformation.
- ITU programmes such as GIGA, capacity building (Digital Transformation Centres (DTC), entrepreneurship, Academy Training Centres (ATCs)), Smart Villages and Smart Islands have been established to support the Members in their digital transformation journey. ITU will also be publishing the ICT Development Index (IDI) for countries to monitor and benchmark their progress.

## 5.0 Summary of RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023 sessions

A brief overview of sessions and summary of discussions of the sessions as follows:

### 5.1 Session 1: Connected the unconnected – ICTs to deliver SDGs as ONE UN

13 September 2023, 10:45-11:45
Moderator: Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. David McLachlan-Karr, UNDCO, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific</li> <li>• Ms. Maria Perdomo, Regional Coordinator for Asia, UNCDF</li> <li>• Mr. Ben Churchill, Director, WMO Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (Virtual)</li> <li>• Mr. Myo-Zin Nyunt, Deputy Regional Director and Officer-in-Charge UNICEF Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific</li> <li>• Ms Gita Sabharwal, UN Resident Coordinator’s in Thailand</li> </ul>

The session focused on exploring the synergies amongst UN agencies in harnessing ICTs to accelerate the delivery of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The key highlights of the session were:

Recalling the suggestions from H.E. Minister of the Maldives during the Ministerial Roundtable that called for collaboration amongst UN agencies to deliver as one, the moderator invited panellists to share their thoughts on how the UN system is collaborating and working to deliver as One UN.





**Mr David McLachlan-Karr, Regional Director of the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) for Asia-Pacific** highlighted the importance of the innovation of UN reforms to accelerate the SDGs and to support more integrated policy approaches. He highlighted the challenges with slow progress on SDGs and pointed out that although there is an improvement in the availability of SDG data, gaps still exist. In addition, significant evidence is still needed, especially for countries in the least developed context in the Asia and the Pacific region. He also introduced the UN resident coordinator system and UN 2.0, the six pathways and cited several concrete country examples where the UN working together as a system to deliver on the digital divide, including Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Pacific Islands. He also thanked ITU for the invitation and called for its leadership in this area.

**Ms Gita Sabharwal, the UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand (UNCT)** shared how UNCT Thailand is working to capitalize on digital transformation. She highlighted the need to leverage digital technology to accelerate progress for achieving the SDGs. Ms. Sabharwal stressed that digital transformation is at the core of the UN Cooperation Framework in Thailand with focus on a low-carbon economy, human capital development, and addressing inequalities, particularly among vulnerable populations like youth, women, and migrants. She commended on ITU's leadership in harnessing technology to deliver pragmatic digital solutions and mentioned successful examples of UN system collaboration in Thailand, including Girls in ICT Day, Boys in ICT, Smart Farming, Digital Learning, and the Net Pracharat project. These initiatives share the goal of bridging the digital divide and driving the country's digital economy forward.

**Ms Maria Perdomo, Regional Coordinator for Asia at United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF),** underlined the critical financing challenges facing the Asia and the Pacific region in achieving digital transformation. With 2.6 billion people still offline, she stressed the need to mobilize finance beyond official development assistance (ODA) and government revenues. She introduced UNCDF's mandate of bridging development and finance and shared their various financial instruments and advisory services. Ms Perdomo emphasized UNCDF's flagship area of promoting inclusive digital economies through collaborations with UN agencies and the private sector in initiatives like the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP) and EU STREIT in Papua New Guinea. She also highlighted UNCDF's ongoing discussion and partnership with ITU to set up capital investment financing facilities aimed at accelerating digital innovation and connectivity across the region. Her speech underlined the vital role of innovative financing in addressing digital transformation challenges while ensuring inclusivity.

**Mr Ben Churchill, Director, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific,** in his statement mentioned the challenge of the increasing impact of extreme weather and climate for sustainable development in the Asia and the Pacific region. He elaborated on the initiative 'Early Warnings for All' initiated by the UN Secretary General and highlighted ITU's contribution to this global effort. He noted that an important issue ahead is how to best deliver the warnings to the individuals and expressed the need to focus on more robust, resilient, and fit for purpose ICT infrastructure. Furthermore, he briefly introduced some WMO initiatives that strongly depend on ICT and connections such as the Global Greenhouse Gas Watch (GGGW), the WMO Information System and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI).

**Dr Myo-Zin Nyunt, Deputy Regional Director and Officer-in-Charge, UNICEF Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific** summarized the importance of addressing digital divide, digital inclusion, and digital equality to promote connections. He expressed the need for a framework on child-centred digital equality, focusing on access, digital literacy, online safety, and digital transformation. Furthermore, he suggested to have an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach to address global challenges at the local level. Two examples were given



to illustrate how the UN agencies are working together to achieve SDGs: the Learning Passport solution and the Digital Health initiative.

Ms Okuda thanked the panelists for sharing their thoughts and experiences.

## 5.2 Session 2: Outcomes of ITU World Conferences and Where we are (Report on the implementation of Regional Initiatives)

13 September 2023, 13:45-14:15
Ms Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
<b>Outcomes of ITU World Conferences and Report on the implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific</b>

During the session, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

- shared the key outcomes of the PP-22 and WTDC-22 including election results, ITU Strategic Plan (2024-27), ITU-D priorities including ITU-D Study Questions and Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives (2022-25).
- shared the Asia and the Pacific region statistics in various areas including connectivity gap, ICT gender gap, and cybersecurity readiness.
- reported on the implementation status of the Asia and the Pacific region with emphasis on the five Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific.
- highlighted some of important outcomes achieved across initiatives and programmes in areas of emergency telecommunications, Smart Villages and Smart Islands, GovStack, Girls in ICT Day including the impact on beneficiary and their catalytic nature to attract partnerships.
- acknowledged the partners who support the ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional initiatives by funding through projects and in-kind contributions.
- informed the audience of the launch of ITU Area Office and Innovation Center in New Delhi and the planned activities.

A participant from the Philippines enquired about the metrics for monitoring and evaluation as the projects are diverse. ITU informed that RDF is one way to report back. Further, there are agreed upon Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at TDAG against which the ITU Secretariat will be reporting back.



### 5.3 Session 3: P2C- Let's talk about the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition Roundtable

13 September 2023, 14:15-15:15

Moderator: Mr. Sameer Sharma, Head, Special Initiatives, ITU

- H.E. Mr Puthyvuth Sok, Secretary of State, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Kingdom of Cambodia
- Mr Ahmed Riad Ismail, Senior Director, Strategy and Industry Development, Huawei
- Mr Alasdair Grant, Head of Public Policy, AUNZSEA, Amazon Project Kuiper, Amazon
- Mr Steve Saerang, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications, Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison (IOH)

The session introduced the Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition, set the stage for the action-oriented exchange amongst the participants throughout the Regional Development Forum. Aside from knowing who can join the P2C Digital Coalition and make a pledge, the type of pledges, and how members can benefit from submitting such a pledge, participants have learnt about all the pledges that have been submitted so far both globally and those related to the Asia and the Pacific region. It also encouraged more members to pledge and mobilize the resources needed to connect those who are still offline.

The key highlights of the session were:

- **Digital Connectivity for Development:** There is an immediate and critical need to extend meaningful connectivity to the most challenging and underserved communities to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs.
- **Digital Skills Empowerment:** Bridging the skills gap is of paramount importance. Empowering individuals with advanced digital skills are a pivotal step towards encouraging the widespread adoption and effective utilization of digital technologies.
- **Building a Digital Ecosystem:** It is imperative to expedite and provide incentives for investments that foster the development of a robust digital ecosystem and drive innovation. This will facilitate value creation and extend digital access to even the most remote and marginalized communities.
- **Turning Pledges into Commitments:** There is a need to translate pledges and contributions into tangible, on-the-ground commitments through matchmaking. This ensures that Member States receive the necessary support. The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition stands out as a key multi-stakeholder alliance dedicated to delivering positive impacts to people's lives.
- **Promoting Partnerships:** Fostering partnerships is critical for pooling resources, including investments and expertise. To connect the remaining 2.6 billion unconnected individuals worldwide, partners are strongly encouraged to announce new pledges and make firm commitments to promote meaningful connectivity and drive global digital transformation.



## 5.4 Session 4: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development

13 September 2023, 15:30-16:00
Moderator: Mr Sabyasachi Majumdar, C-DOT
<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Mohamed Ba, Senior Coordinator, Digital Innovation Ecosystem, ITU (Virtual)</li> <li>• Ms Shaina Hasan, ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre (Virtual)</li> <li>• Mr Sanjeev Sharma, Senior Advisor ITU/OSD to State Minister, Department of Telecommunications, India</li> <li>• Mr Austin Menyasz, SAP</li> <li>• Prof. S. K. Mishra, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (Virtual)</li> </ul>

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- Countries face challenges in mainstreaming innovation, as governance is not catching up with the pace of technological innovation and often work is undertaken in a siloed manner. Against this background, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development (Alliance) was launched by ITU. The vision, mission, objectives, and opportunities provided by the Alliance as well as its three main vehicles, the Digital Transformation lab, Network of Acceleration Centers, and Digital Innovation Board were also shared. The Alliance will support countries in accelerating their digital transformation journey and called for enhanced partnership.
- ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre in Delhi overview, the key activities being undertaken there, and the future activities and projects aimed towards the operationalization of the Area Office and Innovation Centre (AOIC) were shared. In particular, information on an Innovation Centre event that is being organized along with India Mobile Congress (IMC) that will benefit from the frameworks of the newly launched ITU Global Innovation Center and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development was shared.
- Furthermore, the session highlighted the commitment from the Government of India towards the operationalization and success of the Area Office and Innovation Centre, including collaboration with partners such as SAP, IIT Kanpur as well as Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
- The panel shared the Indian case of CAP compliant Disaster Early Warning Platform operationalization that has provided multi-media, multi-hazard, multi-lingual disaster alerts to the 1.4 billion Indians and is aligned with United Nation’s Early Warnings for All initiative.
- The innovation ecosystem and the achievements in India in terms of building start-up ecosystem, Design Innovation Centres, Innovation Hubs and Research Parks, safe and secure school connectivity, and programmes launched by the Department of Telecommunication of India were shared.
- The importance of having a consolidated vision for the future, need for mapping of the existing policies and stakeholders, identifying enablers and roadblocks, bringing everyone along the journey, and setting reasonable timeline and delivering was emphasized. The core areas of expertise of SAP were



highlighted and their keen interest to work with ITU, the Innovation Alliance as well as the Area Office and Innovation Center to assist in the long-term vision of digitalizing governments was mentioned.

- The experiences of collaboration on digital health technologies and an overview of practical digital health projects being implemented by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) and Indian Institute of technology (IIT) Kanpur was shared.

### 5.5 Session 5: ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives 1

The session focused on ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiative 1: Addressing the special telecommunication/ICT requirements of least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries.

14 September 2023, 09:00-10:20
Moderator: Mr Jigme Wangdi, Director, Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA), Bhutan
<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Daniel Mc Farlane, Thammasat University</li> <li>• Ms Renga Teannaki, Senior ICT Policy Analyst, Digital Transformation Office, MICTTD, Kiribati, “Resilient digital transformation in Kiribati”</li> <li>• Mr Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director, Secretariat, International Think Tank for LLDCs (Virtual)</li> <li>• Mr Semisi Panuve, Chief Executive Officer, Tonga Cable Ltd and Executive Member of Pacific Islands Telecommunication Association (PITA)</li> <li>• Mr Ramu Pandey, Nepal GC-ASP youth representative (Virtual)</li> </ul>

The session shared digital development experiences, challenges, and priorities for LDCs, SIDSs and LLDCs in Asia and the Pacific region highlighted and highlighted the importance of partnerships in meeting the expected results of this regional initiative.

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- There is a need to focus on sustainability of programmes as we move towards Smart Villages and Smart Islands considering the experiences from telecentres and community networks. ITU and the Internet Society (ISOC) are currently finalizing a study “From Telecentres, Community Networks To Sustainable Smart Villages and Smart Islands – Case Studies” that captures these experiences and also includes ten case studies from Asia and the Pacific. The study identified three success factors including meaningful connectivity, sustainable financial and organisations models, and reliable connectivity infrastructure. Lack of ownership has been a challenge experienced by Vanuatu in telecentre sustainability. However, experiences in SVSI deployment show greater community ownership, which is generating demand for new services and thereby enhancing uptake of digital services by the communities.
- The experience on the digital transformation journey undertaken by Kiribati including establishment of Digital Transformation Office (DTO), improvement in connectivity (submarine cable, universal access



policies etc.), legislations (Digital Government At), development of Digital Transformation Strategy, cybersecurity, SVSI and GICT Day (digital inclusion) was shared. The need to take the benefits of digital transformation to rural and remote islands in a bid to leave no one behind was emphasized.

- The importance of having an ICT network in SIDS that supports the industry in the Pacific in monitoring international trends, building human capacity, staying competitive internationally, enhancing and supporting connectivity, providing access to vendors and applications relating to digital services, and supporting important areas of emergency telecommunication and climate change was highlighted.
- The importance of collaboration with international organizations such as GSMA, APT and ITU was also emphasized.
- Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) have several common challenges that deter their capacity to grow when compared with those that have access to sea, such as it increases remoteness from major markets, results in poor infrastructure development, and in some countries, smaller markets.
- Specifically in ICT, there are three global challenges for connectivity in the Decade of Action; closing the coverage gap, closing the usage gap, and achieving meaningful connectivity for all. LLDCs are also building their national digital plans. For example, the Mongolian government has set out a 5-year plan for building digital nation.
- To facilitate digital transformation in LLDC, the panel suggested to: a) provide targeted support for LLDCs for policy update and development, financing new technology and infrastructure, and innovation, b) increase investment and funding to the ICT soft and hard infrastructure development, c) develop a regional approach to address the connectivity challenges, and d) create enabling environment for the supported development of ICT.
- the importance to support innovation and inclusivity in LDCs, SIDSs and LLDCs, and to empower the youth to lead the way to realize sustainable digital transformation was highlighted.

During the session, the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) pledged its commitment to support the Pacific Girls for ICT Day programme, promote green energy and e-waste, regularly organize testing of emergency communications equipment, support capacity building in the Pacific, and enhance cybersecurity cooperation in the Pacific.

## 5.6 Presentation on UNCDF-ITU Investment Facility proposal

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) presented to set-up an investment facility with ITU for the development of inclusive digital economy in Asia and the Pacific, which has the ambition to mobilize US\$ 25-40 million as a pledge.

## 5.7 Session 6: ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives 2

The session focused on ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiative 2: Harnessing information and communication technologies to support the digital economy and inclusive digital societies.

14 September 2023, 10:45-12:15
Moderator: H.E. Jocelle Batapa-Sigue, Undersecretary, ICT Industry Development, DICT, The Philippines
Speakers:



- Ms Vannapha Phammathansy, Deputy Director General, Digital Government Center, Ministry of Technology and Communications
- Mr Nothachard Chintakanond, Executive Director, International Affairs, NBTC, Thailand
- Ms Aisha Humera Moriani, Additional Secretary, MoITT, Pakistan (Virtual)
- Dr Eva Galvez Nogales, Agribusiness and Value Chains Officer, (FAO)
- Mr Chen Hui, Industry and Planning Institute of China Academy of ICT CAICT

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- The importance of digital transformation across sectors (trading, agriculture, education, and transportation) and achieving digital inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly, and the disabled was emphasized as it is important to leave no one behind in this journey.
- Efforts by Thailand to bridge the digital divide were highlighted, including programs like Girls in ICT Day and Boys in ICT Day, digital skills development, and initiatives to combat online scams.
- Smart Village Pakistan programme that is bringing significant impact to citizens in Gokina village in priority areas like e-education, digital health services, and digital skills development need to be scaled up. Pakistan’s efforts to create a secure and resilient ICT environment were also shared.
- Citizen centricity was recognized as an important approach to understand the concerns of communities to deliver appropriate digital services to achieve digital transformation.
- Policy-making efforts were also recognized as crucial in achieving digital inclusion while examples from China (Law on Building a Barrier-free Environment) and Thailand (Digital Economy and Society Development Plan) were shared.
- China's contribution towards the digital inclusivity of elderly and disabled communities was highlighted. It was noted that the digital divide has taken a new phase as the urban-rural digital divide which is currently being addressed with the help of operators. The progress made by the Ministry of Industry and Information technology (MIIT) in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance of China since 2015 was highlighted including connecting 130,000 administrative villages with optical fiber and installing 28,000 4G and 5G BTC in rural areas to facilitate needed infrastructure.
- Challenges in implementing e-governance, including resource limitations, technical expertise shortages, and the need for standardized frameworks, were acknowledged. Various government digital services and applications were introduced in Laos, addressing areas like e-commerce, e-health, and digital ID, alongside the identification of barriers and required skills for successful implementation of digital government systems. The importance of approach such as GovStack was also highlighted.
- EU-STREIT PNG Program serves as an example to support policy frameworks, digital services, and connectivity in rural and remote areas of Papua New Guinea. ITU and FAO collaboration in the Program led to initiatives like e-agriculture strategies, network assessments, and tailored digital services. Lessons learned from the Program stress the need for coordinated, long-term efforts, tailored strategies, skill-building, and comprehensive exit plans for successful digital inclusion in agri-food systems. The progress and challenges, such as connecting the unconnected communities, were also shared.



Following the panel discussions, a contribution paper was delivered, and a number of pledges were made from the floor. These include:

- C-DOT presented its contribution on [ICT Innovation and Entrepreneurship Engagement with ITU Innovation Centre in the Asia Pacific Region](#) and delivered a pledge to offer two workshops per year at ITU Area Office and Innovation Center (New Delhi) benefitting for around 100 participants from the region.
- Intelsat reiterated their commitment pledged to provide satellite-based internet access solutions to connect 100 schools in rural and remote areas by 2025.
- The Government of India shared their commitment to connect the unconnected through the BharatNet Project so that everyone, especially those in rural India, can access online services.

## 5.8 Session 7: Regional Regulatory Roundtable

14 September 2023, 13:45-14:45
Moderator: Ms. Jeanette Whyte, <i>Head of Public Policy, APAC, GSMA</i>
<p>Speakers:</p> <p><b>Presentation on “5G enablers”:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Yong Yoon, Chulalongkorn University</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion and roundtable on 5G Enablers</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor (Clinical) Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, Chairman, Office of The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC)</li> <li>• Ms Maria Victoria C. Castro, Director, Head of National ICT Planning, Policy and Standards Bureau (NIPPSB), Philippines</li> <li>• Mr Chuluunbat Tsenduren, Head of Information Service and Network Division, Mongolia Communications Regulatory Commission</li> <li>• Mr Sang Yun Lee, Korea Communication Agency (Virtual)</li> </ul>

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- The session provided an overview of the 5G market in Asia and the Pacific. Since the launch of 5G just over four years ago, the mobile market over that time has evolved significantly and by the end of 2030 is envisaged to reach around 1.4 billion 5G connections in Asia Pacific (equivalent to 41% of total mobile connections).
- Insights on ten specific policy “5G Enablers” including infrastructure and network, affordability and costs, consumer and ownership, content and services, spectrum and bandwidth, security and legislation, economic and development indicators, policy and regulation, geographical and environmental factors, and governance and stability that are part of an upcoming ITU study were shared. There are still challenges of significant use cases that would bring in consumers into 5G from business to health. It is important to ensure that 5G was implemented in a way to ensure a secure, safe, and humane future.





- Insights on how countries in the Asia and the Pacific region have rolled out/preparing for 5G rollout was shared by Thailand, Philippines, Mongolia, and Republic of Korea.
- The panellists provided their views on successful enablers of 5G, which included:
  - implementing technology-neutral and simplified licensing procedures,
  - timely approvals and low-cost Rights of Way,
  - effective predictable and transparent spectrum policy to meet future connectivity demand by ensuring access to spectrum under the right conditions,
  - a holistic whole-of-government approach is crucial to ensuring the realisation of the benefits that 5G can offer,
  - enhanced focus on 5G use cases in various areas, including health, education, agriculture, tourism, enterprise applications is critical.

In conclusion, it was noted that diversity of ideas, diversity of 5G maturity is a great opportunity for Asia and the Pacific to be a region for mobile innovation. However, success requires nurturing, and the need to learn from success and mistakes of the past by sharing best practices and 5G use cases – for example, the GSMA recently launched the report “[How 5G is Transforming APAC](#)”, which contains ten case studies highlighting the utility and versatility of 5G technologies.

## 5.9 Session 8: Partner2Connect: New pledge announcement

14 September 2023, 15:00-16:00
Moderator: Mr. Puji Pujiono, Senior UN Coordinator Specialist, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Choo Kah Kin, ZTE (Presentation)</li> <li>• Mr. Philip Victor, Partner and Managing Director, APAC, Welchman Keen (Presentation)</li> <li>• Mr Shaharyar Jawaid, Islamic Development Bank (virtual)</li> </ul>

The session featured implementation of existing pledges and new pledge interests. A summary is as follows:

- The speakers from the Welchman Keen and ZTE Corporation highlighted the pledges that they have made under the P2C Digital Coalition, updated the meeting of the progress made of the commitments and the way forward in terms of follow through and renewal of pledges. IsDB indicated interest in a new pledge that is at the final phase of endorsement by its leadership while mentioning ongoing activities they have been undertaking and being planned with ITU. These include the scope to collaborate in the areas of safe and secure school connectivity, Smart Villages and Smart Islands.



During the session participants also expressed interest and made new pledges, which included the following:

- PT Mukti Mandiri Lestari pledged to triple its contribution in e-waste management in Indonesia and increase collection to 50,000 tonnes of e-waste annually by 2030.
- PT Indosat Tbk committed to provide at least 100,000 citizens among the underserved communities in the Eastern part of Indonesia with free data packages and digital literacy and proficiency training modules by the end of 2024.
- Welchman Keen committed to continue to enhance capacity and capabilities in cybersecurity in developing and least developed nations, and support the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition by investing additional US\$ 480,000 in-kind to continue these efforts in various regions.
- School of Global Studies of Thammasat University to support with its research Community Networks to support studies such as Smart Islands and Smart Villages initiatives.
- Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD) to continue working with ITU towards the subsequent Asian Media Summit in 2024.
- Department of ICT (DICT) Philippines pledged to host the Asia and the Pacific Girls in ICT Day Policy Summit in 2024 and the Representative of Kiribati joined the call and pledged to continue with this important initiative, Girls in ICT Day in Kiribati.

### 5.10 Session 9: ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives 3

The session focused on ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiative 3: Fostering development of infrastructure to enhance digital connectivity and connecting the unconnected.

15 September 2023, 9:00-10:30
<b>Moderator: Ms. Joyce Chen, Senior Advisor for Strategic Engagement, APNIC</b>
<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Mohamed Shareef, Minister of State for Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives</li> <li>• Mr Toru Anzawa, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan (Presentation)</li> <li>• Dr Yong Yoon, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (Report) (Presentation)</li> <li>• Ms Choney Wangmo, ICT Officer, GovTech Agency, Bhutan (Presentation)</li> <li>• Ms Erdene Bunten, Senior Expert of Policy and Planning Department of MDDC, Mongolia (Presentation)</li> <li>• Mr Alifeleti Tuihalemaka, Director, MEIDECC, Tonga (Presentation)</li> </ul>

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- The eight expected results of Asia and Pacific Regional Initiative 3 were highlighted. These have been supported with assistances in areas such as regulatory decision making, direct country assistance, capacity building amongst others. Information on key ITU products to support infrastructure development for meaningful connectivity such as SMS4DC, ITU Broadband maps, LMC toolkit, disaster connectivity map, ICT infrastructure business planning toolkit and many others were also shared.
- Emerging technologies are not only reshaping the industry but also changing the way we live. Noting the increased deployments across various government, it is important to ensure resilience, affordability and inclusivity of this connectivity. The importance of the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative of the UN



Secretary General, the role played by ITU, and commitment of the Maldives was highlighted.

- SDG 17 that focuses on partnerships is important and Partner2Connect is an example of harnessing such partnerships, which will contribute towards achieving the SDGs.
- While committing to continue contributing to ITU Regional Initiatives, MIC (Japan) shared the ongoing support through projects, including Enhancing Resilient ICT Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific that has benefitted countries such as Mongolia, Kiribati, Tonga, Iran, and others. MIC also reiterated their support to Phase 2 of this project along with another new cooperation on pathways to cybersecurity in the Pacific.
- Enhancing cooperation between ITU-T and ITU-D sectors was also emphasized.
- Socio-economic impact of Village Broadband Internet project (Net Pracharat), which aimed to strengthen the broadband network across Thailand, was shared. A study undertaken by ITU highlighted the positive impact it has brought to communities in enhancing careers, income, education, access to public health, agriculture, and online trading. It also shared some of the challenges of sustainability that is being experienced.
- The details of Government Data Center (GDC) operation in Bhutan, institutional set up and its importance in providing affordable services across whole-of-government. Thanked ITU and Government of Japan for its support in undertaking the resilience assessment of GDC were shared. It was informed that the recommendations of this assessment are being taken up as action items for further development of GDC.
- With the consideration of landlocked developing country, Mongolia’s telecommunication development over the years including policy landscape, improved coverage, broadband availability, enhanced affordability, and service provisioning was shared. The challenges relating to coverage of sparse population and nomadic lifestyle was also highlighted. With the growth of ICT application, the focus is on services such as e-governance, e-commerce, and e-education, which is being delivered through the E-Mongolia programme.
- Importance of resilient infrastructure in Tonga was emphasized including the importance of connectivity, its redundancy, cybersecurity, disaster recovery plan, and promoting ICT skills development. There was also a note on importance of collaboration and resource allocation for the success of digital transformation.

The following expressions of interest in pledges and commitments were made during the session:

- China Academy of Information and Communication Technology, P. R. China, made two pledges: one on promoting the construction of Internet interconnection infrastructure, boosting the equality of digital connectivity and second on digital technology to support other sectors of economy to achieve Net Zero Goals.
- Kacific Broadband Satellites Group pledged “Partnership to connect 1 billion underserved people in Asia Pacific with affordable and accessible connectivity in the next 5 years”.
- GSMA pledged to support inclusive connectivity to achieve connectivity for all.

### 5.11 Session 10: ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives 4

The session focused on ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiative 4: Enabling policy and regulatory environments to accelerate digital transformation.

15 September 2023, 10:45-12:15

Moderator: Dr. Joyee S. Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Gender and Development Studies, Department of Development and Sustainability, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)



## Speakers:

- Ms Rury Demsey, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- H.E. Ms Jocelle Batapa Sigue, Undersecretary, ICT Industry Development, The Philippines
- Ms Kasama Kongsmak, Executive Vice President (Strategy and Security Promotion Unit), Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), Thailand (virtual)
- Ms Undral Ganbaatar, Head of Social and Human Sciences Unit, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional office for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste (virtual)
- Dr Hyun Kyong Lee, Research Fellow, KISDI. Center for AI & Social Policy Associate (virtual)

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- The importance of enhancing the development of standards and frameworks for critical technologies in Southeast Asia was highlighted. The economic impact of AI and its potential to positively impact sectors such as health, education and transport as well as its challenges such as gender bias was shared. The challenges and their adverse impacts, such as putting lives at risk, missed opportunities and psychological bias were highlighted. The activities and achievements of the ongoing project “Enhancing the Development of Standards and Frameworks for Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia”, supported by the Government of Australia under the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), were also shared.
- The roadmap for AI in Philippines was shared, which provides a direction on how it will progress trade and commerce. It is also important to balance growth with safety and the need to develop standards, building capacity and partnering with industry. The platforms should be accessible to all for inclusivity. The speaker shared the need for EUREKA mindset which refers to Empowerment through education, Universal access, Responsible AI, Ethical innovations, Knowledge-driven society, and Agile governance. Philippines also shared the adoption of the ITU’s Smart Islands that is being piloted in Sacol Islands as well as their ongoing development of digital government master plan.
- The Thailand National AI Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027 which has five strategies was shared. It was also informed that DEPA is working on action driven roadmap. The speaker highlighted importance of work on capacity development, start-ups and promoting its deployment in various private and public sector areas with focus on Leave No One Behind. The importance of providing infrastructure to build AI labs in Thailand was noted. The speaker highlighted that AI has risk of increasing the digital divide and it is important to build mechanism to overcome discrimination and protect data protection and privacy, as well as with safety concerns (e.g., in traffic).
- UNESCO’s recommendations on ethics of AI that was adopted by Member States including its values, principles as well as the concrete and actionable pathways was shared. They expressed interest in working with ITU in implementing the recommendations and shared the creation of a political leadership space for the governance of AI in Latin America.
- Human-centered AI policy framework in the Republic of Korea was presented including the challenges of human and systematic biases. She emphasized on balance between adopting AI and removing the biases, shared Republic of Korea strategy including development of guidelines, and checklist for ethical use of AI. Development of textbooks for capacity building and website development were also shared. The speaker highlighted the need for thinking about ethics and standards across all sectors. Partnerships also need to be built to approach it in a holistic manner.
- It is important to develop and share use cases and create platforms for information and knowledge



exchange; importance of international organization (ITU and UNESCO).

- There is a need for UN agencies to work on influencing policy makers and adopting a whole-of-government approach in advocating it to avoid siloes.

The following pledges were made during the session:

- C-DOT pledged AI technology demonstration to UN Country Agencies in New Delhi through the ITU Innovation Centre on use of AI in Early Warning for All Initiative, cybersecurity and fake SIM cards, AI in mobile applications including messaging and VC platforms for safe communications, technology webinars to Member States.
- Chulalongkorn University pledged to share expertise and research in areas of policies in ethical use of AI and data science.

## 5.12 Session 11: ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives 5

The session focused on ITU Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiative 5: Enabling policy and regulatory environments to accelerate digital transformation.

15 September 2023, 13:45-14:15
Moderator: Ms Philomena Gnanapragasam, Secretariat-Director, Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development
<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Wanich Sawayo, Director of Hazardous Waste Subdivision, Pollution Control Department, Thailand (virtual)</li> <li>• Mr Ronald van Kleunen, APJC Business Development Manager, Cisco</li> <li>• Ms Meghan Lefeber, Senior Economic and Private Capital Advisor, USAID</li> <li>• Mr Kisso Diall, General Manger, APAC, Bitsight</li> <li>• Mr Chedup Dorji, GovTech Agency, Bhutan</li> <li>• Ms Ciput Purwianti, Assistant to the Deputy Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia (virtual)</li> </ul>

The key highlights of the session were:

- The e-waste situation in Thailand was shared. As mobile phones and electronic devices are on the rise, there is a need to manage the electronic waste responsibly. One of the challenges in real world is that devices go to secondhand dealer and are disassembled in an irresponsible manner that can cause contamination from heavy metals and loss of valuable metals. Another key challenge in e-waste is to coordinate with all stakeholders. A law has been established for the purpose.
- Initiative from industry such as CISCO that has Net Zero approach by 2040, *Bridge to Possible, If it is connected, it is protected, IMPACT* that aligns closely with the work of ITU were shared. The session stressed on the importance of digital skills initiative such as the digital transformation center initiative (DTCI), which has launched by ITU and CISOC and has been growing.
- The importance of digital inclusion and to connect meaningfully was emphasized. It was also shared that USAID’s digital strategy aligns with P2C as it brings all stakeholders together.
- There is a need to focus on getting affordable connectivity to challenging locations, creating trusted



online system, and building citizen and SME's capacity to engage securely online. Examples from Cambodia and Mongolia, as well as the Cyber4Her challenge was shared.

- Building cybersecurity capability is a key priority, especially in developing countries that face challenges such as inadequate financial resources, human skills, and insufficient prioritization to the issue. BitSight emphasized on the need for critical national infrastructure solution that analyzes the key vulnerabilities in the system and help them improve their cybersecurity posture and shared their commitment to the Cyber4Good programme 12 months free access for LDCs to use their product safely.
- The long-term cooperation between Government of Bhutan and ITU to build the country's capability on cybersecurity e.g., CIRT, Cyberdrill and Child Online Protection (COP) was mentioned. The need for a local version of COP to keep children safe and support on development of National Cybersecurity Strategy and COP guidelines was highlighted.
- The close cooperation between Indonesia and the ITU in getting COP guidelines translated into Bhasa (local language) and for providing technical support on development of COP roadmap, which is now undergoing inter-ministerial committee, was highlighted. There is a need for ITU's support in technical areas for the development of the policies required to implement the regulations, as well as for taking it to the ASEAN level in line with ASEAN Declaration.
- The importance of ensuring safety online was discussed in the context of rise of gaming as well as children's increasing exposure to Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) environments. The panelists discussed some of the measures including technical measures, parenting and stakeholder collaboration. The capacity building measures on online safety in India was also shared.
- The panel also discussed the importance to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IOT) in an inclusive manner and its development with user in mind was emphasized. It was also highlighted that ethical and cognitive bias should also be considered.
- The role of media and their capacity building on cybersecurity is important. The role played by organizations such as Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) in promoting trainings with partners such as ITU and governments was discussed.
- The panel emphasized on the need to work together to advance secure, inclusive, and resilient ecosystem to reach the unconnected and progress the SDGs. For the purpose, alignment, awareness, intent, and collaboration are very important.

The following pledge was made during the session:

- Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Pakistan, pledged the support to develop Smart Village across Pakistan. MoITT also committed to develop resilient telecommunication network to provide uninterrupted digital services. Prioritize data security environment.



### 5.13 Session 12: Unveiling Academia's Impact: Empowering Underserved Communities through Digital Skills

15 September 2023, 15:30-16:30	
Moderator: Mr Steven Matainaho, Secretary, Department of ICT, Papua New Guinea	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Katikar Tipayalai, Chulalongkorn University</li> <li>• Prof. Dadan Rahadian, Telkom University, Indonesia</li> <li>• Mr Ehsen Puri, Director ICT, Virtual University of Pakistan</li> <li>• Prof. S. K. Mishra, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences</li> </ul>	

The key highlights of the session were as follows:

- The outcomes of ITU-IOM study on digital skills assessment in migrant communities in Thailand were shared. The study observed a pronounced digital skills gap in migrant, specifically from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Digital skills play a major role in supporting the migrant workers in different stages of their migration (e.g. job opportunities, social inclusion, communication with family members). Online banking transaction and communication and collaboration skills were perceived to be most beneficial. Surprisingly, online safety skills unfortunately were perceived as low demand despite the importance. The report also provided recommendations for government authorities, development partners and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and employers and employer associations.
- Digital landscape of Pakistan including achievements and challenges were shared. Becoming an ITU Digital Transformation Centre (DTC) provided impetus for the Virtual University as it aligned with their own plans. Achievement of digital skills development and ongoing digital skills programmes in Pakistan (digitalskills.pk with Ignite, STEM for Schools, programmes targeting women and children, mobile app for university students,) was provided. Information was also provided on experiences on specific digital literacy for persons with disabilities with ITU and the plans to engage with other government departments and stakeholders going forward.
- Challenges, experiences, and programmes on harnessing digital connectivity to increase the Human Development Index (HDI) in frontier regions of Indonesia targeting multiple SDGs was shared by Telkom University. Telkom University also shared its ongoing partnerships with international university, local university, central government, local government, and industry. They also shared Smart education, use of Massive Open Online Courses (MooC) and pledged to build digital skills of 2400 participants. The University announced a new pledge submitted to ITU.
- Empowering underserved communities through digital skills is very important. Experiences of telemedicine and biomedical informatics school in building skills in digital health with international organizations in several countries was shared. It is important for digital skills and digitalization to be a part of health policy.
- Ability to access affordable and reliable internet connectivity, appropriate devices in rural and remote areas, and hand holding the people in accessing localized training content were key factors in improving digital skills at community level, empowering people, and bringing them online.
- It is important to have partnerships with academia to achieve the digitalization goals.



## 6.0 Summary Report and Outcomes

Ms Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, presented the outcomes of the RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023 as contained in this report.

## 7.0 Closing

Mr Notachard Chintakanond, Chair of RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023, expressed gratitude to the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on behalf of the Office of NBTC. The Chair thanked all participants and speakers, for their contributions during the RDF to move towards dedicated sustainable and equitable digital future, including shared mission to foster cooperation in the Asia and the Pacific region. RDF-ASP 2023 provided profound information and valuable insights on various issues including thematic sessions, projects, partnerships and pledges. He called on all ITU Members to work together for the betterment of the region and the world.

In his closing remarks, Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, thanked the RDF-ASP Chair, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, moderators, the participants and sponsors for contributing towards the success of the event. In recognition of the work undertaken, the BDT Director thanked and presented a certificate of appreciation to the RDF-ASP Chair. He emphasized that the WTDC-22 outcomes and the work of ITU is a testament to the work of the Members. He also reiterated that the RDF is designed to provide a platform for matchmaking P2C pledges and the need of Member States and that the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific will work with partners to help move the pledges to implementation on the ground to support Member States in a measurable and impactful way. He also emphasized the importance of addressing the challenges faced by countries. He thanked all the dignitaries, governments, regulators, UN agencies, academia, industry and private sector, as well as the organizations that made new pledges.





## 8.0 Announcements and declarations

The following announcements and declarations were made during RDF Asia and the Pacific 2023

### Signing of Joint Declaration with Huawei (13 September)

Huawei and ITU signed a joint declaration to strengthen their partnership on digital development in the Asia and the Pacific region, through collaboration in the area of digital inclusion, conduct ICT research, and organize events that foster the digital ecosystem.



Mr. Xiongwei LI, CEO, Huawei Thailand and Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, BDT ITU

### Signing of Joint Declaration with Indosat (13 September)

Indosat and ITU will strengthen digital literacy and skills of citizens in underserved communities, and promote digital inclusion in Indonesia, primarily through the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative (DTCI).



Mr. Vikram Sinha, President Director and CEO, Indosat and Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU






Mr Steve Saerang, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications, Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison, Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU and Mr Sanjay Kaul, Cisco APJC Vice President

**Signing of Joint Declaration with Indonesia-ITU Concern Forum (IICF) (13 September)**

Indonesia-ITU Concern Forum (IICF) will cooperate with ITU on digital transformation and inclusion in Indonesia, capitalizing on IICF’s multi-stakeholder platform.



Mr. Eddy Setiawan, Founder and Chairman, Indonesia ITU Concern Forum and Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU



## Announcement of Joint Projects with MIC Japan

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan announced joint projects with ITU on digital infrastructure and affordable access and cybersecurity worth US\$ 300,000.



Mr Toru Anzawa, Director, International Policy Coordination, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan and Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU

## 9.0 P2C Matchmaking

The matchmaking exercise, which was a highlight of the P2C sessions, was based on the matching of the regional priorities and country specific needs with the commitments made by the P2C partners at the roundtables through their pledges, contributions, resulting into actionable projects for implementation in the region.

At the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtable Partners announced commitments for several countries following pledges already made. Examples are indicated below:

The commitments of **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** to help 29 million people grow their tech skills by 2025 in Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; investments worth US\$ 4,700,000 by **BitSight** to help LDCs in the region accelerate improvements in their cybersecurity posture and reduce the cyber capacity gap; commitments worth US\$ 25 million made by **Cisco** via their NetAcad and Skills for All program, benefitting over 250,000 people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu by 2027; farmers empowered in Bangladesh and other countries by **FAO**, the Food and Agriculture Organization, with actionable information in the palm of their hands; the provision by **Huawei** to provide 10,000 training opportunities for ICT professionals in Cambodia over the next five years and bring connectivity to about 120 million people in remote areas globally by 2025; the provision by **Intelsat** of Wi-Fi internet access solutions to connect 100 schools in rural and remote areas including in Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Mongolia, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Laos and Timor-Leste by 2025; investments worth US\$ 300 million by **Kacific** to connect 1 billion people across Asia and the Pacific by 2027 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao P.D.R., Malaysia,



Micronesia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka; and commitments by **ZTE** to build US\$ 400 million worth of ICT infrastructure annually by 2025. Training committed by **the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development** for 1000 digital media personnel who can influence over 10 million people and help them positively connect with evolving digital society, including media by 2027. Support by **WMO** to implement the UN Early Warnings for All Initiative. Inclusive connectivity to achieve connectivity for all countries in Asia and the Pacific has been supported by **GSMA**. Investment worth US\$ 26,700,000 by **APNIC Foundation** across inclusion, infrastructure and knowledge in many countries in Asia and the Pacific by the end of 2023.

At the Forum, **new** Partner2Connect pledges and commitments were also announced. A brief is listed as follows:

The **China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT)** committed to collaborate with all countries in the Asia and the Pacific Region to develop standards and projects on enablement indicators and assessment methods of ICT for sustainable development and to promote the construction of Internet interconnection infrastructure boosting the equality of digital connectivity in all countries in the region where applicable; **The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)**, India, committed to hosting capacity building programmes in partnership with ITU at its campus in Delhi while offering two workshops per year, accommodating approximately 100 participants from the region, and providing a high-quality learning environment. Additionally, C-DOT will provide subject matter experts to enhance the learning experience. The **Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT)**, Pakistan, pledged the support to develop Smart Village across Pakistan. MoITT is also committed to developing resilient telecommunication networks to provide uninterrupted digital services and prioritize data security environment. Islamic Development Bank (**IsDB**) committed to conduct capacity building trainings and hybrid workshops to share optimal practices to bridge the digital divide, and establish an IsDB Digital Inclusion Technical Working Group (IDITWG) to develop IsDB's Digital Inclusion Strategy 2025 to better serve the needs of its 57 Member; the **Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association** pledged to support the Pacific Girls for ICT Day programme, promote green energy and e-waste, regularly organize testing of emergency communications equipment, support capacity building in the Pacific, and enhance cybersecurity cooperation in the Pacific; **PT Indosat Tbk** committed to provide at least 100,000 citizens among the underserved communities in the Eastern part of Indonesia, by the end of 2024, with free data packages and digital literacy and proficiency training modules; **PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI** pledged to triple its contribution in e-waste management in Indonesia and increase collection to 50,000 tonnes of e-waste annually by 2030; **UNCDF** pledged to partner with ITU to set-up an investment facility for the development of inclusive digital economy in Asia and the Pacific, which has the ambition to mobilize US\$ 25-40 million; **Welchman Keen** committed to continue to enhance capacity and capabilities in cybersecurity in developing and least developed nations, and support the Partner2Connect Coalition by investing additional US\$ 480,000 in-kind to continue these efforts in various regions. **Telkom University** pledged to help increase access to connectivity, skills and digital education as well as meaningful socio-economic opportunities for at least 2,400 people at 24 educational institutions in 8 frontier regencies in three provinces bordering Indonesia and Malaysia in the Kalimantan Islands through collaboration with various educational, government and private institutions by the end of 2025. The School of Global Studies of **Thammasat University** pledged to support its research on Community Networks such as Smart Islands and Smart Villages initiatives. **Chulalongkorn university** pledged to share expertise and research in areas of policies in ethical use of AI and data science. AIBD also pledged to offer the Asia Media Summit in 2024 in Mongolia.



For further information, please refer to the Matchmaking table below which lists the pledges against the ITU Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific.

No :	Regional Initiatives	Name of the Pledge/Commitment	Submitting Organization	Value of Total Pledge/Commitment in US\$ (US dollars)	Beneficiary Countries of the Pledge/Commitment
1	ASP2.6	Huawei committed to provide 10,000 training opportunities for ICT professionals in Cambodia over the next five years (2022–2027)  Huawei pledges the implementation of ICT projects.	Huawei	N/A  150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambodia</li>    <li>• All countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>
	ASP3.2	Huawei committed to bring connectivity to about 120 million people in remote areas globally by 2025	Huawei	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>
2	ASP2.7	FAO Digital Services Portfolio (DSP) committed to empower farmers in the field with Actionable Information in the palm of their hands	FAO	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Other countries outside ASP Region will also benefit from this pledge (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania)</li> </ul>
3	ASP3.2	ZTE committed to bridge the digital divide by building \$400 million worth of ICT infrastructure annually by 2025	ZTE Corporation	1,400,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>



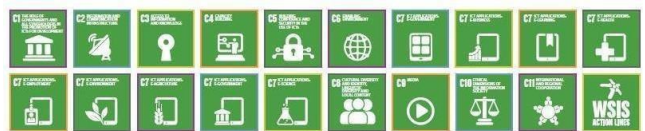
4	ASP2.6	AWS committed to help 29 million people grow their tech skills by 2025	Amazon Web Services	Hundreds of millions of US\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Zealand, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan,</li> <li>• The Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea,</li> <li>• Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam</li> <li>• Other countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>
5	ASP2.6.	Welchman Keen committed to continuing to enhance capacity and capabilities in cybersecurity in developing and least developed nations, and support the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition	WelchmanKeen	480,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 Member States, including LDCs, SIDs</li> <li>• Bhutan</li> <li>• Maldives</li> <li>• Vanuatu</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Fiji</li> <li>• Tonga</li> <li>• Samoa</li> <li>• Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Kiribati</li> <li>• Brunei</li> <li>• Timor-Leste</li> </ul>
6	ASP2.6	CAICT committed to organize two training sessions with the title of “5G technology development and its application” as part of its capacity building.  CAICT committed to collaborate with all countries in the Asia and the Pacific region to develop standards and projects on enablement indicators and assessment methods of ICT for sustainable development.	CAICT	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>
	ASP 3.2	CAICT committed to promote the construction of Internet interconnection Infrastructure, boosting	CAICT	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in the region, where applicable</li> </ul>



		the equality of digital connectivity			
7	ASP3.2	Kacific committed to invest \$300 million to connect 1 billion people across Asia and the Pacific by 2027	Kacific	300,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan</li> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Bhutan</li> <li>• Brunei</li> <li>• Darussalam</li> <li>• Cambodia</li> <li>• Fiji</li> <li>• India</li> <li>• Indonesia</li> <li>• Kiribati</li> <li>• Lao P.D.R.</li> <li>• Malaysia</li> <li>• Micronesia</li> <li>• Myanmar</li> <li>• Nepal</li> <li>• New Zealand</li> <li>• Pakistan</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Philippines</li> <li>• Samoa</li> <li>• Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Sri Lanka</li> </ul>
8	ASP2.6	C-DOT committed to host capacity building programs in C-DOT campus in Delhi in partnership with ITU	Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), India	25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 participants coming from different countries from ASP region</li> </ul>
9	ASP2.6	AIBD committed to train 1000 digital media personnel who can influence over 10 million people and help them positively connect with evolving digital society, including media by 2027.  AIBD pledged to organize the next Asian Media Summit 2023 in Mongolia	Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan</li> <li>• Australia</li> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Bhutan</li> <li>• Brunei</li> <li>• Darussalam</li> <li>• China</li> <li>• Fiji</li> <li>• India</li> <li>• Indonesia</li> <li>• Iran</li> <li>• Korea (Rep. Of)</li> <li>• Lao P.D.R.</li> <li>• Malaysia</li> <li>• Micronesia</li> <li>• Mongolia</li> <li>• Pakistan</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Philippines</li> <li>• Samoa</li> </ul>



					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singapore</li> <li>• Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Thailand</li> <li>• Tonga</li> <li>• Tuvalu</li> <li>• Vanuatu</li> <li>• Viet Nam</li> </ul>
10	ASP5.6	WMO committed to support countries to implement the UN Early Warnings for all Initiative	WMO	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Cambodia</li> <li>• Fiji</li> <li>• Kiribati</li> <li>• Lao P.D.R.</li> <li>• Maldives</li> <li>• Nepal</li> <li>• Samoa</li> <li>• Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Tonga</li> </ul>
11	ASP2.6	Cisco pledged a programmatic \$25 million via their NetAcad and Skills for All programs, impacting over 250,000 people across 46 LDCs by 2027.	Cisco	25,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan,</li> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Bhutan</li> <li>• Cambodia</li> <li>• Kiribati</li> <li>• Myanmar</li> <li>• Nepal</li> <li>• Solomon Islands</li> <li>• Timor-Leste</li> <li>• Tuvalu</li> </ul>
12	ASP5.2	BitSight committed to help LDCs accelerate improvements in their cybersecurity posture and reduce the cyber capacity gap.	BitSight	4,700,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant LDCs in the region</li> </ul>
13	ASP2.6	PT Indosat Tbk committed, to provide by the end of 2024, at least 100,000 persons among the underserved communities in the Eastern part of Indonesia with free data packages and digital literacy and proficiency training modules and thereby will be able to readily embrace, participate in, and benefit from the meaningful digital transformation	PT Indosat TBK	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indonesia</li> </ul>





14	ASP3.2	Intelsat committed to utilize is Wi-Fi internet access solutions to connect 100 schools in rural and remote areas by 2025.	Intelsat	1,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laos</li> <li>• Bhutan</li> <li>• Maldives</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Timor-Leste</li> <li>• Cambodia</li> <li>• Nepal</li> </ul>
15	ASP 5.6	PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI pledged to triple its contribution in e-waste management in Indonesia and increase collection to 50,000 tonnes of e-waste annually by 2030	PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indonesia</li> </ul>
16	ASP 2.4	UNCDF pledged to partner with ITU to set up an investment facility for the development of inclusive digital economy in Asia and the Pacific	UNCDF	25-40 Million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asia and the Pacific countries</li> </ul>
17	ASP 1.1 ASP 1.3 ASP 1.4 ASP 5.6	Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association pledged to support the Pacific Girls for ICT Day programme, promote green energy and e-waste, regularly organize testing of emergency communications equipment, support capacity building in the Pacific, and enhance cybersecurity cooperation in the Pacific	PITA	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacific Island countries</li> </ul>
18	ASP 1.4 ASP 2.4 ASP 2.6	IsDB committed to conduct capacity building trainings and hybrid workshops to share optimal practices to bridge the digital divide, and establish an IsDB Digital Inclusion Technical Working	Islamic Development Bank	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maldives</li> <li>• Pakistan</li> <li>• All relevant LDCs in the region</li> </ul>



		Group (IDITWG) to develop IsDB's Digital Inclusion Strategy 2025 to better serve the needs of its 57 Member Countries.			
19	ASP 2.4 ASP 2.6 ASP 5.1	Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Pakistan, pledged the support to develop Smart Village across Pakistan. MoITT also committed to develop resilient telecommunication network to provide uninterrupted digital services. Prioritize data security environment	Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Pakistan	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan</li> </ul>
20	ASP 4.1	Chulalongkorn University pledged to share expertise and research in areas of policies in ethical use of AI and data science	Chulalongkorn University	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in Asia and the Pacific or as applicable</li> </ul>
21	ASP 2.4	School of Global Studies of Thammasat University pledged to support with its research Community Networks to support studies such as Smart Islands and Smart Villages initiatives	Thammasat University	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All countries in Asia and the Pacific or as applicable</li> </ul>
22	ASP 2.6	Department of Information and Communications Technology the Philippines (DICT) pledged to host the Asia Pacific Girls in ICT Policy Summit through the Digital Innovation for Women Advancement in the Philippines for 2024 in partnership with P2C companies	Department of Information and Communications Technology the Philippines (DICT)	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asia and the Pacific</li> </ul>
23	ASP 2.6	MICTTD Kiribati pledged to continue with Girls in ICT Day in Kiribati	MICTTD Kiribati	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiribati</li> </ul>



24	ASP 2.4	Government of India committed to connect the unconnected through the BharatNet Project so that everyone, especially those in rural India, can access online services	Government of India	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India</li> </ul>
25	ASP 3.2	GSMA committed to support inclusive connectivity to achieve connectivity for ALL	GSMA	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All countries in Asia and the Pacific</li> </ul>
26	ASP 4.1	Telkom University pledged to help increase access to connectivity, skills and digital education as well as meaningful socio-economic opportunities for at least 2,400 people at 24 educational institutions in 8 frontier regencies in three provinces bordering Indonesia and Malaysia in the Kalimantan Islands through collaboration with various educational, government and private institutions by the end of 2025	Telkom University	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indonesia and Malaysia</li> </ul>
27	ASP 2.4	APNIC Foundation committed to investing in inclusion, infrastructure and knowledge in Asia and the Pacific countries by the end of 2023	APNIC	\$26,700,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All countries in Asia and the Pacific or as applicable</li> </ul>



**ASP1: ADDRESSING SPECIAL NEEDS OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES, INCLUDING PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES, AND LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**Objective:** To provide special assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), including Pacific Island countries, and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in order to meet their priority telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) requirements.

**Expected results**

1. Development of policy and regulatory frameworks for broadband infrastructure and ICT applications and cybersecurity, taking into account the special needs of LDCs, SIDS, including Pacific Island countries, and LLDCs, and strengthening of human capacity to address future policy and regulatory challenges.
2. Promotion of affordable and meaningful broadband universal access in LDCs, SIDS, including Pacific Island countries, and LLDCs.
3. Assistance to LDCs, SIDS, including Pacific Island countries, and LLDCs in adopting telecommunication/ICT applications in disaster management relating to disaster prediction, preparedness, adaptation, monitoring, mitigation, response, rehabilitation, and recovery of telecommunication/ICT networks based on their priority needs.
4. Assistance to LDCs, SIDS, including Pacific Island countries, and LLDCs in their efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs, the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs.

**ASP2: HARNESSING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT THE DIGITAL ECONOMY AND INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETIES**

**Objective:** To assist Member States in utilizing information and communication technologies (ICTs) and emerging technologies to reap the benefits of the digital economy by addressing the human and technical capacity challenges, including improving and expanding digital skills to reduce the gender gap, and assisting vulnerable groups<sup>1</sup>, to bridge the digital divide.

**Expected results**

1. Planning and elaboration of national strategic frameworks on the digital economy as well as associated toolkits for selected ICT applications and services.
2. Establishment and annual updating of a repository of all work done within ITU relating to the digital economy since the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017).
3. Development of policies, strategies and guidelines for efficient and timely implementation of the digital economy, including the use of the Internet of Things, ICT-centric applications and platforms, artificial intelligence, 5G and big data.
4. Acceleration of digital infrastructure readiness through the timely deployment of optical fibre, 4G and 5G technologies, and ICT/mobile applications in order to improve the delivery of value-added services in sectors such as health, education, environment, agriculture, governance, energy, financial services and e-commerce. Economic recovery funds and resources of development banks can also be utilized in this process.
5. Identification, collation and sharing of knowledge, best practices and case studies on various telecommunication/ICT applications.
6. Development of cross-sectoral national/regional programmes on digital literacy and skills for inclusiveness, especially for women, youth, older persons and persons with specific needs.



7. Enhancement of international cooperation related to new and emerging technologies pertaining to telecommunications/ICTs to ensure that all countries in the global value chain can benefit from digital transformation.

### ASP3: FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENHANCE DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED

**Objective:** To assist Member States in developing telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in order to facilitate the provision of services and applications, taking into consideration the availability, affordability and accessibility of the infrastructure for connecting the unconnected.

#### Expected results

1. Migration/transition of analogue networks to appropriate digital networks, application of affordable wired and wireless technologies (including interoperability of ICT infrastructure) and optimized use of the digital dividend.
2. Maximized use of new and emerging technologies for the development of communication networks, including 5G and smart-grid infrastructure and services.
3. Review and revision, if necessary, of existing national broadband objectives, and enhanced capacity to develop and implement national broadband plans (including support to study the status of national broadband networks and international connectivity) in order to provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas; promote affordable access, especially for youth, women, indigenous peoples and children; select appropriate technologies; develop and use universal service funds effectively; and develop business models that are financially and operationally sustainable.
4. Promotion of Internet exchange points as a long-term solution to advance connectivity and deployment of IPv6-based networks and applications and facilitation of the transition from IPv4 to IPv6.
5. Strengthening of the capacity to implement conformance and interoperability (C&I) procedures and facilitating the establishment of common regional/subregional C&I regimes (including the adoption and implementation of mutual recognition arrangements).
6. Paying of attention to spectrum-management issues, including radio-frequency planning, harmonization of the use of spectrum allocated and identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), enhancement of spectrum-monitoring systems, and facilitation of the implementation of decisions of world radiocommunication conferences.
7. Building of skills for the development and use of terrestrial and space services.
8. Enhancement of regional ICT connectivity and strengthening of cooperation with international/regional organizations in programmes such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway.

### ASP4: ENABLING POLICY AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

**Objective:** To assist Member States in developing appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, developing digital services across various sectors of the economy, fostering innovation, enhancing skills, increasing information sharing and strengthening regulatory cooperation, thereby contributing to a supportive regulatory environment for all stakeholders.

#### Expected results

1. Sharing of information on developments in policy, legal and regulatory frameworks as well as market developments in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector and the digital economies it enables.
2. Development, implementation and review of strategies, policies and legal and regulatory frameworks, including for next-generation universal service obligation, consumer protection, transformation of small and medium enterprises to digital enterprises, and innovation and entrepreneurship.



3. Encouraging of inclusive dialogues and strengthening cooperation among national and regional regulators, policy-makers and other telecommunication/ICT stakeholders, as well as with other sectors of the economy, on topical policy, legal, regulatory and market issues.
4. Strengthening of institutional, human and technical capacity on topical policy, legal and regulatory issues, as well as on economic and financial issues and market developments.
5. Improved awareness of policy and regulatory frameworks relating to data privacy and cross-border data.
6. Development of strategic frameworks to support research and development activities in ICT in developing countries.

## ASP5: CONTRIBUTING TO A SECURE AND RESILIENT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT

**Objective:** To assist Member States in developing and maintaining secure, trusted and resilient networks and services, and to address challenges related to climate change and the management of global pandemics and disasters.

### Expected results

1. Compilation of national/regional cybersecurity strategies, establishment of national/regional cybersecurity capabilities such as computer incident response teams, and sharing of good practices to nurture a culture of cybersecurity.
2. Strengthening of institutional cooperation and coordination among key actors and stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels (including through organizing cyberdrills) and enhancing the capacity to address issues related to cybersecurity.
3. Development of national emergency telecommunication plans and ICT-based initiatives for providing medical (e-health) and humanitarian assistance in disasters and emergencies.
4. Incorporation of disaster-resilient features in telecommunication networks and infrastructure, and development of ICT-based solutions (including the use of wireless and satellite-based technologies) to enhance network resilience.
5. Development of standards-based monitoring and early-warning systems linked to national and regional networks, and enhanced use of active and passive terrestrial/space-based sensing systems for disaster prediction, detection and mitigation.
6. Formulation of comprehensive strategies and measures to help mitigate and respond to the devastating effects of climate change, including e-waste policy.

