Meeting Report

3rd Meeting of ITU Industry Informal Working Group Meeting in Asia and the Pacific

Virtual
14 May 2024

1. Introduction

ITU is hosting the quadrennial World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) scheduled in Delhi, India, from 15-24 October 2024. As the flagship conference of ITU's standardization (ITU-T) sector, WTSA defines the general policy for the ITU-T Sector. As part WTSA 2024, a number of related events will be held that may be of interest to ITU's sector members in the Asia-Pacific region. This includes:

- 5th Global Standards Symposium, 14 October 2024
- Network of Women for WTSA-24, 17 October 2024
- AI for Good, Impact India, 18 October 2024
- ITU Kaleidoscope, 21 – 23 October 2024
- UN Day, 24 October 2024

Additionally, ITU opened an Area Office for South Asia and global Innovation Centre in New Delhi last year. The ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre brings together government, industry, academia and others in an entrepreneurial environment so that digital technology advancements in sectors such as agriculture, health, and education can reach the communities that need them most.

Finally, in 2022 ITU launched the Partner2Connect digital coalition. This innovative platform is engaging all stakeholders to mobilize and pledge resources, partnerships, and commitments to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation in the hardest-to-connect communities, with a focus on, but not limited to, Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States. Pledges do not have to be financial, but can also take the form of Policy, Advocacy, or Programme. More information on pledges can be found at the link here.

Additionally, under the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D), a number of upcoming activities and new projects are being organized at the global and regional levels that can harness academia participation. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Telecommunication Development Advisory Group from 20-23 May in Geneva
- Global Symposium of Regulators 2024 from 1-4 July, in Kampala, Uganda
- Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues (IAGDI) and Chief Regulatory Officers meeting (IAGDI-CRO), on 2 July in Kampala, Uganda.
- ITU-D Study Group Meetings
- Partner2Connect National Roundtable Cambodia from 8-9 July in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

In this context, the role of industry sector partners is crucial in fostering innovations throughout the Asia-Pacific region, including through the Partner2Connect pledge platform.

Therefore, ITU convened the 3rd meeting of the *ITU Industry Informal Working Group for Asia and the Pacific* to highlight potential partnerships, linked to the work of the ITU Regional Office for Asia-Pacific.

2. Meeting Summary

The 3rd Meeting of ITU Industry Informal Working Group Meeting in Asia and the Pacific was held virtually on 14 May 2024, from 13:00PM – 14:30PM (GMT+7). It was attended by 38 participants representing 21 organizations.

The opening began with remarks from Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ITU. Ms. Okuda provided an overview of the Industry informal Working Group and highlighted her desire for this meeting to foster discussions, collaborations, and strategies among members to drive digital transformation, particularly by connecting the unconnected. She overviewed the agenda of the meeting and encouraged all participants to actively intervene, discuss, and share ideas. She emphasized the importance of partnership and combined efforts in achieving significant advancements in global digital initiatives.

Following the opening session, Ms. Atsuko Okuda provided a presentation of upcoming collaborations and initiatives with ITU. She addressed the significant number of unconnected individuals globally, emphasizing the large proportion within the Asia Pacific region. She highlighted ongoing ITU initiatives designed to tackle these challenges through regional support in infrastructure, policy, digital economy, and security. She also mentioned recent studies underscoring the urgency of these issues and the strategic initiatives aimed at empowering these vulnerable populations.

Ms. Okuda highlighted upcoming ITU events under both the Development and Standardization sectors and encouraged members to actively participate. Furthermore, she discussed the new ITU area office and Innovation Center in New Delhi, and invited partnerships from membership. Finally, she updated on the Partner to Connect (P2C) platform, noting the significant pledges made to support digital transformation globally, and encouraged further engagement from membership.

Subsequently, Mr. Dmitry Frischin, Portfolio Manager, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) presented on the UNV modality and potential collaboration with ITU and its sector members. Mr. Frischin provided background on UNV and highlighted its role in integrating skilled and motivated volunteers into various UN entities, including ITU projects, as a way to contribute to development initiatives. He underscored the inclusivity of UNV, aiming to offer opportunities across community to senior levels, and for underrepresented groups including those with disabilities. Mr. Frischin further elaborated on UNV's work with private sector partnerships and the public sector to integrate volunteers in strategic projects, including potential collaboration on digitalization in the Pacific together with ITU. Finally, he shared a specific case of partnership in Kenya with Microsoft and UNDP, revealing the effective nature of collaboration whereby UNV provides the manpower for IT projects. He expressed hope for continued successful partnerships in promoting digitalization and supporting disability initiatives through volunteers.

Following the presentation, the floor was open for discussions among attending members and invited stakeholders. Points raised during the discussion were as follows:

- **Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)** highlighted the importance of ITU's work in the region and partnerships with ITU's regional office initiatives, including on cybersecurity. AIBD praised the networking opportunities offered through ITU's events and in Asia-Pacific, and noted how media integrates with connected devices beyond traditional platforms like radio and television. AIBD reinforced the significance of a collaborative relationship with the ITU in advancing media technology. Finally, AIBD highlighted Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5G, and misinformation, as key priorities for their impact on media, and expanded on planned pre-summit workshop on 5G at the upcoming AIBD Asia Media Summit.
- **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** highlighted their engagement with ITU across multiple sectors, including under AWS' low-earth orbit satellite project. AWS expressed thanks for the successful partnership with ITU at the Regional Development Forum (RDF) for Asia and the Pacific 2023, held from 13-15 September 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, and noted interest in supporting future ITU events. AWS also overviewed ongoing discussions about potential collaboration with ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on joint research focused on using cloud AI-enabled digitalization to promote inclusion. Finally, AWS expressed interest in potential capacity building engagement with the new ITU Innovation Centre in New Delhi.
- **Cisco** discussed involvement with ITU in achieving the sustainable development goals and on digital transformation initiatives. Cisco highlighted their commitment to skills development in cybersecurity and networking, emphasizing the importance of increasing gender balance in ICT through initiatives like Girls in ICT. Cisco highlighted its global engagement on work in cybersecurity and noted its interest in further partnerships to assist regional development.
- **Huawei** highlighted ongoing collaboration with ITU on Girls in ICT Day 2024. Huawei also expressed interest in partnering with ITU on further understanding policy data linked to telecommunications vis-à-vis industry and sector member views.
- **Infobip** spoke about their recent joining as a an ITU member and their efforts to familiarise themselves with ITU hosted events and initiatives. Infobip expressed interest in supporting ITU's Innovation Centre in New Delhi, noting that the company is focused on promoting message security to protect mobile users from scams and spam. Infobip expressed hope for

future collaborations through the ITU platform to improve subscriber protection and overall mobile user safety.

- **SAP** noted the significance of cooperation and building foundational elements for digital transformation in the public sector. SAP highlighted the workshop that they joined hosted by the ITU Innovation Centre in New Delhi, which examined key components of a digital transformation roadmap, focusing on the digital delivery of government services and the integration of the ITU GovStack program. SAP emphasized the challenges faced by governments in starting and implementing these transformations, including technical skills and funding. Finally, SAP expressed their commitment to assisting ITU member states in developing roadmaps and fostering public-private partnerships to advance these digital initiatives.

ITU thanked all participants for interventions. ITU reiterated the ITU Area Office for South Asia & Innovation Centre in New Delhi, India and highlighted a desire to foster partnerships across the stakeholder ecosystem with emerging technologies including on AI, Internet of Things, and blockchain. I

ITU concluded by noting its regional initiatives and ongoing programs for industry to partner with, including in the Pacific and with UNV. ITU highlighted that it looks forward to deepening these discussions and concretizing partnerships and welcomes ideas and expressions of interest from sector members and stakeholders to partner to close the digital divide. ITU closed by expressing its eagerness for future in-person or online meetings and thanking everyone for their participation.

3. List of Participants

No.	Institution	Name
1.	Amazon Web Services	Natasha Beschorner
2.	Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development	Naing Naing Aye
		Wickramage Don Dhammika
		Philomena Gnanapragasam
		Krishanth Nair
		Ain Osama
		Amal Punchihewa
		Pangiestu Syahnur
		Nabeel Tirmazi
		Viknaace
3.	Axiata Group Berhad	Foong Chee Kheong
4.	Cisco Systems (Thailand)	Ronald Van Kleunen
5.	Fujitsu Limited	Kazutomo Hasegawa
6.	Globe Telecom, Inc.	Christophe Buaya
		Emmanuel Lazaro Estrada
7.	Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.	Kitty Naksomsong
		Meng Liang
8.	Indonesia-ITU Concern Forum	Eddy Setiawan
9.	Infobip (Thailand) Limited	Johan Jensen
		Jiun Kei Lim
10.	Ncell Axiata Limited	Sadeep Acharya

11.	PLDT Inc.	Gilbert Bautista
12.	Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang	Sirmayanti Sirmayanti
13.	PT Mukti Mandiri Lestari	Fariz Muhammad Rizwan
14.	SAP Asia Pte Ltd.	Austin Menyasz
15.	Shanghai Spacecom Satellite Technology Ltd.	Tianjun Chang
16.	Syniverse Technologies (China) Limited	Cho Wong
17.	Telenor ASA	Jonathan Yap
18.	Telkom University	Syifa Nuurunnisa Wijaksana
		Galih Prihartanto
19.	Telstra Limited	Golnar Khomami
20.	United Nations Volunteers	Dmitry Frischin
21.	International Telecommunication Union	Atsuko Okuda
		Calvin Chan
		Mohamed Farkhani
		Akanksha Sharma
		Kishore Babu Yerraballa
		Hangyu Zhou