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**To: ITU Member States, Sector Members,
Associates and Academia**

**Subject: World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2016:
*ITU Secretary-General's Call for Action***

The theme for WTISD-16, ***“ICT entrepreneurship for social impact”***, focuses attention on ICT entrepreneurs and start-ups and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have a particularly relevant role in ensuring economic growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

The theme for WTISD-16 is in line with ITU's work in unlocking the potential of ICTs for young innovators and entrepreneurs, innovative SMEs, start-ups and technology hubs as drivers of innovative and practical solutions for catalysing progress in achieving international sustainable development goals, with a focus on SMEs from developing countries.

The activities to be undertaken by ITU Membership, beginning as early as possible and continuing throughout the year, will contribute towards building political momentum to further mobilize support for these enterprises as a mechanism to enable and accelerate sustainable development through ICT-enabled solutions and applications. They will showcase and leverage relevant national and regional strategies and initiatives to promote ICT-related SMEs and foster and discover new technological solutions to accelerate sustainable development.

WTISD-16 Call for Action: *“ICT entrepreneurship for social impact”*

Recalling:

1. The common vision adopted by ITU Member States during the 2014 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, enshrined in the *Connect 2020 Agenda*, which outlines goals and targets for the entire ICT sector in the areas of growth, inclusiveness, sustainability and innovation, and partnerships.
2. The *Budapest Call for Action* issued by Ministers attending ITU Telecom World 2016, in which participating governments committed to work together towards mobilizing global entrepreneurship to accelerate innovation for social impact.
3. The vision of the *Emerge Partnership*, an initiative between ITU and partners, that rich ICT innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems in emerging economies are built through close collaboration between public, private, academia and civil society actors, resulting in small, young and nimble firms with high-growth potential in the ICT/technology/Internet sectors.

Recognizing:

1. The role played by governments in creating an enabling environment for private enterprise, through ensuring the optimum policy, regulatory, legal and financial frameworks which improve the ease of doing business.
2. That information and communication technology (ICT) is a key driver of the global economy.
3. The importance of small and medium sized companies (SMEs) in leveraging the use of ICT in creating new wealth, new jobs, increasing productivity and contributing to the economic growth and well-being of their societies.
4. The potential of high-growth firms in the ICT sector, noting that these may constitute between 1 per cent and 6 per cent of all ventures in an economy, and account for the majority of economic growth, new job creation and spillovers from innovation.
5. The importance of public/private partnership in implementing ICT solutions to benefit governments, societies and economies.
6. The importance of local stakeholders in creating rich innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems which address all points in the development of a company.
7. That national paradigms are context specific, and that support needs to be differentiated depending on the unique constraints, circumstances and cultures faced by local ecosystems.
8. That well-trained, skilled human capital is fundamental for innovation and growth.

Call upon ITU Members to:

1. **PROMOTE the role of small, young, and innovative firms in the ICT sector**, their contribution to advancing connectivity solutions, and their role in pioneering applications which are driving demand for increased connectivity.
2. **ENCOURAGE the spread of digital social innovation**, and the role of ICT-enabled innovation in addressing key socio-economic challenges, such as those enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals and other national and regional frameworks.
3. **PRIORITIZE economic policies which promote innovation**, and which seek to prioritize conditions for existing ventures of all ages and sizes to be able to achieve rapid growth.
4. **ENSURE the availability of necessary human capacity** by improving primary, secondary and tertiary education systems, thereby ensuring availability of talent, and reducing the burden of unemployment.
5. **SUPPORT the establishment of comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystems** which leverage a multitude of local, regional and national stakeholders, agendas, enabling policies and the necessary resources to create and sustain environments where innovation flourishes.
6. **SUPPORT entrepreneurs in moving from idea/innovation to sales/revenue** in order to create marketable products and services that will generate social and economic value.

Yours faithfully,

(signed)

Houlin Zhao
Secretary-General