



## General Secretariat (SG)

Geneva, 3 February 2017

Ref: **Circular Letter/SPM/CCD/CL-17/5**

Contact: Patricia Benoit-Guyot

Telephone: +41 22 730 6094

E-mail: [protocol@itu.int](mailto:protocol@itu.int)

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

**Subject: Subject : World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2017:  
ITU Secretary-General's Call for Action**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The theme for WTISD-17, "Big Data for Big Impact," focuses on the power of Big Data for development and aims to explore how to turn imperfect, complex, often unstructured data into actionable information in a development context. The insight brought on by advanced analysis can strongly complement the evidence-based nature of decision-making that can be leveraged at national, regional and international levels to drive success towards attaining all 17 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030.

Activities undertaken by the ITU Membership will contribute towards building political momentum to embrace Big Data on a global scale. The goal of my attached "Call for Action" is to ignite a global dedication to leveraging the insights provided by Big Data for new opportunities to address development challenges.

The theme for WTISD-17 is in line with ITU's work highlighting the technological developments that have facilitated the emergence of Big Data, developing standards related to Big Data and identifying sources and uses of Big Data, including use of Big Data technologies for developing and monitoring improvements in information societies.

I appreciate your support.

Yours faithfully,

*(original signed)*

Houlin Zhao  
Secretary-General

Annex: 1

## **Annex**

### ***WTISD-17 Call for Action: “Big Data for Big Impact”***

#### ***The ITU Secretary-General***

#### **Recalling:**

1. *World Telecommunication Day* has been celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969, marking the date of the founding of ITU and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865. It was formally instituted by the Plenipotentiary Conference in Malaga-Torremolinos in 1973. In recognition of ITU as the lead United Nations agency for ICTs, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, November 2005, called on the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 17 May as World Information Society Day ([see paragraph 121 of the Tunis Agenda](#)).
2. On 27 March 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/252, proclaiming 17 May as *World Information Society Day* to focus global attention annually on bringing the enormous benefits of the digital revolution in ICTs to the world’s inhabitants.
3. The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in November 2006 welcomed the General Assembly’s decision and amended Resolution 68 to invite the Council to adopt a specific theme for each *World Telecommunication and Information Society Day*.

#### **Recognizing**

1. WTISD-17 marks the 152nd anniversary of ITU, highlighting the theme “Big Data for Big Impact,” in line with ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 68 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) and as decided by Council 2016.
2. Big Data is an extremely important technology development. Big Data is an umbrella term for the large amounts of digital data continually generated from various devices being used by the global population, often including emerging technological capabilities in solving complex tasks.
3. Big Data for development is about turning imperfect, complex, often unstructured data into actionable information in development context. The insight brought on by advanced analysis can strongly compliment the evidence-based nature of decision-making that can be leveraged at the national, regional and international level to drive success towards attaining all 17 of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030.
4. Activities undertaken by the ITU membership will contribute towards building political momentum to embrace big data and leverage insights to identify new opportunities to creatively address sustainable development challenges.

**Calls upon ITU Members to:**

1. **CREATE and strengthen a national data ecosystem for sustainable development**, where data is being generated, captured, shared and analyzed in innovative ways, and increase the value of data and analytics through national policies in a development context.
2. **ENCOURAGE cross-sector, cross-agency, cross-border data collaboration**, and develop unified standards for emerging data sources and data interoperability by considering rapidly changing technologies and data landscape.
3. **ESTABLISH a data-driven decision making, service delivery and operational efficiency culture**.
4. **DEVELOP national policies and data strategies to promote open data and Big Data analytics**, services and markets, consistent with public interest and fostering common good, and provide an unambiguous regulatory framework for enhancing data transparency and utility.
5. **PROVIDE equitable data protection and strategies for information release**, and implement an inclusive and open process to foster privacy, security, public trust and the ethical use of data involving a variety of stakeholders.
6. **SUPPORT and scale up R&D to explore and understand possibilities and opportunities** of big data and improve the national landscape for data education and training to respond to the increasing demand for both deep analytical talent and capacity for the broader areas.
7. **SUPPORT international effort on collaborative activities across all sectors and nations** to respond to and measure any possible crisis, and foster regional, cross-sector collaboration and multinational projects to foster innovation using Big Data.