EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On 23 May the Green Digital Action Summit took place on the Global Leaders and AI Stage of GITEX Europe at Messe Berlin.

Hosted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the German Environment Agency (UBA) the first -ever Green Digital Action Summit was an essential gathering at the intersection of digital innovation and climate action. The Summit reflected on the progress made since the COP29 Green Digital Action Declaration and set the stage for further momentum toward sustainable technology solutions, especially in anticipation of COP30 in Brazil.

The Summit convened almost 50 expert speakers, including government ministers, regulators, industry leaders, academics, and civil society representatives.

Speakers addressed the challenges and opportunities in green tech, policy development, and digital innovation that will help shape the future of our collective environmental stewardship. This document summarizes key messages.

PROGRAMME

The sessions explored the intersections of digital technology, sustainability, and climate action. Key themes included the role of digital policy and regulation in integrating environmental considerations into technology deployment, fostering interdisciplinary cooperation, and aligning digital infrastructure with renewable energy goals. Discussions addressed the surge in energy consumption by AI systems, strategies for reducing environmental impacts, and the use of AI and big data to support equitable energy transitions. Investment in green digital infrastructure and transparency in climate reporting were emphasized as vital for guiding the digital sector toward achieving net-zero emissions.

In the afternoon, sessions delved into aligning digital innovation with environmental standards, while fireside chats highlighted cross-sector collaboration using AI to address challenges in climate, health, and agriculture. The event closed with forward-looking discussions on Green AI skills for workforce sustainability and technology's role in advancing climate action in the context of the upcoming UNFCCC climate conference (COP30). A digital art presentation rounded off the programme.

ACCESS THE RECORDINGS HERE

8	4	3	1
PANELS	KEYNOTES	FIRESIDE CHATS	DIGITAL ART PRESENTATION

KEY MESSAGES

Twin Transition

Discussions throughout the Summit converged on a shared recognition: Digital transformation must advance in tandem with environmental sustainability - requiring alignment of climate and digital strategies a*nd green-by-design infrastructure.*

"Digital tools can help fight the climate crisis, but the industry must also take responsibility for its own environmental impact."
Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU

"The twin green and digital transformations move in parallel in two silos and we need to overcome this".
Dirk Messner, President, UBA

Standards as enablers

Common methodologies for measuring environmental impacts of digital technologies are indispensable for transparency and accountability.

"Standardization is a mindset…we need a common metrics, a common language—so companies talk about the same thing, competitors can compare results, and civil society gets transparency."
Christoph Winterhalter, Chairman of the Executive Board, DIN

From data to action

Precise estimates for GHG emissions from the digital technology sector remain elusive. Reliable data on GHG emissions and energy use from the sector are needed for policymaking, target setting, and progress reporting.

"We still don't know how much energy AI consumes after all these years. There is really no way around understanding all the environmental impacts along the entire AI supply chain."
Kilian Vieth-Ditlmann, Head of Policy, Algorithm Watch

Collaboration and Investment

Mobilizing green digital infrastructure requires both public and private investment, with clear regulatory frameworks to guide resilience, lifecycle assessment, and interoperability.

Technology alone isn't directional - it's shaped by values, economics and regulation. International and interdisciplinary cooperation will be critical to scaling sustainable digital systems and to steer AI toward the just energy transition we need.

"To encourage a net-positive AI impact, cross-industry collaboration is very important. How can the health sector learn from the finance sector; how can the advanced manufacturing sector learn from the energy sector?
Ginelle Greene-Dewasmes, Lead, Artificial Intelligence and Energy, World Economic Forum

Skills for Inclusion

Building a workforce equipped with green digital and AI skills is essential to ensure all countries and communities can participate in and benefit from the twin transition. Targeted reskilling policies must accompany technological deployment to avoid leaving vulnerable groups behind.

"We estimate that millions of jobs can be created in the green economy but this needs investment in reskilling and upskilling."
Beate Andrees, Assistant Director-General & Regional Director of the ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

NEXT STEPS

The twin green and digital transitions require a balanced approach, leveraging digital technologies as enablers of innovative solutions to address climate change and environmental challenges, while ensuring that the emissions generated by these technologies are accurately accounted for and effectively mitigated.

The Green Digital Action (GDA) initiative has been a key driver in this effort, fostering collaboration among stakeholders to advance sustainable digital practices. In the context of the GDA GHG emissions pillar, ITU is spearheading efforts to develop a global database for tracking ICT sector energy consumption and GHG emissions. Efforts are also underway to shed light on the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence (AI). The GDA Green Computing working group is developing a testing plan to examine AI use cases and workloads, aiming to improve transparency and enable actionable assessments, building on the key findings in the recently published report Measuring What Matters: How to Assess AI's Environmental Impact.

As the third edition of the Green Digital Action Track approaches at COP30, the world has a unique opportunity to double down on digital solutions as enablers of accelerated climate progress. By integrating digital technologies into climate strategies with greater ambition - while accounting for their footprint and energy consumption - countries can pave the way for a greener, more sustainable future.

GDA will continue working closely with its global community, reinforcing its commitment to leveraging digital technologies for accelerated climate action and addressing critical gaps in methodologies and transparency. Building on the success of the first Green Digital Action Summit, the event will return next year, providing a platform for stakeholders to share insights, showcase progress, and collaborate on innovative strategies to further the twin green and digital transitions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the GITEX organizing team, the German Environment Agency (UBA), the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES) and the Sustainable AI Coalition for their support and contributions to the Green Digital Action Summit. We also thank the Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as a key champion of the GDA initiative as well as the GDA partners and supporters.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all speakers and moderators who shaped the Green Digital Action Summit: Beate Andrees, Assistant Director-General & Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia; Bertrand Le Tallec, Economic Advisor, French Embassy in Berlin; Bosun Tijani, Minister of Communication, Innovation and Digital Economy, Nigeria; Charles Hurpy, Senior Digital Specialist, World Bank; Christoph Winterhalter, Chairman of the Executive Board, DIN; Daniel Paska, Director, Sustainability Policy, Ericsson; Denis Trystram, Distinguished HPC Professor, Grenoble INP/INRIA; Dirk Messner, President, German Environment Agency (UBA) & CODES Chair; Diane Drubay, Visual Artist & Curator, Blueshift; Eric Masanet, Head, Industrial Sustainability Analysis Lab, University of California, Santa Barbara; Ginelle Greene-Dewasmes, Lead, Artificial Intelligence and Energy, World Economic Forum; Hugues Ferreboeuf, Advisory Board Member, The Shift Project & European Green Digital Coalition; Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Managing Director, GIZ; Jean-Manuel Canet, Senior Manager, Climate & Biodiversity, Orange Group; Jonas Corne, Operating Partner, Ardian, Founder & Former CEO, Greenbyte; Jodie Miller, Head, Isotope Hydrology Section, IAEA; Julie Godin, Manager – European Partnerships, GGGI; Katrin Saarsalu-Layachi, Climate and Energy Ambassador, Estonia; Kilian Vieth-Ditlmann, Head of Policy, AlgorithmWatch; Lala Hikmat, Action Agenda, COP29 Presidency; Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU; Lynn Kaack, Professor of Computer Science & Public Policy, Hertie School; Max Schulze, Director, Leitmotiv; Mathieu Wellhoff, Head of Digital Sobriety, ADEME; Mathilde McBride, Data Protection Lead, Accenture; Melanie Kubin-Hardewig, Vice Chair, GeSI and Vice President Group Corporate Responsibility, Deutsche Telekom AG; Nasimi Aghayev, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Germany; Paolo Gemma, Chair, ITU-T WP2/5; Philipp Hacker, Professor, European New School of Digital Studies; Rahul Jha, Programme Analyst, ITU; Reyna Ubeda, Study Group Engineer, ITU; Roberto Jaguaribe, Ambassador of Brazil to Germany; Robert Wagner, Lead Scientist, UBA AI and Big Data Solutions Lab; Robin Zuercher, Programme Lead, Green Digital Action, ITU; Saifur Rahman, 2023 President, IEEE; Stefan Wunderer, Government Funding Manager, Nokia Mobile Networks; Vanessa Gray, Head, Emergency Telecommunications and Environment Division, ITU; and Xavier Merlin, Member of the Board, ARCEP.

Green Digital Action

green@itu.int

www.itu.int/green-digital