

Global Youth Summit 2025 (GYS-25)

Varadero, Cuba, 11 to 13 March 2025

Outcome report



Global Youth Summit 2025 (GYS-25) - Outcome report

The 2025 edition of the Global Youth Summit was held in Varadero, Cuba from 11 to 13 March 2025 under the theme “Amplifying youth voices in ICT for an inclusive and connected future”.

GYS-25 was the 17th youth event organized by International Telecommunication Union (ITU), continuing a journey that began with the first-ever youth forum, held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2001.

Around 400 participants from 31 countries attended the event from all ITU regions, with young people from across the globe attending, with gender balance, and representation from Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Governments, regional organizations, companies, and academia also took part, along with representatives of other UN agencies and Youth Envoys for ITU's Generation Connect programme.

The three-day event, organized by the ITU and hosted by the Ministry of Communications of the Government of Cuba, set out to amplify youth voices on the tech-driven future. Participants

from around the world between 18 and 25 years of age identified their priorities to ensure that information and communication technologies are safe, affordable and accessible.

Key tech issues for young people discussed at the summit included connectivity, digital inclusion, online safety, ethical development and use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, preparing for the future of work, and enabling digital participation by all to foster economic and social empowerment of youth globally.

The summit's networking opportunities and intergenerational dialogues allowed young people to learn from technology professionals, experts and policy makers. Discussions highlighted the need for youth to be digitally included and skilled to create opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers of global social and economic development.

This report on the Global Youth Summit captures ideas shared at the event and challenges identified by youth as well as recommendations for action and will serve as a resource for stakeholders seeking to align approaches on digital issues and the digital development agenda, including by using the ideas as input to the Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPMs) and the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25). The ideas captured in this report will also be presented during the Youth Celebration that will take place on 16 November 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan, just before WTDC 2025.

Sessions

The event included interactive thematic discussions, breakout exercises, intergenerational dialogues, and pitching and networking opportunities during which youth explored innovative youth-led projects. A song competition completed the series of interactive activities for youth to engage. Highlights of the Summit can be seen in the Highlights Video, available [here](#).

Tuesday 11 March 2025	Wednesday 12 March 2025	Thursday 13 March 2025
Opening Ceremony	Intergenerational Dialogue: Harnessing ICTs for Health, Wellbeing, and a Better Future	Driving Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Youth Digital Development
Youth digital empowerment	Cybersecurity: are you safe online?	UN and Youth: Collaborative Pathways to a Connected and Inclusive Future
Bridging the Digital Skills Gap for Decent Employment	Coffee Break / Networking	Closing Ceremony and Celebration
Youth as agents of change for green digital transformation and climate action	Empowering Youth: Economic aspects of ICTs and digital transformation – innovative business models	
Transformative Tech: A Deep Dive into AI for connectivity	Equitable Digital Empowerment – Women Leadership in ICTs	
	Youth regional priorities to foster equitable empowerment for a connected digital future	

Youth Voices for an inclusive and connected future

Key challenges

Youth from around the world identified the following challenges that need addressing with urgency to ensure inclusive and sustainable progress in the digital era:

1. Lack of critical and resilient infrastructure, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDs).
2. Digital inclusion gaps including in the access to, use and knowledge of ICTs that present major barriers to be active participants in the digital society, economy and ecosystem.
3. Urban-rural digital divides that hinder equitable access to digital opportunities and resources.
4. Inadequate e-waste management to mitigate impact and ensure environmental responsibility and sustainability.
5. Lack of youth engagement in discussions on shaping the future of the digital world, the global technology landscape and future digital public policy.
6. Lack of digital skills.

Recommended Actions

Youth recommended the following measures for action to foster an inclusive, sustainable, and digitally empowered society:

1. Developing robust regulatory frameworks to enhance connectivity and build confidence and trust in digital technologies.
2. Fostering collaboration through public-private partnerships and multistakeholder approaches to expand affordable connectivity solutions and infrastructure projects, particularly in unserved and underserved areas and for marginalized groups.
3. Promoting digital accessibility for ICT products and services jointly with a holistic and intersectional approach in formulation and implementation of policies strategies aimed to enhance digital inclusion, to ensure equitable access to education, skills development, and employment opportunities, thus ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital society, and economy.
4. Encouraging and empowering youth-led entrepreneurship and innovation in the digital world as drivers of youth employment and economic growth.
5. Using technology, including green digital technologies, to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly digital future.
6. Prioritizing the development of digital skills among all youth to equip them with the tools needed to navigate and thrive in the rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Annex 1: Overview of the ITU Global Youth Summit - GYS 25sessions

Opening ceremony



The Opening ceremony welcomed the following distinguished guests, who underlined their commitment to digital development, and recognized the Summit as a platform for action, and for advancing a more inclusive, sustainable and secure digital future for all.

- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU
- H.E. Mr Ernesto Rodriguez Hernandez, First Vice-Minister, Ministry of Communications, Cuba
- *Video message:* Mr Felipe Paullier, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs
- Youth representatives: Ms Edlawit Dereje, Ethiopia/Africa; Mr Rakan Alanazi, Saudi Arabia/Arab States; Ms Yearin Lee, Korea (Rep.)/Asia and the Pacific and Mr Sergio José Díaz García, Cuba/Americas



Youth digital empowerment



Moderator: Mr George Pule, GCYE Africa, Zambia

Firestarter: Ms Mayte Medina, President, Unión Nacional de Informáticos

Panelists:

- Ms Catalina Carbajo, Fundación Gran Chaco, Argentina
- Mr Jung Choul Loic Kaboré, Generation Connect Youth Envoy Africa, Burkina Faso
- Mr Tariq Mohammed, Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN) (GC Alumni)
- Ms Anna Orlova, Department of television and cloud technology, Intersputnik
- Ms Gala Tomovska, Wave Group, North Macedonia (Republic of)

Participants discussed how to shape the digital future building an accessible, inclusive and connected future highlighting challenges and opportunities, contributed innovative solutions to enhance infrastructure, expand connectivity and digital ecosystems, extend access to digital literacy programs, and create inclusive, safe and sustainable digital environments.

Bridging the Digital Skills Gap for Decent Employment



Moderator: Ms Eva Marie Ecklu, Ghana, Generation Connect Youth Envoy Africa

Panelists:

- Ms Millenium Anthony, GCYE Africa, Tanzania
- Ms Reet Chopra, AI Skills Accelerator for girls, India
- Ms Zulegmy Carrasco Rodriguez, Cuba
- Mr Akuè Allogho Glen Serguey, GCYE Africa, Gabon

Participants explored how to empower young people with the digital skills they need to secure decent jobs in the digital economy, stressing the need to address unequal access to digital training, disparities in digital skills, and the lack of safeguards that leave some youth behind and create opportunities for meaningful employment. But to create an inclusive digital future, digital literacy is key and these programmes must be tailored to local languages and cultures and reach diverse communities, and rural areas. More needs to be done to encourage more girls and women to enter STEM fields and this requires providing access to resources and role models who can inspire and guide them.

Youth as agents of change for green digital transformation and climate action



Facilitators:

Mr Lavan Gardiner, GCYE Americas, Bahamas
Ms Julieth Sewava, GCYE Africa, Tanzania

Group leads:

- Ms Mariangel Calderón Martínez, GCYE Americas, Dominican Rep.
- Ms Madjidath Ouro-Djeri, GCYE Africa, Benin
- Ms Gaso Grace Pascal, GCYE Africa, South Sudan
- Ms Cleidys Betsy Hernandez, Environmental Specialist, GAMMA, Cuba
- Mr Kudzai Zhuwaki and Mr Innocent Mudzingwa, GCYE Africa, Zimbabwe

With the rapid expansion of our digital society and the rising use of electronic devices, both e-waste and the ICT sector's carbon footprint have surged. Participants discussed in breakout groups strategies and roles they can play to make tech more sustainable for the future, considering e-waste, climate change mitigation and transition to a green and circular economy.

Transformative Tech: A Deep Dive into AI for connectivity



Moderator: Mr Shergaun Roserie, GCYE Americas, St Lucia

Panelists:

- Ms Haneen AlMayouf, National Center for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI), Saudi Arabia

- Mr Juan Alonso, GCYE Americas, Paraguay
- Mr Rodion Immel, Technical Department, Intersputnik
- Ms Yearin Lee, GCYE Asia and Pacific, Korea (Rep.)
- Ms Rose Rwegasira, GCYE Africa, Tanzania

Participants explored how groundbreaking transformative tech like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, IoT and Cloud Computing are revolutionizing the digital world and cutting-edge technologies including satellites, are breaking barriers and contributing to connecting everyone, everywhere. Participants stressed the challenges related to bias, cybersecurity and job displacement, noting as well that to ensure equitable adoption and maximize the benefits of AI, capacity building in its use and international cooperation are required to avoid disparities and fostering a more inclusive society. The session was organized with the support of the Project led by BDT and funded by MSIT Korea on Emerging Technologies.

Intergenerational Dialogue: Harnessing ICTs for Health, Wellbeing, and a Better Future



Moderator: Ms Mariangel Calderón Martínez, GCYE Americas, Dominican Rep.

Panelists:

- Hon. Dingumuzi Phuti, Deputy Minister, Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe
- Dr Eduardo René Valdés Bencosme, MINSAP, Cuba
- Ms Fatoumatta Buwareh, GCYE Africa, Gambia
- Ms Nematou Kabore, GCYE Africa, Burkina Faso
- Ms Erina Eunis Adria Etsaga Sendze Abori, GCYE Africa, Gabon
- Ms Beverly Chikoore, GCYE Africa, Zimbabwe

In this session, participants examined how ICTs are revolutionizing telehealth, fostering safe listening practices, and addressing mental health challenges across all age groups. Participants shared their experiences and insights on how to ensure ICTs are a force for good in building healthier, happier communities and illustrating how young people and older adults can collaborate to ensure technology is used for good and that ICT health solutions are culturally relevant, inclusive, and sustainable. Telehealth inclusion requires investment in digital infrastructure, early digital literacy training, and youth-focused workshops to ensure equitable access and engagement. Data protection in telehealth was also stressed as critical to building trust as well as youth involvement in policy-making and innovation processes.

Cybersecurity: are you safe online?



Facilitator: Ms Madjidath Ouro-Djeri, GCYE Africa, Benin

As digital natives, being online is the second nature of young people. With today's societies and economies becoming increasingly digital, youth are more and more exposed to cyber attacks and threats. This guided discussion enabled participants to share their views and experiences on defining and anticipating the risks they face online, on to protect themselves and keep safe online, and how to include more young people in cybersecurity careers. Diverse perspectives emerged on the role of generative AI, with some highlighting its potential harms, such as spreading misinformation, while others emphasized the need for training to understand and mitigate these risks. Digital literacy was recognized as a crucial tool for empowering users to navigate online spaces safely.

Empowering Youth: Economic aspects of ICTs and digital transformation - innovative business models



Moderator: Ms Uliana Stoliarova, GCYE CIS, Russian Federation

Firestarters:

- Video message from Mr Arseny Plossky, Rapporteur, ITU-D Study Group 1, Question 4/1
- Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, POTRAZ, Zimbabwe

Panelists:

- Ms Alina Ustinova, Senior International Cooperation Manager/Head of Youth Engagement, CGITC, Russian Federation
- Mr Lavan Gardiner, GCYE Americas, Bahamas
- Mr Shergaun Roserie, GCYE Americas, Saint-Lucia
- Mr Amadou Tall, GCYE Africa, Guinea

Participants contributed their views on the economics of ICTs and the role youth can play in developing innovative business models, how to better leverage digital infrastructures, services and technologies to reduce the prices of services and increase inclusive affordable access. With youth being the most connected, they are creating new economic opportunities. Participants noted that it is essential to create mechanisms to reduce the price of digital tools to ensure affordable prices for consumers and in particular vulnerable populations, and for youth to align business ideas and projects with current needs. Participants further learned from the work done by the ITU-D Study Group dealing with economic aspects of national telecommunications/ICTs.

Equitable Digital Empowerment – Women Leadership in ICTs



Moderator: Ms Milagro Suiira, GCYE Americas, Panama

Firestarter: Ms Katia Pérez Díaz, Vicepresidenta en Quota S.R.L, Coordinadora de la Red Cubana de Mujeres Emprendedoras, Cuba

Panelists:

- Ms Reet Chopra, AI Skills Accelerator, India
- Ms Lorena Giménez, AI Skills Accelerator, Paraguay
- Ms Edlawit Dereje Loulseged, GCYE Africa, Ethiopia
- Mr Tariq Mohammed, Chair, Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN) (GC Alumni)
- Ms Shahad Albalawi, International Representation Director, CST, Saudi Arabia
- Ms Layla Vargas Gonzalez, Ministry of ICT, Costa Rica

In an increasingly digital world, equitable access and leadership in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are critical to shaping a future where everyone can thrive. But despite progress, disparities in ICT leadership persist, particularly in emerging fields like for example, Artificial Intelligence (AI). This session enabled participants to learn from stories of women leading the way in ICTs and how mentorship, innovation, and collaboration can bridge gaps and inspire women and youth to lead the charge in digital development.

The Network of Women (NoW) in the Development Sector of the ITU and related mentorship programme, was indicated as a good practice that build, in the medium and long term, a community where women delegates representatives from different countries, that support each other, expand their network, advocate, share experience and knowledge to foster women empowerment in ICT sector.

Youth regional priorities to foster equitable empowerment for a connected digital future



Moderator: Ms Millenium Anthony, Tanzania, Generation Connect Africa

Panelists:

- GCYE-AFR: Ms Gaso Grace Pascal, South Sudan, Mr George Pule, Zambia
- GCYE-AMR: Mr Juan Alonso, Paraguay, Ms Mariangel Calderón Martínez, Dominican Rep.
- GCYE-ARB: Mr Rakan Alanazi, Saudi Arabia
- GCYE-ASP: Ms Yearin Lee, Korea, Mr Zhuoyong Shi, China
- GCYE-CIS: Ms Uliana Stoliarova, Russian Federation
- GCYE-EUR: Ms Dorijn Boogaard, Netherlands

Youth leaders shared their priorities for shaping an inclusive and connected digital future. ITU Generation Connect Youth Envoys (GCYE) reported on the main priorities they identified through the consultations that were carried out at the regional level (available [here](#)), focusing on digital inclusion for all, affordable connectivity, skills development, cybersecurity and data governance, digital innovation and emerging technologies, ICTs and climate challenges, inclusive and ethical AI development.



UN and Youth: Collaborative Pathways to a Connected and Inclusive Future



Moderator: Mr Francisco Pichón, UN Resident Coordinator, Cuba and Ms Mariangel Calderón Martínez, GCYE Americas, Dominican Rep.

Panelists:

- Ms Elena Nápoles Rodríguez, Information and Communications Program Officer, UNESCO
- Mr Johan Navarro Padrón, Digital Transformation Coordinator, UNDP
- Ms Livia Quintana Llanio, Program Officer, UNFPA
- Ms Yanisbell Sánchez Rodríguez, Program Officer, FAO
- Ms Meylin Pacheco, Policy and Program Officer, WFP
- Mr Rolando Verdes, Program Assistant, Emergency Preparedness and Response, WFP
- Mr Miguel González, International Advisor for Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health, and now Officer-in-Charge, PAHO/WHO

The session highlighted the specific actions taken by the UN system and its agencies in Cuba to amplify youth voices and foster an inclusive, sustainable connected future. Participants highlighted the importance of developing a favourable digital infrastructure and ensuring youth competence in digital technologies. The UN's broader technological contributions, such as telemedicine, mobile health applications, AI-driven diagnostics, and digitalized clinical records, were also highlighted, showcasing how youth, particularly university students, have been instrumental in driving innovation in these areas. Collaborative efforts between the UN, governments, and youth are essential for leveraging technology to achieve sustainable development goals and ensure no one is left behind.

Driving Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Youth Digital Development



Moderator: Ms Rose Rwegasira, GCYE Africa, Tanzania

Panelists:

- Mr Lesdaniel Herrera Reyes, ETECSA Transfermovil, Cuba
- Ms Revinah Remigius, GCYE Africa, Tanzania
- Ms Alina Ustinova, Senior International Cooperation Manager/Head of Youth Engagement, CGITC, Russian Federation
- Ms Claire Chaseya Makuyana, GCYE Zimbabwe

As technology evolves, it fuels opportunities for young entrepreneurs to develop groundbreaking ideas and transform industries. Participants explored how young leaders can shape a brighter future in the digital economy through innovation and entrepreneurship. Innovative applications and solutions were shared highlighting the potential of innovation and entrepreneurship of youth. Some participants stressed however, the lack of appropriate regulatory frameworks, the lack of access to skills, in particular management skills, financial resources and the networks needed to fully unleash their potential.

Closing Ceremony and Celebration



The closing ceremony welcomed youth representatives as well as distinguished guests.

Generation Connect Youth Envoys expressed their thanks to the ITU and the government of Cuba for enabling youth from across the world to connect and share their visions for a brighter future. As we prepare for WTDC-25, youth asked all stakeholders to take the outcomes of this summit to inspire regional and global priorities and that the challenges and priorities expressed are not only heard but acted upon. As catalysts of change, they concluded, we can bridge the digital gaps together and create an equitable digital future for all.

- Ms Uliana Stoliarova, GCYE-CIS, Russian Federation
- Ms Dorijn Boogaard, GCYE-EUR, Netherlands
- Mr Eugenio Acosta, Youth representative, Cuba
- Mr Juan Alonso, GYCE-Americas, Paraguay



Distinguished guests agreed that the innovative ideas, solutions, and partnerships proposed by youth at the Global Youth Summit will be instrumental in driving a more inclusive, sustainable, and secure digital future for everyone.

- H. E. Mr Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of Cuba
- H.E. Ms Mayra Arevich Marín, Minister, Ministry of Communications, Cuba
- H.E. Mr Ernesto Rodríguez Hernández, First Vice-Minister, Ministry of Communications, Cuba
- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU



Annex 2: Resources

Press release

- [ITU Global Youth Summit places young people at the heart of digital transformation](#)

Speeches

- [Opening Remarks by Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU](#)
- [Closing Remarks by Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU](#)

Video

- [Highlights video](#)
- [A journey through the ITU-D youth events throughout the years \(Youtube\)](#)

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International Telecommunication Union
Place des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva Switzerland