



2026 ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)

***Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for
an inclusive and sustainable digital future***

**25-26 May 2026
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

Event website: <http://itu.int/go/RDF-AFR-26>

CONTRIBUTION FORM

This form is intended to collect inputs from stakeholders contributing to the implementation of the Baku Action Plan and the ITU Regional Initiatives for Africa (2026–2029).

ORGANIZATION: [Ministry of Technology and Science, Zambia]

FOCAL POINT: [Gezile Zulu, Principal ICT officer, gezile.zulu@mots.gov.zm, +260974360372]

TITLE: [National Emergency Telecommunications Plan and Child Online Protection and Girls in ICT]

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION:

The Department of Digital Communications under the Ministry of Technology and Science plays a critical role in promoting secure, inclusive, and resilient digital development in Zambia. Through initiatives such as the National emergency Telecommunications (NETP) development and drafting process, Child Online Protection (COP), and Girls in ICT, the department continues to strengthen communication systems, safeguard vulnerable internet users, and promote equal participation in the digital economy.

The National Emergency Telecommunications Plan once developed shall focus on ensuring that communication systems remain operational during emergencies and disasters. The department coordinates with mobile network operators, government institutions, emergency services, and other stakeholders to establish reliable communication frameworks that can support disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. This includes strengthening emergency communication infrastructure, developing coordination protocols, improving network resilience, and enhancing early warning systems through ZICTA and DMMU. Through the NETP, Zambia aims to guarantee uninterrupted communication services that are essential for public safety, national security, and effective disaster management.

In the area of Child Online Protection, the department is actively working to create a safer digital environment for children and young people. As internet usage continues to grow, children face increasing risks such as cyberbullying, online exploitation, exposure to harmful content, and privacy violations. The department collaborates with schools, parents, law enforcement agencies, regulators, civil society organizations, and international partners to raise awareness about online safety and responsible internet use. Key actions include conducting digital literacy campaigns, promoting safe online behaviour, supporting the development of child protection policies, and encouraging reporting mechanisms for online abuse. The department also supports stakeholder engagement in strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks that protect children in cyberspace. Through these efforts, the ministry seeks to empower children to benefit from digital technologies while minimizing online risks and vulnerabilities.

The Girls in ICT initiative is aimed at encouraging girls and young women to participate in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education and careers. Recognizing the gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, the department implements programs that inspire girls to pursue digital skills and innovation opportunities. Activities include mentorship programs, ICT training workshops, coding sessions, career guidance, innovation competitions, and commemorations of the International Girls in ICT Day. The initiative also highlights successful women in technology as role models to motivate young girls to break barriers and actively contribute to the digital transformation agenda. By promoting digital inclusion and equal opportunities, the department supports the empowerment of girls and women to participate meaningfully in Zambia's growing digital economy.

Through these three strategic areas, the Department of Digital Communications continues to advance national development by promoting digital resilience, online safety, and inclusive participation in technology and innovation.

COUNTRIES in FOCUS:

The implementation of the National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP), Child Online Protection (COP), and Girls in ICT initiatives in Zambia is expected to positively impact several African countries, particularly within the Southern African region. The countries most likely to be affected by the National Emergency Telecommunications Plan include Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Zambia shares regional environmental and climatic conditions with these countries, including the Zambezi River basin, the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), and weather systems influenced by the Indian Ocean. As a result, natural disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones, disease outbreaks, and severe storms often affect these countries simultaneously. Strengthening Zambia's emergency communication systems will therefore improve regional coordination, information sharing, disaster preparedness, and emergency response across borders.

Additionally, the Child Online Protection initiative has the potential to influence neighbouring countries by promoting safer digital environments for children throughout the region. Cyber threats, online exploitation, and harmful digital content are cross-border challenges that require regional cooperation among African nations. Similarly, the Girls in ICT initiative can inspire regional efforts to promote digital inclusion and women's participation in technology sectors. Countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, and Angola may benefit through shared knowledge, partnerships, and regional ICT empowerment programs that encourage innovation and digital skills development among young women and girls.

YEARS of IMPLEMENTATION: [Tick the relevant boxes]

☒ 2026

☒ 2027

☒ 2028

☒ 2029

RELEVANT ITU REGIONAL INITIATIVE: [Tick the relevant boxes]

☒ AFR1: Resilient digital infrastructure and universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for sustainable development

☒ AFR2: Developing an inclusive, trustworthy artificial intelligence ecosystem in Africa for socio-economic development

☒ AFR3: Building trust, safety and security in the use of telecommunications/ information and communication technologies

- ☒ AFR4: Development of digital applications, micro, small and medium enterprises and digital innovation ecosystems
- ☒ AFR5: Sustainable funding mechanisms for Africa's digital transformation

Please find more information on the ITU Regional Initiatives 2026-2029, as defined by WTDC-25, [here](#).

RELATED ITU-D PRIORITIES AS DEFINED BY THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025 [Tick the relevant boxes]

- ☒ Affordable connectivity
- ☒ Digital Transformation
- ☒ Enabling policy and regulatory environment
- ☒ Resource mobilization and international cooperation
- ☒ Inclusive and secure telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

Please find more information on the ITU-D Priorities, as defined by WTDC-25, [here](#).

RELATED PARTNER2CONNECT FOCUS AREAS [Tick the relevant boxes]

- ☐ Focus Area 1 – ACCESS: Connecting people everywhere
- ☒ Focus Area 2 – ADOPTION: Empowering communities
- ☒ Focus Area 3 – VALUE CREATION: Building digital ecosystems
- ☒ Focus Area 4 – ACCELERATE: Incentivizing investments

Please find more information on the Partner2Connect Focus Areas Action Framework [here](#).

RELATED WSIS ACTION LINE: [Tick the relevant boxes]

- ☒ C1: The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- ☒ C2: Information and communication infrastructure
- ☒ C3: Access to information and knowledge
- ☒ C4: Capacity building
- ☒ C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
- ☒ C6: Enabling environment
- ☐ C7: ICT applications
- ☐ C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- ☐ C9: Media
- ☐ C10: Ethical dimensions the Information Society
- ☒ C11: International and regional cooperation

RELATED GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT: [Tick the relevant boxes]

- ☒ 1: Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals

- ☒ 2: Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all
- ☒ 3: Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promote human rights
- ☒ 4: Advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches
- ☒ 5: Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity

RELATED SDG: [Tick the relevant boxes]

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ SDG 1: No Poverty | ☒ SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities |
| ☐ SDG 2: Zero Hunger | ☐ SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities |
| ☐ SDG 3: Good Health and Well- being | ☐ SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| ☐ SDG 4: Quality Education | ☐ SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production |
| ☒ SDG 5: Gender Equality | ☒ SDG 13: Climate Action |
| ☐ SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation | ☐ SDG 14: Life Below Water |
| ☐ SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy | ☐ SDG 15: Life on Land |
| ☐ SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth | ☐ SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions |
| ☒ SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | ☒ SDG 17: Partnerships for the SDGs |