



ITU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM FOR AMERICAS (RDF-AMS 26)

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

16 and 17 June 2026 | Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

<http://itu.int/go/RDF-AMS-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 Americas (2026-2029).

ORGANIZATION: Caribbean Telecommunications Union

FOCAL POINT: Rodney Taylor, Secretary-General, Rodney.Taylor@ctu.int

TITLE: Resilient and Inclusive Connectivity for Caribbean Fisherfolk and Coastal Communities: The Smart Seas Project

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION:

The CTU, building on the ITU/CTU/TATT Smart Seas Toolkit for Disaster Resilience Project, proposes to contribute to the Baku Action Plan and the ITU Regional Initiatives for the Americas 2026-2029 through continuation and expansion of the Smart Seas across Phases 1.5 and 2, focused on resilient, inclusive and affordable communications for small-scale fishers and other coastal and maritime users in Caribbean SIDS.

Smart Seas Phase I (ending June 2026) has demonstrated that the digital divide in SIDS does not end at the shoreline. Small-scale fishers, many of whom operate in small, undecked vessels within territorial waters and exclusive economic zones, remain highly exposed to maritime hazards, adverse weather, piracy, emergency situations, and digital exclusion. Phase I strengthened the maritime communications enabling environment through a gap analysis across the Trinidad and Tobago Search and Rescue Region, the development of the online Smart Seas Toolkit, targeted VHF-DSC equipment and GMDSS-related training, and an Agenda for Accessible Communications at Sea for small-scale fishers.

A proposed Phase 1.5, to be undertaken during 2026-2027, will provide the preparatory bridge for direct interventions across the Caribbean. It will continue policy and regulatory support, identifying and filling policy and regulatory gaps, related to relevant international conventions and instruments, structured stakeholder engagement and needs assessments; resource mobilization and partnership-building, targeted context-appropriate capacity-building for fisherfolk and relevant organizations, and finalization of an investment-ready Phase II Project Document.

Phase 2, proposed for 2027-2029, will move from enabling-environment support to practical implementation across selected Caribbean countries, with outputs designed for wider replication among CTU Member States. It will focus on five action areas: policy and regulatory support; capacity-building and procurements; early warning system support, including maritime and coastal weather and sensor data; digital transformation, including emerging technologies such as AI to support the maritime data ecosystem and fisheries value chain; and outreach and regional knowledge-sharing/collaboration.

This action will directly contribute to the implementation of WTDC-25 outcomes, including Resolution 11 on telecommunications/ICT services in rural, isolated, unserved and underserved areas, particularly its recognition of territorial waters and populations such as small-scale fishers; Resolution 34 on telecommunications/ICTs in disaster preparedness, early warning, rescue, mitigation, relief and response; and Resolution 37 on bridging the digital divide, including coverage and usage gaps affecting unserved and underserved areas. By supporting communications at sea, Smart Seas advances universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity, disaster resilience, early warning dissemination, digital inclusion, sustainable livelihoods and practical SIDS-focused implementation across the Americas region.

COUNTRIES in FOCUS:

Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, with applicability to the wider Caribbean and other SIDS.

YEARS of IMPLEMENTATION:

- ☒ 2026
- ☒ 2027
- ☒ 2028
- ☒ 2029

RELEVANT ITU REGIONAL INITIATIVE: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ AMS1: Facilitating resilient infrastructure to enable deployment of universal and meaningful connectivity
- ☒ AMS2: Digital inclusion, digital skills/competencies
- ☒ AMS3: Support for innovative digital ecosystems and the adoption and use of emerging technologies
- ☐ AMS4: Promoting cyber resilience and capacity building in cybersecurity and cyber resilience
- ☒ AMS5: Governance and enabling regulatory frameworks for sustainable digital transformation

RELATED ITU-D PRIORITIES AS DEFINED BY THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025

- ☒ Affordable connectivity
- ☒ Digital Transformation
- ☒ Enabling policy and regulatory environment

- ☒ Resource mobilization and international cooperation
- ☒ Inclusive and secure telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

RELATED PARTNERS2CONNECT FOCUS AREAS

- ☒ 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

RELATED WSIS ACTION LINE: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ 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 or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ 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 or delete the irrelevant items]

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| ☒ SDG 1: No Poverty | ☒ SDG 4: Quality Education |
| ☒ SDG 2: Zero Hunger | ☐ SDG 5: Gender Equality |
| ☒ SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being | ☐ SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation |

☐ SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

☒ SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

☒ SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

☐ SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

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☐ SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

☐ SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

☒ SDG 13: Climate Action

☒ SDG 14: Life Below Water

☐ SDG 15: Life on Land

☐ SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

☒ SDG 17: Partnerships for the SDGs