Dear Sir/Madam,

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the co-organizers, are pleased to invite you to the WSIS Forum 2020, which ITU will host in Geneva, Switzerland. In response to the general requirement for organizations to scale down activities and meetings and in order to mitigate the effects of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation, the annual WSIS Forum, originally scheduled from 6 – 9 April 2020, has been postponed to 31 August – 4 September 2020. The overall theme for WSIS Forum 2020 is “Fostering digital transformation and global partnerships: WSIS Action Lines for achieving SDGs”.

The WSIS Forum represents the world's largest annual gathering of the ‘ICT for development’ multistakeholder community and is a global multistakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development. The WSIS Forum 2020 (WSIS+15) will provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

The WSIS Forum builds upon the outcomes of the UN General Assembly Overall Review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes (UNGA Resolution 70/125) that recognized the necessity of holding this Forum on an annual basis and called for close alignment between WSIS and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, the WSIS Forum will leverage the WSIS-SDG Matrix and serve as a platform for discussing the role of ICTs as a means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with due regard to the global mechanism for follow up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (UNGA Resolution A/70/1).

The WSIS Forum is organized with the engagement of other United Nations Agencies, including FAO, ILO, ITC, UNDESA, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNODC, UPU, UN Women, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO and UN Regional Commissions.

Its format, agenda, and thematic focus are the result of an open consultation process with the involvement of all WSIS Stakeholders. The Forum will build upon two tracks, the High-Level Track, consisting of policy statements, interactive high-level dialogues, a WSIS Prize ceremony, a ministerial round table, and the Forum Track, which will offer participants a series of WSIS Action Line facilitation meetings, country workshops, thematic workshops, training sessions, special tracks on various thematic areas, knowledge cafés, a Hackathon (Smart Sustainable Cities) as well as an exhibition addressing issues that are critical to WSIS implementation and follow-up in a multistakeholder setting.

To ensure gender balance at the WSIS Forum 2020, we encourage all WSIS Stakeholders to plan gender balanced delegations and nominate women speakers for sessions and workshops, in particular the high-level segment.

Relevant documentation, agenda and registration can be accessed at www.wsis.org/forum. We look forward to welcoming you to the WSIS Forum 2020.

Yours faithfully,

[original signed]

Mr. Houlin Zhao
Secretary-General, ITU

[original signed]

Ms Audrey Azoulay
Director-General, UNESCO

[original signed]

Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary-General, UNCTAD

[original signed]

Mr. Achim Steiner
Administrator, UNDP

To: All WSIS Stakeholders
- Governments
- Private Sector
- Civil Society
- Academia/ Technical Community
- International Organizations