

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2021

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) has been celebrated annually every 17 May since 1969 to mark the founding of ITU and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.

The theme for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2021

- The Second Virtual Consultation of Councilors approved “Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times” as the theme for WTISD in 2021.
- The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the critical role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for continued functioning of societies. ITU Members have stepped up and engaged in activities that have proven essential in saving lives and keeping economies going. They have demonstrated their remarkable resilience in the face of challenging times.
- Digital transformation is to deliver in an efficient, accountable, transparent, and auditable way to the benefit of all. It not only implies applying and/or updating the technology we use, but creating a culture that embraces new digital technologies that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of people in their daily life and business.
- While COVID-19 is perceived as the biggest international challenge the world has faced since the Second World War,¹ challenging times may also include climate change and the destruction of our natural environment, economic crisis, extreme weather events and natural disasters.^{2,3}
- In this decade of action, WTISDs help raise awareness of The Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/ICT Development ([Resolution 200, Rev. 2018, Dubai](#)), as a shared global vision where telecommunications/ICTs enable and accelerate social, economic and environmentally sustainable growth and development for everyone. ITU monitors and evaluates progress towards the 5 goals and 24 targets.

Calls to action

To “Accelerate the digital transformation in challenging times”, ITU invites:

Member States to:

- Continue leveraging telecommunications/ICTs by developing digital policies and strategies to adapt and respond timely and effectively to different challenges that may occur.
- Report national progress with special focus on the targets that particularly contribute to digital transformation in the framework of the [Connect 2030 Agenda](#) (Targets 1.4, 1.7, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1, 5.1), by providing data and statistics, as appropriate, as well as initiatives to be included in the Connect 2030 Agenda microsite.

Sector Members, Associates and Academia to:

¹ [2020: ‘Biggest international challenge’ ever taken on by UN humanitarianists | UN News](#)

² [UN75 Report: The Future We Want, The UN We Need | United Nations](#)

- Continue to facilitate cooperation and partnership in areas such as innovation, infrastructure, investment, and capacity development to advance digital transformation for all and achieve the Connect 2030 Agenda.
- Share their technology-driven strategies, considering the possible opportunities and/or challenges of digital transformation, and how these challenging times, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, can be used as an opportunity to connect all.

All stakeholders to:

- Raise awareness of this year's theme, "Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times."
- Reflect how ITU and its membership respond and adapt to new challenges through ICTs.
- Enhance cooperation between governments, business communities, UN bodies, civil society and other stakeholders in challenging times.
- Reinforce the importance of developing digital strategies and other technology-driven initiatives as part of digital transformation.
- Consider both the opportunities and/or challenges of digital transformation when trying to find timely and effective answers to the different challenges that the world may experience.
- Share with ITU their challenges, lessons learned, expertise, guidelines, success stories, case studies, good practices, solutions, publications, and policies put in place to better meet future challenging times (Annex 2).

Milestones



ITU advocacy materials

The ITU Secretariat will support ITU membership by official means and through the communication and advocacy campaign, including:

- A Circular Letter to invite membership to participate actively in WTISD-21 celebrations.
- A website and advocacy kit dedicated to WTISD-21 with video messages, the campaign logo, posters, social media graphics, speeches and a campaign video that membership is welcome to share and promote to their respective audiences.
- [Connect 2030 microsite](#) with dashboards to measure the progress of ITU membership to deliver on the Union's 5 goals and 24 targets. The microsite is also a hub to share the guidance of ITU and the contributions of membership towards connecting the world.

ITU COVID-19-related resources

- [ITU COVID-19 website](#) with ITU's list of data, analyses, reports, multimedia assets, guidance, initiatives and partnerships to date, including cybersecurity resources.

WTISD 2021 celebration

This year, WTISD-21 will take place virtually on 17 May in the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2021 (WSIS). By integrating WTISD into WSIS, we can reach many more stakeholders than via a separate event, including civil society. In 2020, WSIS saw 15000 cumulative attendees over 11 weeks of virtual events.

The event will address the importance of enhancing collaboration and cooperation across countries and sectors and bring together ITU partners to showcase how governments, companies and academia can accelerate digital transformation through telecommunication/ICT in and for future challenging times. Related events within the WSIS Forum 2021 will also aim to address the WTISD 2021 theme.

If you should have any questions or need for assistance, please do not hesitate to contact ITU at strategy@itu.int.