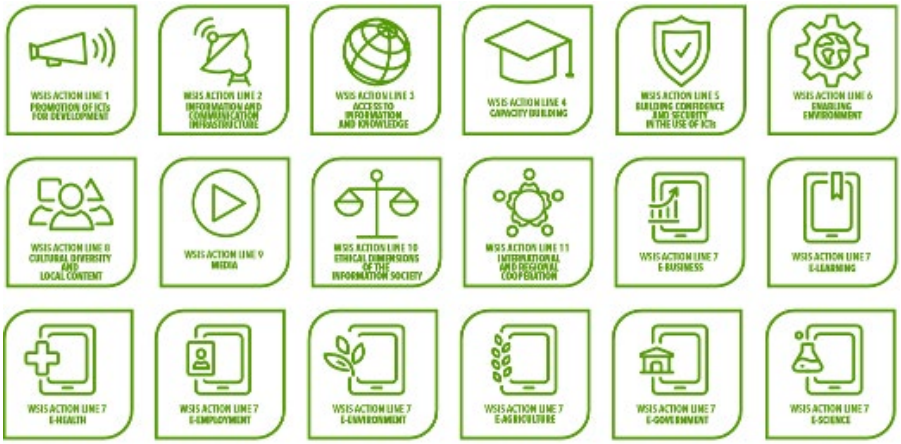
WSIS FORUM 2022
Starting on 15 March
Final week 30 May - 3 June

working together towards 2025
World Summit on the Information Society
Turning targets into action
Geneva 2003 | Tunis 2005 | New York 2015

WSIS Action Lines

High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2022 Theme*: Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*



ITU
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITED NATIONS UNCTAD
UNDESA
World Health Organization
FAO FIAT PANIS
International Trade Centre
UPU UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION
World Meteorological Organisation
UNEP
ILO

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Lead Facilitator: UN DESA

C1 - The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

The scale, spread, and speed of change brought about by digital technology are unprecedented, especially in a time of the global pandemic. As stated in the GA resolution 74/306, economic and social inequalities, in addition to digital divides, have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the progress made towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its goals and targets along with hard-won development gains have been considerably undermined. The resolution, likewise, recognizes the role and leverage that Member States possess in reducing the impact of the COVID-19 through digital technologies and urges them to use those to advance digital governance through concerted actions all while also ensuring a path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to a preparatory survey UN DESA conducted in preparation for the 2022 LOSI, it is noted that cities with higher LOSI levels tend to align municipal e-government strategies with national e-government strategies. They also pay attention to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and national strategies for digital development. They have existing partnerships with local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), a dedicated budget for e-government, and take into consideration the voice of residents and civil society. SDG-oriented strategies include improving education, welfare, health care, transportation, mobility, safety, and the quality of life, as well as monitoring and improving the environmental situation. Majority of the cities responding to the Survey publish their budget on their municipal portal. Cities recognized that such efforts help them accelerate their development from diversified aspects, cover multiple public concerns, perfect digital government services, and improve users' satisfaction.

C7 - ICT Applications: E-government

Since 2001, DPIDG has published the United Nations E-Government Survey on a biennial basis. The Survey is the only global report that assesses the e-government development status of all Member States of the United Nations. The assessment rates the e-government performance of both countries and cities and for each level, relative to one another, as opposed to being an absolute measurement. It recognizes that each country should decide upon the level and extent of its e-government initiatives in keeping with its own national development priorities and with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we could observe from the COVID-19 pandemic, digital transformation can be driven at a remarkable pace and ensue unprecedented development and adoption of ICTs in governments at all levels. This pivotal change brought by the pandemic should also incite governments and

academics to further research into the future of digital government and the key trends in technology and e-government. This endeavor, which the UN E-Government Survey 2022 will also include in its research, allows for two main outcomes; the first one will be an overall better preparedness of governments in harnessing these new technologies, and the second will be ensuring digital inclusion and strengthening engagement and partnership to guarantee that no one is left behind (LNOB) and not in spite of these new ICT applications but because of them.

As part of the research for the upcoming United Nations E-Government Survey 2022, most city portals have a dedicated COVID-19 page or section serving as a hub for pandemic-related information. Many cities have formulated specific strategies and implemented targeted digital technology solutions for COVID-19 response and recovery.

C11 - International and regional cooperation

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many dialogues and initiatives in the area of international and regional cooperation to promote universal access and bridge the digital divide since the last annual meeting of the WSIS. While it is not possible to list all initiatives here, there are two that deserve highlighting. The first one launched at the beginning of 2020 is the UN 75 Initiative and Declaration which recognized the critical power and role that digital technologies can play in transforming society. The second one, released in May 2020, is the United Nations Report of the Secretary-General Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, a report drafted for the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

Further, to facilitate progress towards the SDGs, in particular Goal 11, several forums have addressed sustainable urban planning and the pursuit of a more sustainable future, focusing on a number of different areas. The 2021-2022 International Mayors Forum, hosted by UN DESA and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development together with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), aimed at providing a knowledge-sharing platform to help cities initiate smart transformations towards more sustainable, resilient, safe and inclusive societies, with particular emphasis on addressing pandemic-related challenges. The second Forum for Mayors, held in April 2022, focused on exchanging urban development solutions around climate-neutral housing, green cities, and sustainable urban transport. The C40 World Mayors Summit in 2019 launched the Global Green New Deal, with mayors from nearly 100 major cities making new commitments to achieve 2030 targets for sustainable, healthy food systems and clean air. In *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations system will strengthen its collaboration with sub-national authorities through the creation of an Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments.

WSIS Action Line – C2: Information and communication infrastructure
Lead Facilitator: ITU

WSIS Action Line – C3: Access to information and knowledge
Lead Facilitator: UNESCO

WSIS Action Line – C4: Capacity Building
Lead Facilitator: ITU

WSIS Action Line – C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
Lead Facilitator: ITU

COVID-19 has highlighted the fundamental importance of ICT to the economy and society. From teleworking and e-commerce to telemedicine and remote learning, ICT technologies are supporting continued access to education, healthcare, and essential goods and services.

Never before have telecommunication networks been so vital to our health and safety, and to keep our economy and society working, as during the COVID-19 crisis we are living through today. Building trust and confidence in the usage of ICTs is therefore more crucial than ever in ensuring that all the world's people benefit from ICTs as well as in enabling social and economic development for all nations.

Collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships between the government, industry, academia and civil society are essential to developing a transformative but also a safe, trusted and inclusive cyberspace.

This is where ITU comes in. ITU, as the UN specialized agency for ICTs and as facilitator for Action Line C5 of the World Summit on the Information Society, works within its mandate to bring different stakeholders together to forge meaningful partnerships to help countries address the risks associated with technology. This includes adopting national cybersecurity strategies, facilitating the establishment of national incident response capabilities, deploying international security standards, protecting children online, and of course as core mandate of ITU, building capacity.

The ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) is a framework for international cooperation aimed at enhancing confidence and security in the information society. In 2022, after a two-year review process, Council has approved Guidelines for utilization of the GCA.

In the time of COVID-19, ITU has created the CYB4COVID platform to provide a space for stakeholders to share information about initiatives, actions, resources and projects on cybersecurity that are designed to help ensure communities remain connected safely and securely.

ITU also organized a series of cybersecurity-related webinars under the virtual WSIS TalkX platform aimed at helping different stakeholders. The updated version of ITU's Guidelines for Parents, Carers, Guardians, and Educators for Child Online Protection specifically discusses the actions that can be taken to ensure the online safety of children.

As part of the dedicated group of experts focusing on discussions on Artificial Intelligence and Health, an Ad-hoc Group on digital technologies for COVID health emergency was established - with security and trust forming a key integral component of these discussions.

Since 2020, ITU has continued to undertake, together with a variety of national and international partners, assessments on computer incident response in countries and set up CIRTs. ITU also continues to conduct regular regional exercises of cyber-drills to enhance countries' ability to respond to threats.

The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), a multi-stakeholder effort managed by ITU, is a trusted reference that measures the commitment of countries to cybersecurity at a global level.
As an international standards-making body for ICTs, interoperability, accessibility and security are our requirements from the design stage. Over 200 standards focusing on security have been published by ITU.

In its efforts, ITU works closely with partners from international organizations, the private sector and academia - strengthened by MoUs with a range of organizations such as UNODC, World Bank, Interpol, WEF, FIRST and several others.

Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs is a global issue that requires a global dialogue. No single entity or organization can address the whole range of current and emerging challenges. ITU is committed to working with all stakeholders to help build a universally available, open, secure and trustworthy ICT ecosystem.

WSIS Action Line – C6: Enabling Environment
Lead Facilitator: ITU

WSIS Action Lines – C7: ICT Applications: E-learning and E-science
Lead Facilitator: UNESCO

WSIS Action Line – C7: ICT Applications: E-health
Lead Facilitator: WHO

WSIS Action Line – C7: ICT Applications: E-agriculture
Lead Facilitator: FAO

The world is facing economic, social and environmental shocks due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and currently grappling with geopolitical conflicts. These shocks have impacted agrifood systems, igniting and fuelling a global food crisis. The recent *Global Report on Food Crises 2022*[1] states that approximately 193 million people in 53 countries or territories experienced acute hunger in 2021 – an increase of nearly 40 million people compared with 2020. To support countries, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) established the FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme as an immediate response, a transition and recovery phased programme, to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on agrifood systems. The current focus of the programme is to 'build and transform' agrifood systems.

In the initial phases of the programme, FAO identified seven key areas of action required to ensure rapid and continued support to the most vulnerable while anticipating the secondary repercussions of the virus. These are a) Global humanitarian response plan; b) Data for decision-making; c) Economic inclusion and social protection to reduce poverty; c) Trade and food safety standards; d) Boosting smallholder resilience for recovery; e) Preventing the next zoonotic pandemic; f) Food systems transformation. To further support countries, FAO mobilized resources and availed a number of policy tools to analyse and assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture, food systems, food prices, food security across the globe. For example, the programme as of February 2022, received confirmed and pledged contributions totalling USD 466 million. One major achievement is the FAO's new Data-in-Emergencies Hub[2] which was launched in 2021 and supports up-to-date (i) risk profiling; (ii) monitoring of the impact of shocks on agricultural livelihoods; including using technologies for remote assessment in food insecure countries, (iii) supports ex-post impact assessment to provide granular understanding of the impact of natural disasters and conflicts on agriculture and agricultural livelihoods.

Besides the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, FAO also continued with digital and innovative initiatives and programmes:-

- **Hand-in-Hand initiative**: an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative of the FAO to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (SDG1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2). In this context, the **Hand-in-Hand Initiative Geospatial Platform** provides advanced information, including food security indicators and agricultural statistics. The platform was recognized as the best collaborative platform towards data-driven agriculture at the Geospatial World Forum (GWF) 2022[3].

[1] Global Report on Food Crises – 2022. https://www.wfp.org/publications/global-report-food-crises-2022
[2] Data in Emergencies Hub. https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/
[3] Geospatial data for more targeted agricultural interventions: FAO receives excellence award. https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/geospatial-data-for-more-targeted-agricultural-interventions-fao-receives-excellence-award/en

- **FAO Data Lab, launched a Big Data Tool** that platform that publishes data on real-time on a daily bases (such as daily food prices). The Data Lab seeks also to expand its interactive dashboard to include more than 500 media houses around the world.

In addition to these initiatives, FAO continued collection and publishing data-based knowledge products for decision-makers to support policy making related to food-systems. Examples of some knowledge products to support countries include (not limited to), *20 National Surveys using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)*[4] and *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (July 2021)*. In the current focus of the FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, FAO aligns its response to the UN Food Systems Summit identified priorities. FAO continues to build robust monitoring systems that use real time data and analysis – which include early warning systems, price monitoring and other systems supporting agri-food systems.

The role of digital technologies and connectivity (such as access to broadband) continue to be prioritized. It is evident that the pandemic response has placed the uptake of digital technologies at the forefront, for example, it has spurred countries to accelerate their digital agriculture transformation by harnessing digitalization and innovation. Nevertheless, the fast paced uptake needs to be kept under check, if digital transformation is not managed well, it risks marginalizing and entrenching the already existing "divides"- such as rural-urban divide, gender divide, age divide, income divide and widening the digital divide. The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2022, was held under the theme 'ICTs for Well-Being, Inclusion and Resilience: WSIS Cooperation for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs' reiterated the importance of well-being, inclusion and resilience. FAO continues to monitor the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on global food security, and most importantly observing the impacts on agrifood systems – such as impacts on supply chains, smallholder farmers and family farmers, women and youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups.

It is against this background that the WSIS Action Line Facilitators Meeting - C7: E-Agriculture [5]was held at WSIS Forum 2022 under the theme - *ICTs for Well-Being, Inclusion and Resilience: through digital skills for youth and women in agriculture*. The theme reinforced FAOs commitment to leveraging and adopting digital technologies for Better Production, and specifically through inclusion and resilience. The session took stock on digital agriculture transformation in Africa, by discussing the findings of FAO and ITU's report on the "Status of Digital Agriculture in 47 sub-Saharan Africa countries". To support the theme, FAO and ITU presented selected projects that focus on digital skills for youth and women in agriculture. This session had two separate parts, (i) presentations on digital skills for women and youth; and (ii) panel discussion on challenges and solutions. During the session, speakers and panelists from international organizations and the private sector presented the challenges faced by women and youth in the adoption of digital technologies and how decision-makers and stakeholders should

[4] Access to food in 2020. Results of twenty national surveys using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5623en

[5] WSIS ALFM C7: E-Agriculture. https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2022/Agenda/Session/329

take measures to improve digital literacy and skills that affect its uptake. The session also addressed the most concerned questions and issues on digital inclusion posted by the participants that covering various sectors. Outcomes of this session would be used to inform the design of digital inclusion programmes for smallholder farmers and family farmers, women and youth, Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable groups.

WSIS Action Line – C7: ICT Applications: E-business
Lead and Co-Facilitators: UNCTAD, ITC, and UPU

WSIS Action Line – C7: ICT Applications: E-environment
Lead and Co-Facilitators: WMO, UNEP, and ITU

WSIS Action Line – C7: ICT Applications: E-employment
Lead Facilitator: ILO

WSIS Action Line – C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
Lead Facilitator: UNESCO

WSIS Action Line – C9: Media
Lead Facilitator: UNESCO

WSIS Action Line – C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society
Lead Facilitator: UNESCO