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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM | |

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| Summary  This report presents an overview of ITU’s activities and relationship with the UN system since Council 2016.  Action required  This report is transmitted to the Council **for information**.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  Documents [C08/INF/8](http://www.itu.int/md/S08-CL-INF-0008/en), [C11/INF/6](http://www.itu.int/md/S11-CL-INF-0006/en), [C12/INF/1(Rev.1)](http://www.itu.int/md/S12-CL-INF-0001/en), [C13/INF/10](http://www.itu.int/md/S13-CL-INF-0010/en), [C14/INF/7](http://www.itu.int/md/S14-CL-INF-0007/en), [C15/INF/4](http://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-INF-0004/en) and [C16/57](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0057/en) |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 As a United Nations Specialized Agency, ITU collaborates, participates, and interacts within the United Nations system, its governance processes, subsidiary mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination networks, as well as through joint initiatives, to strengthen synergies and foster greater cooperation and information-sharing in order to deliver programmatic, operational, and management mandates in a more coherent and coordinated manner.

The ITU General Secretariat, assisted by the UN Liaison Office in New York, coordinates ITU’s external relations and ensures that its priorities are strengthened and reflected in the UN system. Over recent years, these efforts have resulted in greater visibility for the work of ITU and acknowledgment of telecommunications/ICTs as an important cross-cutting tool for economic, social, and environmental sustainable development.

ITU continued to play a key advocacy role for increased visibility of ITU’s mandate within the UN system and of ICTs in the internationally agreed development agenda, and strengthened relationships with different stakeholders and partnerships.

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

2016 was a ground-breaking year for the United Nations with the coming into effect, on the first of January, of the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.

ITU’s activities with respect to the 2030 Agenda in 2016 included, among others, participation in the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF), held annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), from 11-20 July at UN headquarters in New York and related mechanisms and forums, such as the Forum on Partnerships (31 March, New York); Financing for Development Forum (18-22 April, New York); Integration Forum (2-4 May, New York); and the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum) (6-7 June, New York). Activities included the following: hosting side events in various forums with partners such as GeSI, GSMA, WEF, Accenture, Verizon, IBM Research, Aspen Institute, Symantec Corporation; inputs to the HLPF process from the Chair of the ITU Council, as well as contributions from the WSIS Forum and Broadband Commission; inputs to issue briefs on “Inclusive Digital Financing Services” and on “Financing for ICT Infrastructure” of the Financing for Development annual report; and also collaboration with the Technology Facilitation Mechanism’s stream of work on the development of an online platform of science, technology and innovation (STI) initiatives and programmes.

**UN Governance and subsidiary mechanisms**

ITU participates annually, as an observer, in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Statistical Commission, among others.

During 2016, ITU continued to make all possible efforts to include the work of ITU in relevant General Assembly, ECOSOC, and CSTD resolutions and to a number of UN Secretary-General’s annual reports presented to these bodies.

Key issues and contributions include: ICTs for sustainable development (digital divide, social inclusion, including empowerment of women and girls, youth, and people with disabilities; climate change, disaster risk management and emergency telecommunication; LDCs, LLDC, SIDS, technology transfer, capacity building; m-health); ITU/ICT-related issues (Cyber Security, Internet Governance); and the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) follow-up process (the annual outcomes of the WSIS implementation process, including the WSIS Forum, WSIS Prizes, WSIS Stocktaking, UNGIS and Partnership on Measuring ICT for development, submitted to the CSTD).

The ITU Secretary-General’s mission to New York in 2016 for the annual opening of the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly, included attending the Broadband Commission meetings, participation in plenaries, thematic High Level panels, side-events, report launches, and bilateral meetings among others.

ITU also attends meetings of the governing bodies of sister UN bodies, particularly those of UNESCO’s, WMO, WIPO, WHO, and the Human Rights Council.

**3. UN Summits and Conferences**

ITU’s work with the United Nations during this period was also driven by the Union’s participation in and contributions to other major conferences, summits, and high-level meetings, including: the World Humanitarian Summit (23-24 May, Istanbul, Turkey); High-Level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (27-29 May, Antalya, Turkey); Habitat III (17-21 October, Quito, Ecuador); Climate Change Conference COP 22 (7-18 November, Marrakech, Morocco); the 11th Annual Internet Governance Forum (November, Guadalajara, Mexico). Activities in these events included participation in the negotiation process of the outcome documents, side events, policy statements, and strengthening relationships with different stakeholders, including Member States and UN agencies, Sector Members, Academia, and civil society.

**Inter-agency Coordination**

During this period, ITU has contributed actively to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which unites the executive heads of UN bodies twice a year under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, and its three pillars (High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM), and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

ITU’s visibility and leadership within the CEB remained strong, by way of the ITU Secretary-General chairing the ICT-Network Information Security Special Interest Group of the HLCM and leading on Cybersecurity, WSIS, and ICTs for development-related issues, including new frontier issues, such as Artificial Intelligence, within the HLCP.

ITU participates actively in the work of various inter-agency mechanisms and networks throughout the year, among these the following: Inter-Agency Task Team of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; Inter-Agency Task Team on Financing for Development; Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development; Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality; the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics; the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development; the Inter-Agency and [Expert Group on SDG Indicators](http://www.unsceb.org/content/iaeg-mdg); the UN Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics; the UN Global Pulse Data Privacy Advisory Group and UN Privacy Policy Group; the [UN Environment Management Group](http://www.unsceb.org/content/emg); the UN Geographic Information Working Group; the [Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA Plus)](http://www.unsceb.org/content/ecesa); the Inter-Agency Task Team on Technology Bank; the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Emergency Telecommunications; the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; the UN Communication group; the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa; the Inter-agency Consultative Group of the United National system and international organizations on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020; the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the UN Governing Bodies Secretariat Group; the UN Strategic Planning Network (UNSPN); and the Inter-agency Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) Task Force. The ITU Secretary-General also continued to co-Chair the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) in 2016.

Furthermore, ITU also works closely with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to bring the potential of ICTs/broadband for sustainable development. As member of the UN Inter-Agency Group of the LDCs, ITU contributed to the toolkit for mainstreaming the Istanbul Program of Action.

**Key initiatives with other UN Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies**

Throughout 2016, ITU continued to collaborate and strengthen its joint initiatives with the UN system organizations, on issues ranging from gender equality, youth, accessibility for persons with disabilities, health, education, climate change, smart sustainable cities, e-waste, poverty eradication, the sustainable development goals, countries with special needs, WSIS, cybersecurity, cybercrime, child online protection, and the peaceful use of outer space, among others.

In addition, ITU Regional Offices jointly organize events and implement programmes with other UN regional and country teams, as well as interact with the UN Resident Coordinator Office.

Key initiatives to highlight include the following:

* ITU and UN Women joined forces to launch EQUALS: The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, and continuation of the GEM-TECH Awards;
* ITU is an active member of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, the international, multistakeholder initiative to improve the availability and quality of ICT data and indicators;
* The joint WHO-ITU mHealth for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) partnership a global initiative since 2012;
* ITU-FAO collaboration supporting countries to develop their e-agriculture strategy;
* ITU-WMO-UNESCO/IOC Joint Task Force (JTF) tasked with developing a strategy and roadmap that could lead to enabling the availability of submarine repeaters equipped with scientific sensors for ocean and climate monitoring and disaster risk reduction (tsunamis).

**Collaboration with the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system (JIU)**

ITU has continued to collaborate with the JIU, participating with dedicated thematic focal points and providing timely contributions to the various JIU reviews undertaken during this period. ITU has also provided comments to JIU reports requested by the CEB for system-wide observations.

With regards to the JIU Review of ITU management and administration in 2016, ITU has continued its efforts to fulfil the implementation of the JIU recommendations (both formal and informal), within the established timescale. The overall progress of the implementation of the recommendations will be reported by the secretariat to Council-17 in document [C17/49](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0049/en).

In relation to the follow-up and tracking of ITU acceptance and implementation of JIU UN system-wide reports, since 2016 ITU has increased the acceptance rate for the long-standing JIU recommendations from approximately 50% to 87%, while the implementation rates have gone up from 46% to approximately 86% (as of December 2016) for JIU reports during the period 2006-2014.

2016 JIU reports/recommendations and CEB comments can be obtained from the JIU website: <https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/Pages/reports.aspx>.

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