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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 2017.  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), [C16/57](http://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0057/en), and [C17/INF/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0010/en) |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 As a United Nations (UN) Specialized Agency, ITU collaborates, participates, and interacts with the UN system governance processes, subsidiary mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination networks, as well as through joint initiatives. This work aims to strengthen synergies and foster greater cooperation, information and knowledge sharing in order to fulfil programmatic, operational and management mandates in a more coherent and coordinated manner. The ITU General Secretariat, assisted by its UN Liaison Office in New York, coordinates ITU’s relations with the UN and ensures that its priorities are strengthened and reflected in UN system-wide related work, outputs and agenda setting. Over recent years, these efforts have resulted in greater priority and recognition being given to the critical role of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) for economic, social, and environmental sustainable development. See ITU Council reports [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), [C16/57](http://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0057/en), and [C17/INF/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0010/en) for more information.

**2. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals**

2.1 2017 has been an important transitional period for the UN, with the UN Secretary-General Mr António Guterres ushering in a new set of priorities to ensure a more coherent, accountable, and effective UN system to support the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The Secretary-General’s priorities are to ensure the UN is ‘fit for purpose’. This through reforms in management, focus on conflict prevention, repositioning the UN’s development system, as well as steps towards achieving gender parity, eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse, and protecting whistle-blowers.

2.2 The *2030 Agenda* recognizes that “the spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress and to develop knowledge societies”. In this regard, ITU continued to follow, participate and provided inputs to the global follow-up and review process of the SDGs carried out annually at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), by means of an ITU Council contribution. ITU has also enhanced its outreach with countries presenting their voluntary national review reports annually at the HLPF, to raise the visibility of the critical role of ICTs as an enabling tool for achieving and accelerating progress for sustainable development. ITU has also engaged in partnerships and collaboration with UN system entities (i.e. with FAO, ILO, ITC, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNU, UN Women, WHO and World Bank), and other stakeholders to promote ICTs for the SDGs. ITU has organised joint publications and side events for example, the a report presented at the 2017 HLPF, “[Fast-forward progress: Leveraging tech to achieve the global goals](https://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Documents/Fast-forward_progress_report_414709%20FINAL.pdf)“, presenting thought pieces from 25 UN Executive Heads on the role of ICTs across mandates in the UN system to deliver on the SDGs.

2.4 Underlining the importance of the WSIS framework, ITU continued to map and link its activities to the SDGs and the WSIS Action Lines. ITU also increased its engagement with diverse stakeholders and fostered partnerships (including with the WEF, GSMA, and GeSI), as well as with business, civil society, academia, the scientific community, and UN entities, to strengthen efforts in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly with respect to gender empowerment, digital skills, digital financial inclusion, climate change, smart sustainable cities, AI, IoT, agriculture, and health, among others.

**3. UN Governance and subsidiary mechanisms**

3.1 ITU participated in and followed, as an observer, the UN’s governing bodies, such as meetings of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its subsidiary bodies, in particular, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Commission on Sustainable Development and the Statistical Commission, as well as the regular meetings of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) twice a year, UNIDO General Conference, among others. In this respect, ITU has ensured that key ITU activities and the important role of ICTs for sustainable development are reflected in relevant UN Secretary-General reports and UNGA, ECOSOC/CSTD resolutions, among these, UNGA resolution on *Information and Communications Technologies for Development* and ECOSOC/CSTD resolutions on *Science, Technology and Innovation for Development* and the resolution on the *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the WSIS*. Key activities and issues that ITU promotes in various thematic reports and above mentioned resolutions include: WSIS Forum, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, the Connect 2020 Global Partnership, EQUALS, the Partnerships on Measuring ICT for Development and on ICT-Centric Innovation Ecosystem, the digital divides, (including the digital gender gap), youth, inclusion, accessibility, digital skills, LDC, LLDC, SIDS, climate change, smart sustainable cities, e-waste, digital financial inclusion, technology transfer, capacity building, emergency telecommunication, m-health, e-agriculture, cybersecurity, IoT, Artificial Intelligence, and financing for ICT infrastructure, among others.

3.2 The ITU Secretary-General undertakes an annual mission to New York on the occasion of the opening of the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, which includes hosting leading telecom industry CEOs and policy-makers at the annual Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development meeting, attending thematic High-Level panels and related events, and meetings with Heads of State and Government.

**4. UN Summits and Conferences**

4.1 ITU also participated in and contributed to various other UN major conferences, summits and high-level meetings, including: First UN World Data Forum (January 2017); UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Sub-Committee (January, March and June 2017); UNIDIR 2017 Outer Space Conference (April 2017); Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (May 2017); World Health Assembly (May 2017); International Labour Conference (June 2017); High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2017); World Health Organization Global Conference on NCDs (October 2017); Climate Change Conference - COP 23 (November 2017); UNIDO General Conference (November 2017), UN Environment Assembly (December 2017) and the Internet Governance Forum (December 2017) among other.

**5. Inter-agency Coordination**

5.1 During this period, ITU has contributed actively to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its subsidiary mechanisms (HLCM, HLCP, UNDG), which unites the executive heads of UN bodies twice a year under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General.

5.2 ITU’s visibility and leadership within the CEB continued by way of the ITU Secretary-General leading within the CEB/HLCP on Frontier Issues, in particular facilitating the discussion on Artificial Intelligence (AI).  Within the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), ITU confirmed its commitment to the United Nations Development system through its contribution to the cost-sharing of the UN Resident Coordinator system.

5.3 ITU also continues to participate actively in the work of various inter-agency mechanisms and networks throughout the year, including at the regional level. Among these:

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| **Management / Administrative** | **Thematic** |
| * CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment in the UN system * Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations (ENMO) * Human Resources network * Finance and Budget Network * Procurement network * Legal network * Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) * UN Strategic Planning Network * ICT-Network (chaired by ITU SG from 2015-2017) * UN Information Security Special Interest Group ((UNISSIG) chaired by ITU from 2011-2017) * UN Communication group * UN Governing Bodies Secretariat Group * UN Representatives of Investigation Services (UN-RIS) * International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangement, Documents and Publication (IAMLADP) | * Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) * Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) * Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) * Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (IASG) * Inter-agency Consultative Groups on LDCs/SIDS * Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa * Inter-Agency Task Team on Technology Bank * Inter-Agency Task Teams of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism * Financing for Development Task Force * Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) * UN Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs * Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Emergency Telecommunications * [UN Environment Management Group (EMG)](http://www.unsceb.org/content/emg) * Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) * UN Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for Official Statistics * Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics |

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

6.1 ITU continued to strengthen its relationship with UN organizations through joint initiatives promoting ICTs as enabling tools for sustainable development. In this regard, ITU collaborates regularly with UN entities, including FAO, Global Compact, Global Pulse, ILO, ITC, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UN-OHRLLS, UNOOSA, UNU, UN-Women, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, the World Bank, among others.

6.2 During this period, key initiatives to highlight include the following:

* EQUALS: The Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age implemented by ITU, UN Women, UNESCO, UNCTAD, ITC, UNU-CS, GSMA;
* Decent Jobs for Youth Campaign led by ILO and ITU (ITU is leading the digital skills thematic priority of Decent Jobs for Youth, the global initiative to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development);
* Be-He@lthy Be-Mobile WHO/ITU joint programme to enhance the use of mobile technologies to combat non-communicable diseases (Multi-country projects on non-tobacco use, healthy eating and life habits. Setting up a mHealth Hub in Europe to share the best practices);
* Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development led by ITU and UNESCO, with membership from six other UN entities;
* AI for Good Global Summit led by ITU, in partnership with 20 UN sister agencies;
* The Global E-Waste Monitor 2017, in partnership with the United Nations University, and the International Solid Waste Association;
* Innovation for digital transformation by ITU and UNIDO especially on SDG 9;
* Financial Inclusion Global Initiative (FIGI) by ITU and World Bank supported by other partners and foundation;
* United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC): is coordinated by ITU and UNECE and supported by CBD, ECLAC, FAO, ITU, UNDP, UNECA, UNECE, UNESCO, UN Environment, UNEP-FI, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNU-EGOV, UN-Women and WMO. U4SSC serves as a global platform to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”;
* Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities which is being implemented in over 50 cities and was developed by ITU together with UNECE,CBD, ECLAC, FAO, ITU, UNDP, UNECA, UNECE, UNESCO, UN Environment, UNEP-FI, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNU-EGOV, UN-Women and WMO;
* [Green Standards Week](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/gsw/201704/Pages/default.aspx) 2018: co-organized with UNEP, Basel Convention, UNIDO, UN-Habitat and UNU;
* ITU/WMO/UNESCO-IOC Joint Task Force on SMART Cable Systems which is leading an ambitious new project to equip submarine communications cables with climate and hazard-monitoring sensors to create a global observation network capable of providing earthquake and tsunami warnings as well as data on ocean climate change and circulation;
* Annual ITU-UNECE Symposium on the Future Networked Car within the Geneva International Motor Show (brings together key players in the ICT and automotive industries to present their latest intelligent-transport innovations);
* International IoT Week (Geneva, 6-9 June 2017). ITU was one of the co-organizers. The event was co-located with the Global IoT Summit, exploring scientific publications on IoT research. UNDP, UNECE, UNIDO, UNODC, WHO, WMO and WTO discussed how IoT technology can contribute to achieving SDG.5.8;
* Local 2030 and the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. ITU is also active member of this international, multi-stakeholder initiative to improve the availability and quality of ICT data and indicators, with participation of various UN entities;
* Within IASMN ITU has been leading the introduction of enhanced access control to UN premises and services through implementation of standards for Smart Cards including biometric data.

6.3 ITU has also embarked on strengthening joint collaboration with UN entities through collaboration agreements such as the one on agriculture and ICTs with FAO and with WHO on developing an international standard for safe listening devices.

6.4 In addition, ITU maintained close cooperation with a number of UN agencies such as ICAO, IMO and WMO with a view to establishing a stable regulatory environment, satisfying spectrum requirements, ensuring use of spectrum management best practices and developing standards for emerging mobile, aeronautical, maritime and radio technologies, thus creating a sustainable radiocommunication ecosystem that largely contributes to developing the digital economy and bridging the digital divide, as well as monitoring the Earth and outer space.

6.5 Furthermore, ITU continued to work 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 to these groups of countries requiring particular attention. The thematic report on ICTs, LDCs, and the SDGs: *Achieving Universal and affordable Internet in the least developed countries*, was done in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing States, and Small Island Developing States.

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

7.1 Through the Inter Sectoral Coordination – Task Force (ISC-TF), ITU reviewed reports from the JIU’s 2016 and 2017 work plan, as well as the status of recommendations from previous year reports that remained under consideration, including full acceptance and implementation of the agency specific review of management and administration in the ITU carried out in 2016. The percentage of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations by ITU has seen a significant rise in the past two years. This progress, as well as the monitoring mechanism ITU has established has been acknowledged by the JIU as a best practice.

7.2 2016-2017 UN system-wide reports, including the corresponding recommendations and CEB comments can be obtained from the JIU website: <https://www.unjiu.org/content/reports-notes>.

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