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Proposal for the Incorporation of the Development of Digital Economy into the Overall Strategic Goals of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2020-2023

# **Background**

Nowadays, network and information technologies are integrating with traditional economic sectors in a more rapid manner, and countries are speeding up their efforts in developing digital economy. In recent years, ITU has deepened its studies on ICTs, the ICT industry and their integrated use, and exerted wider influence on related Member States through the publication of IDI etc. Against such new backdrop, the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) convened in Buenos Aires this year has further identified one of the key objectives of ITU-D -- "Inclusive Digital Society: Foster the development and use of telecommunications/ICTs and applications to empower people and societies for sustainable development", and further specified in its Outputs the telecommunications/ICTs policies for digital economy as well as products and services related to ICT applications and new technologies, such as information sharing, deployment support, evaluation research and tool kits.[[1]](#footnote-2)

From the membership perspective, all ITU Member States have attached great importance to the driving role of digital economy for various sectors of the real economy. The 2016 G20 Summit in Hangzhou passed the G20 Digital Economy Development and Cooperation Initiative which lays out the definition and significance of digital economy, as well as its guiding principles of innovation, partnership, synergy, flexibility, inclusion, open and enabling business environment, and flow of information for economic growth, trust and security. The Initiative also identifies 6 key areas of priority: expand broadband access and improve quality, promote investment in the ICT Sector, support entrepreneurship and promote digital transformation, encourage e-commerce cooperation, enhance digital inclusion and promote development of MSMEs.[[2]](#footnote-3) The G20 Digital Ministers' Meeting held in Dusseldorf of Germany in April this year adopted the G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Declaration and A Roadmap for Digitalization with the following specific objectives: expand digital infrastructure, promote the fulfillment of the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, encourage continued development of the IoT and the digitalization of production, measure the digital economy, and bridge the digital gender divide etc.

# **Reasons**

The ITU Strategic Plan as a strategic instrument developed on the basis of its Constitution and Convention is of great significance in guiding ITU's activities in the next four years. At present, Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014) pertaining to goals of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019[[3]](#footnote-4) did not cover the latest development trend and impact of digital economy[[4]](#footnote-5). Therefore, we suggest incorporate this into the Plan for the next four years and take it into consideration.

# **Proposal**

Based on the above, we suggest ITU consider to incorporate the promotion of faster integration between digitalization and the real economy into its mid- and long-term strategic plan. Our detailed proposal goes as follows:

* Consider to incorporate part of the outcomes of the G20 Digital Ministers' Meeting held in Germany into the objectives of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2020-2023.
* Promote the development of a universally-recognized research framework on digital economy, including development framework, audit framework, statistical framework and monitoring framework etc.
* Incorporate the promotion of balanced development of digital economy into the major projects of the General Secretariat to promote balanced development of digital economy across all economies in the world.
* Facilitate ITU's use and publication of related index and research reports, such as the annual publication of the Digital Economy Index for all economies in the world and the world development report on digital economy.

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1. Please refer to Output 4.2 (Products and Services) under the ITU-D objectives of the WTDC-17 Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Source: official website of the 2016 G20 Summit: <http://www.g20chn.org/hywj/dncgwj/201609/t20160920_3474.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The overall strategic goals of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019 include "enable and foster access to and increased use of telecommunications/ICTs", "bridge the digital divide", "manage challenges resulting from telecommunication/ICT development", and "innovation and partnership". [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Please refer to Annex 2 to Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014) "ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019", Paragraph 19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)