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Ref:	**Circular Letter/SPM/CDD/No.18/16**
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To: ITU Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia

Subject: **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), 17 May 2018:** *ITU Secretary-General's Call for Action*

Dear Sir/Madam,

The theme for WTISD-18 (17 May 2018), *"Enabling the positive use of Artificial Intelligence for all",* will focus on the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to accelerate the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In recent years there has been significant progress in AI technology, made possible by tremendous advances in contributing fields, such as Big Data, machine learning, computing power, storage capacity and cloud computing, among others. AI-based technologies are already emerging as a key component of proactive tools and applications being used to help people lead better lives by improving healthcare, education, finance, agriculture, transportation, and a wide range of other services.

The 2018 theme will allow ITU Membership and other key stakeholders to focus on the opportunities for how AI can help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

WTISD-18 will coincide with the second edition of the Artificial Intelligence for Good Global Summit at the ITU headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland from 15-17 May 2018.

I appreciate your support.

Yours faithfully,

Houlin Zhao
Secretary-General

Annex: 1

<u>**Annex**</u>

WTISD-18 Call for Action:
"Enabling the positive use of Artificial Intelligence for all"

Recalling:
1. World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969, marking the date of the founding of ITU and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865. It was formally instituted by the Plenipotentiary Conference in Malaga-Torremolinos in 1973. In recognition of ITU as the lead United Nations agency for ICTs, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, November 2005, called on the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 17 May as World Information Society Day (see paragraph 121 of the Tunis Agenda).
2. On 27 March 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/252, proclaiming 17 May as World Information Society Day to focus global attention annually on bringing the enormous benefits of the digital revolution in ICTs to the world's inhabitants.
3. The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in November 2006 welcomed the General Assembly's decision and amended Resolution 68 to invite the Council to adopt a specific theme for each World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

Recognizing:
1. That information and communication technology (ICT) is a key enabler for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. There has been significant progress in Artificial Intelligence technology, made possible by tremendous advances in contributing fields, such as Big Data, machine learning, computing power, storage capacity and cloud computing, among others.
3. Artificial Intelligence is considered as a frontier technology with great potential that could be leveraged, while also recognizing the various challenges that the technology could pose.
4. The importance of engaging all stakeholders to fully leverage the potential of Artificial Intelligence for all.
5. The importance of partnerships among stakeholders including public / private partnerships

Call upon ITU Members to:
1. **SUPPORT and scale up R&D** to understand and explore opportunities where Artificial Intelligence has the most potential impact, particularly in their impact on the Sustainable Development Goals
2. **IDENTIFY how AI** will contribute to achieving the SDGs through, for example, improved efficiency of systems or methodologies to support evidence-based decision-making.
3. **SUPPORT international efforts on collaborative activities** across all sectors and nations to foster innovation using Artificial Intelligence.
4. **ENCOURAGE the** sharing of experiences on the use of Artificial Intelligence across sectors and borders.
5. **CONTEXTUALIZE** the use of Artificial Intelligence to their own regional and national needs.
6. **DEVELOP national policies and strategies** that promote the use of Artificial Intelligence for good and for all.