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| **Council 2019Geneva, 10-20 June 2019** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 2.2** | **Document C19/17-E** |
| **10 May 2019** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| World Telecommunication and Information Society Day |

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| SummaryThe purpose of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. WTISD marks the anniversary of the signature of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the International Telecommunication Union on 17 May 1865.Action requiredThe Council is requested **to note** the celebration of WTISD-19 on the theme **“Bridging the standardization gap”** which was approved by Council 2018.The Council is also requested to **approve** the theme “***Connect 2030: ICTs for the SDGs”*** for WTISD-20. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ReferencesUNGA Resolution [60/252](https://www.itu.int/en/wtisd/Pages/res60-252.aspx); Resolution [71](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-071-E.pdf), [200](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-200-E.pdf) (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference; Council documents [C18/17](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0017/en), [C18/104](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0104/en);  |

# 1. Background

1.1 *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](http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html)).

1.2 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.

1.3 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*.

**2. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2019**

2.1 This year, the Union and stakeholders will celebrate the 50th anniversary of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD-19).

2.2 WTISD-19’s theme is “Bridging the Standardization Gap.” Setting standards is a fundamental pillar of ITU’s mission as the specialized agency of the United Nations for information and communication technologies. ITU standards offer a common basis for growth and innovation, and thereby accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. They enable interoperability, economies of scale and grant access to global markets. They create opportunities enjoyed by small and bigger market players.

2.3 ITU’s Bridging the Standardization Gap programme facilitates the participation of developing countries in ITU’s standards-making process, empowers local experts in the standardization process at the national, regional and international levels, and promotes the implementation of international standards in developing countries.

2.4 The 2019 theme will allow ITU membership and other key stakeholders to focus on the opportunities for:

* participation of developing countries in ITU’s standards-making process;
* empowering local experts in the standardization process at the national, regional and international levels; and
* promoting the implementation of international standards in developing countries.

# 3. The theme for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020

* 1. The year 2020 has been identified as a key milestone for the future ICT development and deployment, especially since the ‘Connect 2020 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/ICT Development’ was first adopted at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2014, Busan, Republic of Korea. WTISD-20 will represent a unique opportunity for ITU membership to commemorate ICT’s contribution to the advancement of the Information Society, specifically focusing on technological advances in the last 10 years.
	2. The proposed theme for WTISD-20 is “Connect 2030: ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”.
	3. The proposed theme will allow ITU membership to reflect on the ICT advances for transition to smart and sustainable development. In particular, it will focus on specific ICT-enabled solutions and emerging trends for fostering economic, environmental and social sustainability, contributing to the five strategic goals of Connect 2030 Agenda: Growth, Inclusiveness, Sustainability, Innovation and Partnership. The proposed theme will allow ITU membership to celebrate the significant progress achieved towards the Connect 2020 targets but also to highlight the emerging needs and challenges while formulating their national and regional strategies to accelerate the ambitious targets for 2030.
	4. This proposed theme for WTISD-20 will be in line with Resolution 200 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), which defines the Connect 2030 Agenda for telecommunications/ICTs, fully aligned with the strategic plan of the Union (2020-2023) and the global efforts to ‘Connect the unconnected’.

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