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| Contribution by the secretariat | |
| ITU COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION AT HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) 2023 | |
| **Purpose**  This document presents the ITU Council contribution and participation at High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2023.  **Action required**  Members are invited to **note** the updates.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  <https://hlpf.un.org/2023> | |

1. **HLPF 2023:** The 2023 HLPF, organized by ECOSOC, took place in New York from 10 to 19 July. It featured a diverse array of speakers, including experts and government officials, along with the participation of NGOs. With the central theme of ‘Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels’, it focused on reviewing progress regarding SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, and supported preparation for the 2023 Sustainable Development Summit. Notable events included Science Day, a climate conference, and discussions on implementation challenges for various country groups, including SDIS, Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, and MICs. Following the HLPF, Member States at the SDG Summit 2023, held 18-19 September, adopted a comprehensive Political Declaration reaffirming their commitments to eradicate poverty and hunger, address inequalities, and promote peaceful and inclusive societies.
2. **Digital/ICTs during HLPF 2023:** During the HLPF 2023, the importance of digital technology in advancing sustainable development across sectors, such as education, energy, human rights and climate change, was prominently highlighted. The general debate referenced digital and ICT topics over 46 times, with a focus on AI, education, and digital divide. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) from 39 countries emphasized digital’s evolving role in expanding access, e-learning, and addressing gender disparities. Europe and Middle Eastern regions emphasized digital development, highlighting the need for partnerships. Digital transformation and smart cities were pivotal in SDGs 9 and 11, while Science Day emphasized knowledge transfer.
3. **ITU Council contribution to HLPF 2023:** ITU Council contribution to the HLPF 2023 was duly submitted to the HLPF 2023. It emphasized its commitment to global connectivity and digital accessibility, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The contribution highlighted ITU’s role in advancing sustainable development aligned with the SDGs and WSIS through its Strategic Plan and Connect 2030 Agenda. This includes addressing the digital divide, prioritizing rural areas and marginalized groups, and advocating for adaptable regulatory frameworks, increased digital infrastructure investments, and digital skills development. Additionally, it further detailed ITU’s contribution to specific SDGs, including Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17.
4. **ITU Participation in HLPF 2023:** In conjunction with its Council contribution, ITU actively engaged with the HLPF 2023 through multiple channels. These encompassed submissions related to the Broadband Commission, Partnership on Measuring ICT4D, WSIS Forum, and UNGIS. Additionally, ITU played an active role in collaborating with UNDESA in organizing expert group meetings (EGMs), aimed at gathering insights from experts both within and outside the UN system, with a particular focus on SDG 9 and SDG 11.

Throughout the HLPF 2023, ITU delivered high-level statements during the general debate and official meetings, addressing pertinent subjects such as science, technology, innovation and the unique challenges faced by small island and developing countries. ITU also organized side events addressing digital connectivity policy imperatives, the metaverse’s potential impact on cities and communities, and harnessing digital innovation for sustainable development. Furthermore, ITU participated in partner-organized side events, discussing various aspects of digital cooperation and infrastructure development to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

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