# Innovation for Emergency Connectivity

Side Event
7th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable
Development Goals (STI Forum 2022)

Organizers: ITU, UN Innovation Network, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

Date: **4 May 2022, 10.30 - 11.30 am (EDT), 4.30 – 5.30 pm (CEST)**

Virtual session

**Register for the event**

Digital technologies are recognized as one of the key enablers for the achievement of SDGs, allowing for more equitable access to education, public services, and healthcare, among others. However, this cannot happen without digital connectivity. Yet, despite the meteoric growth of broadband connectivity, 2.9 billion people have never connected to the Internet and the majority of them are in developing countries.

The gap is especially persistent for the most vulnerable populations and people who are highly prone to connectivity disruptions due to disasters, emergencies, or crisis situations. In that respect, innovative solutions for universal connectivity and fast emergency connectivity response when disasters/crises strike (such as rapidly providing satellite telephones, terminals and other equipment), are crucial.

**About the Session:**

The **Innovation for Emergency Connectivity** session will bring together stakeholders representing different perspectives (UN organizations, tech and satellite companies, representatives of the national and local communities, and associations of the emergency telecommunication operators). The discussion will center around sustainable innovative solutions for connectivity for emergency response with an overall objective of **evaluating the level of innovation in emergency connectivity**, and will as well:

- Highlight **best practices of digital connectivity** in an emergency.
- Spotlight the **importance of partnerships** with the private sector in deploying and providing vital connectivity in emergency response situations, not only in terms of equipment but also how important the connectivity data sharing is for fast response.
- **Discuss lessons learned from deployment on the groun**d and what **innovative technologies** could emerge in the future.

The discussion and knowledge exchange will be further facilitated during breakout rooms by the ITU's International Centre of Digital Innovation (I-CoDI) and UN Innovation Network. During the breakout room virtual sessions, participants will be able to dive into a specific topic of interest.

Moderation by **Kasia Jakimowicz**, ITU's International Centre of Digital Innovation (I-CoDI) & **Catalin Marinescu**, Head of Strategy and Planning, ITU Secretariat General

**Agenda:**

- **Maria-Francesca Spatolisano**, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UNDESA, and Acting Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, United Nations
- **H.E. Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, New York

Panel discussion (25 min)

- **Arif Albayrak**, Co-Chair of the Working Group on Data, ITU/WMO/UNEP Focus Group on Artificial Intelligence for Natural Disaster Management (FG-AI4NDM), Associate Research Engineer at NASA's Biospheric Sciences Laboratory, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
- **Gregory Domond**, Senior Consultant - Regulatory Representative, Conseil National des Télécommunications (CONATEL), Haiti
- **Jonathan Hofeller**, Vice President of Starlink Commercial Sales at SpaceX
- **Aarti Holla-Maini**, Secretary General, Global Satellite Operators Association (GSOA)
- **Patrick McKay**, Data Operations Manager - Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), World Food Programme
- **Rich Thanki**, Managing Director & Head of Technology, Jangala

Break-out room sessions (20 min)

- **Drones & connectivity for humanitarian response** (World Food Programme)
- **Role of AI & data sharing for emergency connectivity** (Focus Group AI4Natural Disaster Management)
- **Wi-Fi solutions for vulnerable populations** (Jangala Big Box)

Wrap up (5 min)

We are looking forward to your participation! More about the speakers at the event website: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/events/I-CoDI/innovation-for-emergency-connectivity/default.aspx

**About STI Forum**

The seventh annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) will be held from 5 to 6 May 2022, organized by the UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs (IATT), convened by UN-DESA and UNCTAD, and the 10-Member Group of high-level representatives appointed by the Secretary General.

The theme of the STI Forum will be Science, technology, and innovation for building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This closely aligned with that of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), to be held in July 2022, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The HLPF in 2022 will review in-depth Sustainable Development Goals 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The STI Forum will take an exclusive focus on the role and contributions of science, technology and innovation to these SDGs.

**About I-CoDI**

**ITU's International Centre of Digital Innovation** (I-CoDI) aims to help countries and partners to advance connectivity and accelerate digital transformation via faster, more impactful and more cost-efficient interventions, bringing key stakeholders, regulators and policy makers together to experiment with new tools, processes and methods, explore new ideas, and effectively use technology to address connectivity challenges.

**About UN Innovation Network**

The UN Innovation Network (UNIN) is an informal, collaborative community of UN innovators interested in sharing their expertise and experience with others to promote and advance innovation within the UN System. UNIN is open to innovators from all UN Entities as well as external partners and to date, 3,000 colleagues from 70+ UN Entities in over 140 countries have joined the Network.

**About Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology**

The Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology coordinates the implementation of the Secretary-General's Roadmap on Digital Cooperation and will advance work towards the Global Digital Compact proposed in the Common Agenda, in close consultation with Member States, the technology industry, private companies, civil society, and other stakeholders.