ICTs *for* **development: Setting the agenda**

A **Snapshot Report** of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17)

WTDC-17: ICTs for Development

Brahima Sanou

Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

We were warmly welcomed recently in Buenos Aires for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (**WTDC-17**), from 9 to 20 October, by the Government of Argentina, to whom I express my sincere thanks. The conference attracted over 1360 participants from 134 Member States.

The **Buenos Aires Declaration** we adopted is our vision for the future. It sends a strong message from the information and communication technology (ICT) community to the world about our contribution to the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Strategic Plan we endorsed will guide us to implement the Buenos Aires Declaration, while the Buenos Aires Action Plan will shape our daily work.

We also adopted five regional initiatives per region that will be cascaded into concrete projects, that I am deeply convinced, will make a difference in the lives of people on the ground.

We organized 13 **side events** on themes related to ICT for SDGs, and we celebrated the **25th anniversary** of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU–D).

I would like to thank all the WTDC-17 side events and anniversary sponsors, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Platinum sponsor of the 25th anniversary celebrations.

> **❝ *WTDC-17 is a landmark on our journey to sustainable development.* ❞**

(Message from the Director)

I would like to congratulate and welcome Mrs Roxanne McElvane Webber, the newly appointed Chair of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG), Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat for his second term as Chair of ITU–D Study Group 1, and Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou, the newly appointed Chair of ITU–D Study Group 1.

I am very proud that two women are leading the work of two statutory bodies of ITU–D. I strongly encourage all ITU members to promote women's representation in their work.

The end of WTDC-17 marks a new beginning. A new journey is about to start, and it will pave the way to new opportunities to achieve socio-economic development.

The outcomes of WTDC-17 will be featured in the final report to be issued soon. In the meantime, a provisional final report is available to all ITU members with access to an ITU TIES account, and I am pleased to present you here a snapshot of the conference. ◢

(Contents)

ICTs for development: Setting the agenda

A 'Snapshot Report'* of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017

*   *This 'Snapshot Report' is intended only to recap some of the highlights of WTDC-17. It is not the official WTDC-17 report.*

Argentina welcomes world ICT leaders to WTDC-17

▶ António Guterres United Nations Secretary-General's video message to WTDC-17

Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary-General

Brahima Sanou Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

Marcos Peña Chief of the Ministerial Cabinet, Argentina

Andrés Horacio Ibarra Modernization Minister, Argentina

Emil Paul Tscherrig Apostolic Nuncio
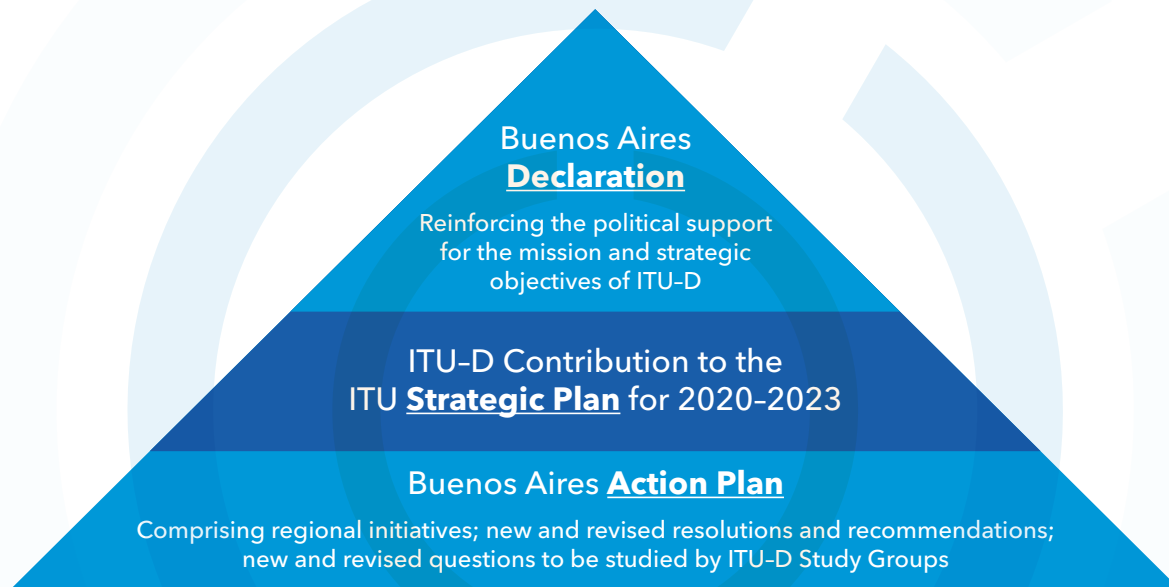

▶ See the WTDC-17 highlights video

See more photos on flickr

Setting the agenda ...

At **WTDC-17** global ICT leaders convened to specifically review and endorse actions under the theme "ICT for Sustainable Development Goals (ICT4SDG)".

Outcomes included:

Buenos Aires
Declaration

Reinforcing the political support
for the mission and strategic
objectives of ITU–D

ITU-D Contribution to the
ITU **Strategic Plan** for 2020–2023

Buenos Aires **Action Plan**

Comprising regional initiatives; new and revised resolutions and recommendations;
new and revised questions to be studied by ITU-D Study Groups

A rich two-week meeting programme featured:

A **High-level plenary segment**	**Strategic discussions**
Ministers and deputy ministers shared their views on emerging trends and on matters of strategic importance to the development of the ICT sector.	Delegates were involved in discussions at different levels to shape the global ICT environment.

Side events

Participants shared knowledge and experience on timely issues:
- Cybersecurity
- Gender
- Digital skills for youth employment
- Emergency telecommunications
- Digital economy
- E-health.

Lightening sessions
- Satellite and the SDGS making a difference (EMEA Satellite Operators Association (**ESOA**))
- Argentinian Modernization Plan (Argentina's **Ministry of Modernization**)
- UNESCO harnessing ICT4SDG towards knowledge societies (**UNESCO**).

... for ICTs for sustainable development

WTDC-17 by the numbers

Total number of participants » 1360

Total number of participants from ITU Member States and ITU–D Sector Members 1208

Officials from the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies 152

Snapshot of registration statistics: ITU Member States

By region

Africa	Americas	Arab States
35	23	20

Asia-Pacific	CIS *Commonwealth of Independent States*	Europe
25	8	23

Gender distribution

28% 72%

Female participants 341 Male participants 867

VIP presence

VVIPs 2

VIPs 45

Worldwide

ITU Member States
Current total worldwide

17% 83% **134**

Developing countries 111 Developed countries 23

Distribution of participants
Current total of Member States

15% 85% **1011**

Developing countries 863 Developed countries 148
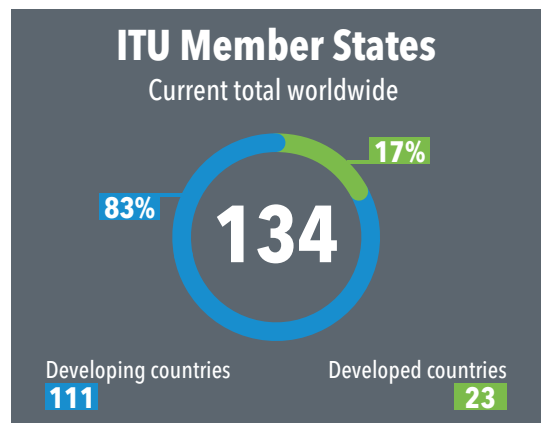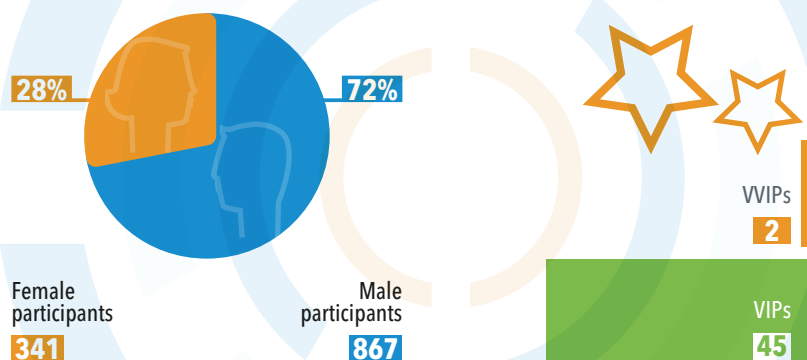
Sector Members, Academia and Observers

197

Number of entities 83

Click to see WTDC-17 at a glance

Speakers

Bios Pre-event

Bios GSR

Photos

Videos

#ITUGSR
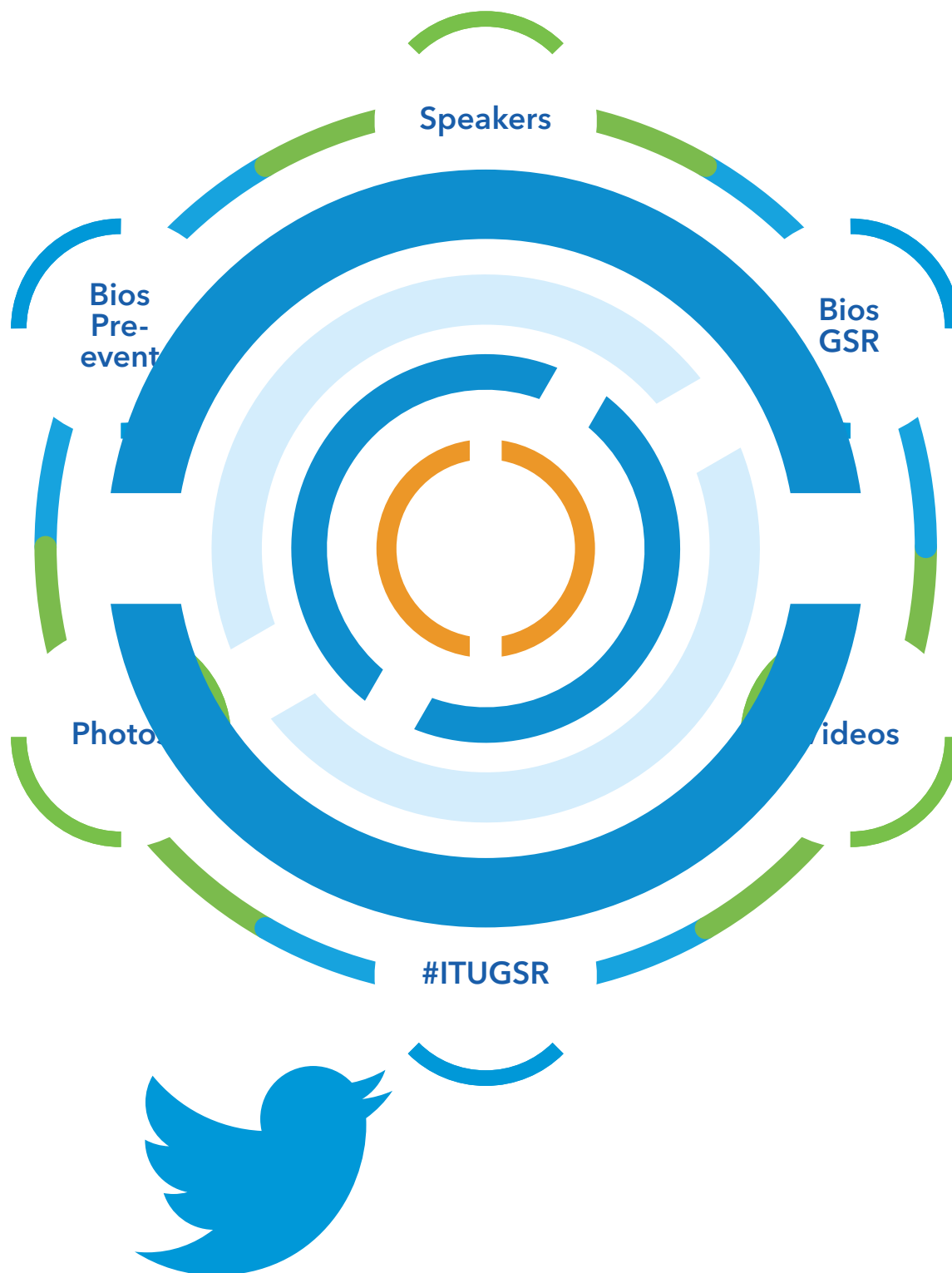
> **❝ Communication technologies can help us on each and every Sustainable Development Goal. ❞**
>
> Antonio Guterres
>
> Director General, United Nations

(Speaking at the WTDC-17 Opening Ceremony)

> **❝ *We stand firmly convinced to have a better world is a connected world, and this revolution and transformation of humanity can be found through telecommunications.* ❞**
>
> Marcos Peña
>
> Chief of the Ministerial Cabinet, Argentina

(Speaking at the WTDC-17 Opening Ceremony)

❝ *We think that democracy is strengthened through citizens who are connected; who have the capacity to not only receive information, but also to produce information.* ❞

Andrés Horacio Ibarra

Modernization Minister, Argentina

(Speaking at the WTDC-17 Opening Ceremony)

> **" What we achieve here in Buenos Aires in the next two weeks will shape not just the next four years, but the next 13 years – all the way to 2030, the year set by the international community to achieve the SDGs. "**

Houlin Zhao

ITU Secretary-General

(Speaking at the WTDC-17 Opening Ceremony)

" *People's stories and experiences continue to inspire our work so that one day everyone will be empowered by the full potential of ICTs to promote socio-economic development and peace in the world.* **"**

Brahima Sanou

Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

(Speaking at the WTDC-17 Opening Ceremony)

WTDC-17 advances ICTs for sustainable development

Delegates participating in the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (**WTDC-17**), which took place in Buenos Aires from 9 to 20 October, have adopted a forward-looking agenda designed to leverage information and communication technologies (ICTs) towards the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) – and to chart the next four-years of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (**ITU-D**).

More than 1360 participants, including more than 1010 government delegates representing more than 130 countries, convened in Buenos Aires to specifically review and endorse actions under the WTDC-17 theme "ICT for Sustainable Development Goals (ICT4SDG)". This represented a unique opportunity to realize a "common understanding" on the forward-looking role of ICTs toward achievement of the SDGs, and in so doing, improving livelihoods around the world.

Oscar M. Gonzalez, Argentina's Under-Secretary for ICT Regulation, Ministry of Modernization, was elected Chairman of the Conference.

"The decisions taken at WTDC-17 reaffirm our commitment that ICTs have an important and distinct role to play in the attainment of sustainable development thereby improving the lives of millions of people around the world," said Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary-General, in his closing remarks. "I am confident that infrastructure will be strengthened, investment will be increased, innovation will be developed, and inclusion will be fostered… bringing a better life to all without leaving anyone behind."

The two-week meeting programme included a **high-level plenary segment** in which ministers and deputy ministers shared their views on emerging trends and on matters of strategic importance to the development of the ICT sector. Knowledge and experience were shared among participants at a series of **side events** on timely issues including cybersecurity, gender, digital skills for youth employment, emergency response telecommunications, digital finance and e-health. Rich strategic discussions were also held at the national, regional and international levels, with many **views and experiences shared**.

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High-level segment

A high-level segment enabled high-ranking officials from ITU Member States, for the most part ministers or deputy ministers, to share their views on emerging trends and on matters of strategic importance to the development of the telecommunication and information and communication technology sector worldwide.

See their **statements and videos**.

WTDC-17 Outcomes

The **Buenos Aires Declaration** states that "universally accessible, secure and affordable telecommunications/ICTs are a fundamental contribution towards the achievement of the WSIS Action Lines and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development of the global information society and the digital economy."

WTDC-17 developed and agreed the objectives and outputs that form ITU–D's component in the overall draft of the ITU Strategic Plan. The forthcoming **ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018** to be held from 29 October to 16 November in Dubai, will approve the ITU Strategic plan for the period 2020–2023.

The **Buenos Aires Action Plan** provides a simple, comprehensive and functional instrument for the achievement of the strategic objectives of ITU–D. The Buenos Aires Action Plan, specifically its programmes, regional initiatives and Study Group Questions will further contribute to the implementation of ITU resolutions and recommendations relevant to the mandate of ITU–D, including the ITU Connect 2020 Agenda, the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) action lines and Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.

Regional initiatives outlined in the Buenos Aires Action Plan are intended to address specific telecommunication/ICT priority areas, through partnerships and resource mobilization to implement projects. Under each regional initiative, projects will be developed and implemented to meet the region's needs.

The working methods of the Sector were further improved, the strategic guidelines were developed, resolutions were adopted, and the management teams of the various organs were elected.

As outlined in the Buenos Aires Action Plan, ITU–D study groups are responsible for developing reports, guidelines and recommendations based on input received from the membership for review by their members. Information is gathered through surveys, contributions and case studies, and is made available for easy access by the membership using content-management and web-publication tools. The study groups will examine specific task-oriented telecommunication/ICT questions of priority to ITU–D membership to support them in achieving their development goals.

WTDC-17 also commemorated the **25th Anniversary** of ITU's Development Sector. The milestone was marked by two Ministerial Roundtables focused on the impact of ICTs for SDGs and the future of the digital economy. This was followed by a Gala Dinner honouring all of the Telecommunication Development Bureau's Directors and recognizing the contribution made by ITU–D long-standing Members.

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" *The Bahamas is aware that ICTs are critical to both survival and sustainable development. Our nation is currently in the process of ensuring that one of our Southeastern Islands, devastated by Hurricane Irma is rebuilt as a green island, with special emphasis being placed on the delivery of quality communication at all levels.* **"**

Pakesia Parker-Edgecombe
Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for Information and Communications, Office of the Prime Minister, Bahamas

" *The digital economy has become the substance of the new economy. It is the main engine of development.* **"**

Majed M. Al-Mazyed
Deputy Governor, Communications and Information Technology Commission, Saudi Arabia
(Platinum Sponsor of the ITU–D 25th Anniversary)

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" *E-learning ensures inclusive and quality education for all, for example, multimedia classrooms and digital labs, teachers' portals, free books for the visually impaired, and training teachers to create digital content.* **"**

Begum Tarana Halim
State Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Bangladesh

Side events

A Lighting session on satellite and the SDGs making a difference by the EMEA Satellite Operations Associations (ESOA) featured ESOA's Ethan Lucarelli, Global Network and Services Policy, and Natalia Vicente, Head of Public Affairs as speakers who explain how satellite communication has a key role in achieving all 17 of the SDGs.

WTDC Women's breakfast, showcased initiatives and shared experiences on facilitating digital skills and job creation opportunities for women and girls. These included steps ITU and its members are taking that are making every day Girls in ICT Day as well as digital skills training programmes and job placement services for young women in support of the Digital Skills for Decent Jobs for Youth campaign.

A lighting session on Argentinian modernization plan (Ministry of Modernization) featured speaker Andrés Horacio Ibarra, Argentina's Minister of National Modernization, Argentina's Minister of National Modernization, who gave an overview of Argentina's 21st Century digital agenda objectives in terms of convergence and digital inclusion.

Digital skills for youth employment in the digital economy explored the latest trends in digital skills for youth employment in the digital economy. It also highlighted the role of ITU in promoting digital skills for youth employment globally and shared the latest developments from ITU Members, the European Commission, the Global Initiative and the joint ILO – ITU Digital Skills for Decent Jobs Campaign.

Academia4SDGS: From research to innovative solutions to accelerate sustainable development saw the showcasing of existing and new pilot ITU–D platforms for Academia engagement and other Academia-led projects and initiatives in

ICT4SDGs. It also provided an opportunity for all academia members to discuss possible ways to strengthen the involvement of academia in the future implementation of ICT4SDGs-related projects and initiatives.

Digital economy: Accelerating digital transformation through innovation provided opportunities to bring together multi-stakeholders to discuss digital innovation frameworks leading towards a common agenda to foster innovation through public service stakeholders, startups, and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Emergency Telecommunications showcased the work of ITU–D in the area of emergency telecommunication deployment and its close cooperation with public and private sector partners, on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

Cybersecurity showcased some ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) cybersecurity related flagship initiatives (e.g. the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), the National Cybersecurity Strategy project (NCS), among others), in order to collect views and inputs from the membership, so to improve BDT service delivery for the benefit of the Member States.

A **Lightning session on UNESCO harnessing ICT4SDG towards knowledge societies** was about initiatives which leverage the United Nations Educational, Scientifiic and Cultural Organization's mandate and strengths in ICT4SDG.

E-Health: ICT for universal health coverage raised awareness on the role of ICTs in achieving greater equity in accessing health services irrespective of socioeconomic status and without incurring financial hardship on people in pursuit and in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

CELEBRATING
25YEARS
OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Participants at WTDC-17 commemorated the **25th Anniversary** of ITU's Telecommunication Development Sector (**ITU-D**) which was established in 1992 by the Additional Plenipotentiary Conference held in Geneva.

The milestone was marked by two Ministerial Roundtables which focused on the impact of ICTs for the sustainable developments goals (SDGs) and the future of the digital economy.

High-level interventions at the ministerial and head of regulatory authority level were enriched by contributions from representatives of the private sector, civil society, technical community and academia.

This was followed by a Gala Dinner honouring all of the Development Bureau Directors since 1992.

Over the past 25 years, ITU–D has immensely contributed to the rapid growth and expansion of telecommunication/ICT networks and services and continues today, to play a pivotal role in helping countries achieve sustainable development.

Learn more about ITU–D's achievements

See the ITU–D 25-year timeline.

**The Platinum Sponsor of the 25th Anniversary celebrations was Saudi Arabia.** ◢

ITU honoured all of the Development Bureau Directors since 1992

From left to right:
Arnold Ph. Djiwatampu, First Director;
Hamadoun I. Touré, Third Director
Brahima Sanou, current Director;
Ahmed Laouyane, Second Director; and
Sami Al Basheer, Fourth Director.

BOOKshop

Your roadmap for sustainable economic growth

#**ICT**4**SDG**

ICT-centric economic growth, innovation and job creation

ITU
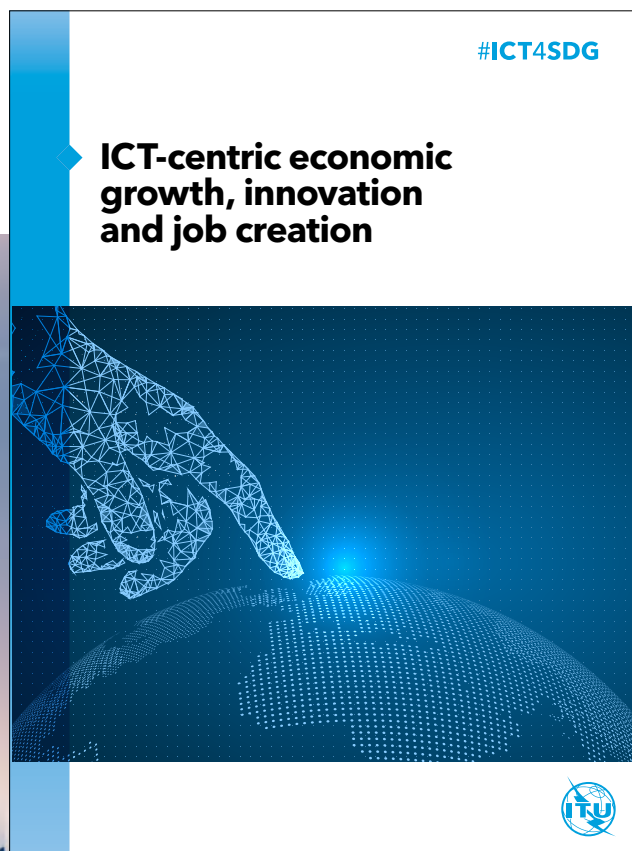
Video insights

Thought leaders shared their insights with us on the various topics and sessions discussed at the conference.

Houlin Zhao

*ITU
Secretary-General*

> ITCs are important for all and every one of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Brahima Sanou

Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

> WTDC-17 is a golden platform for accelerating the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ursula G. Owusu-Ekuful

Minister of Communications, Ghana

> ICTs is an essential tool for development in all its forms.

See related **article**

Karma W. Penjor

Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications, Bhutan

> A challenge the government continues to face is the issue of affordable connectivity.

See related **article**

Go to the WTDC-17 **YouTube playlist** to view all videos.

Go to the WTDC-17 **YouTube playlist** to view all videos.

> **One of the biggest challenges for us is the density of the population.**

See related **article**

Ismailov Rashid

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation

> **We need to include all of those who are not included today.**

See related **article**

Oscar M. Gonzalez

Chair of WTDC-17

> **The devastation is an opportunity for rebuilding sustainably.**

See related **article**

Bernadette Lewis

Secretary General, Caribbean Telecommunications Union

> **We decided that in every development project there has to be also a digital component.**

See related **article**

Andrus Ansip

Vice President, European Commission

WTDC-17 Highlights video

The ITU–D Action Plan comprises regional initiatives, new and revised resolutions and recommendations to support the fulfilment of the Sector's objectives, and new and revised Questions to be studied by ITU–D study groups.

Regional initiatives adopted at WTDC-17

Africa

AFR1
Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa

AFR2
Promotion of Emerging Broadband Technologies

AFR3
Building trust and security in the Use of Telecommunications/ICT

AFR4
Strengthening human and institutional capacity building

AFR5
Management and monitoring of the radio frequency spectrum and transition to digital broadcasting

Americas

AMS1
Disaster risk reduction and Management Communications

AMS2
Spectrum management and transition to digital broadcasting

AMS3
Deployment of broadband infrastructure, especially in rural and neglected areas, and strengthening of broadband access to services and applications

AMS4
Accessibility and affordability for an inclusive and sustainable Americas region

AMS5
Development of the digital economy, Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) & Internet of Things (IoT), promoting innovation

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Arab States

Asia-Pacific

RDF ARB   **RPM** ARB

RDF ASP   **RPM** ASP

ARB1
Environment, climate change and emergency telecommunications

ARB2
Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs

ARB3
Digital financial inclusion

ARB4
Internet of Things, smart cities and big data

ARB5
Innovation and entrepreneurship

ASP1
Addressing special needs of least-developed countries, small island developing states, including Pacific island countries, and landlocked-developing countries

ASP2
Harnessing ICTs to support the digital economy and an inclusive digital society

ASP3
Fostering development of infrastructure to enhance digital connectivity

ASP4
Enabling policy and regulatory environments

ASP5
Contributing to a secure and resilient environment

CIS
Commonwealth of Independent States

Europe

CIS1
Development of e-health to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages

CIS2
Use of telecommunications/ICTs to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality and safe education, including the enhancement of women's knowledge of ICTs and e-government

CIS3
Development and regulation of infocommunication infrastructure to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient

CIS4
Monitoring of the ecological status and of the presence and rational use of natural resources

CIS5
Fostering innovative solutions and partnership for the implementation of Internet of Things technologies and their interaction in telecommunication networks, including 4G, IMT-2020 and next-generation networks, in the interests of sustainable development

EUR1
Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management

EUR2
A citizen-centric approach to building services for national administrations

EUR3
Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

EUR4
Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of ICTs

EUR5
ICT-centric innovation ecosystems

For more details on regional initiatives and their guidelines for implementation, see the **Provisional Final Report** (accessible to ITU members). ◢

New Resolutions

1	Special assistance and support to the Government of Libya for rebuilding its telecommunication networks	Facilitating the Internet of Things and smart cities and communities for global development	3
2	Combating mobile telecommunication device theft	Use in the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector of the languages of the Union on an equal footing	4

In addition to four new Resolutions adopted at WTDC-17, ITU members modified over 40 Resolutions on a range of topics including ICT services in rural, isolated and poorly served areas; alternative calling procedures; Internet access and availability for developing countries; assistance to countries in special need; the role of ICTs in disaster preparedness; bridging the digital divide; capacity-building initiatives; assistance in implementing future networks; assistance to indigenous peoples; strengthening cooperation among telecom regulators; gender equality; accessibility for persons with disabilities and specific needs; ICT and climate change; child online protection;

National computer incident response teams; ITU Centres of Excellence; support for ICT development in Africa; and combating counterfeit devices.

In addition, members abrogated six Resolutions deemed to have achieved their objectives.

For more details on new and revised resolutions that are designed to support the fulfilment of objectives towards assisting developing countries in harnessing the full benefits of ICTs, see the **Provisional Final Report** (accessible to ITU members).

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Study Questions for ITU-D Study Groups

Study Group 1

Enabling environment for the development of telecommunications/ICTs

Q1/1 Strategies and policies for the deployment of broadband in developing countries.

Q2/1 Strategies, policies, regulations and methods of migration and adoption of digital broadcasting and implementation of new services.

Q3/1 Emerging technologies, including cloud computing, m-services, and OTTs: Challenges and opportunities, economic and policy impact for developing countries.

Q4/1 Economic policies and methods of determining the costs of services related to national telecommunication/ICT networks.

Q5/1 Telecommunications/ICTs for rural and remote areas.

Q6/1 Consumer information, protection and rights: Laws, regulation, economic bases, consumer networks.

Q7/1 Access to telecommunication/ICT services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs.

Study Group 2

ICT services and applications for the promotion of sustainable development

Q2/1 Creating the smart cities and society: Employing ICTs for sustainable social and economic development.

Q2/2 Telecommunications/ICTs for e-Health.

Q3/2 Securing information and communication networks: Best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity.

Q4/2 Assistance to developing countries for implementing conformance and interoperability (C&I) programmes and combating counterfeit ICT equipment and theft of mobile devices.

Q5/2 Utilizing telecommunications/ICTs for disaster risk reduction and management.

Q6/2 ICTs and the environment.

Q7/2 Strategies and policies concerning human exposure to electromagnetic fields.

For more details on new questions for ITU–D Study Groups, see the **Provisional Final Report** (accessible to ITU members). ◢

About ITU–D Study Groups.

Provisional Final Report of WTDC-17

In the Provisional Final Report you will learn more about how WTDC-17 has prepared the way forward for ITU–D and the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) for the period 2020–2023.

As well as the outcomes of the conference already mentioned briefly in this snapshot report, you will find a more comprehensive text on the ITU–D Contribution to the Draft ITU Strategic Plan, as well as the Buenos Aires Action Plan, including an important 20-page section: "Objectives and Outputs", outlining key outcomes, performance indicators and outputs.

In addition, you will see that WTDC-17 appointed Roxanne McElvane Webber from the United States as new Chair of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group Bureau (TDAG), Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou from Côte d'Ivoire as new Chair of Study Group 1, and Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat from Iran (Islamic Republic of) as new Chair of Study Group 2. Look inside the full report to also see appointed vice-chairs, as well as other important highlights from WTDC-17. ◢

Provisional Final Report

World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17)

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 9-20 October 2017

ITUWTDC BUENOS AIRES 2017
9-20 October

ITU

CELEBRATING 25YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

ITU-D 1992 2017
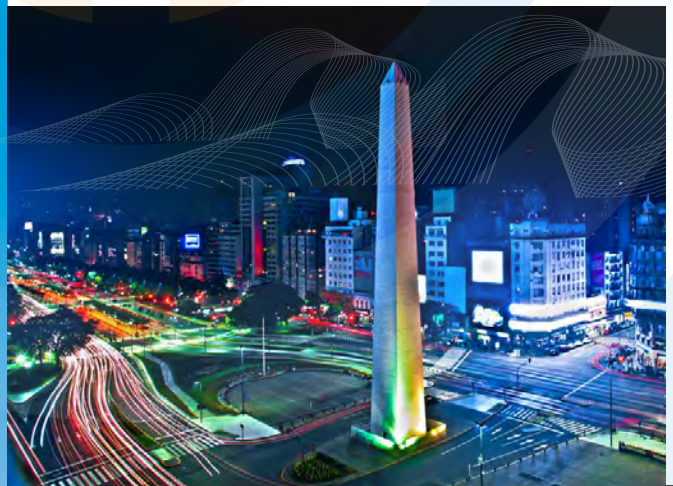
The report is available here in the six official languages of the Union and accessible to ITU members.

Disclaimer: This is a Provisional Final Report of WTDC-17 based on the texts approved by the Plenary sessions. Some of the texts have not yet been reviewed by Committee 5 (Editorial) and are subject to editorial changes.

Global Symposium for Regulators 2018

Geneva, Switzerland

Join us in Geneva for GSR-18 from 9 to 12 July!

Contact us to find out more.

ITU invites Heads of national telecom and ICT regulatory authorities, policy-makers, industry leaders, and other key stakeholders from the region and across the globe to join the event.

The SDGs need a boost.

ICTs can help us
do more – **faster**.

Join the #ICT4SDG campaign
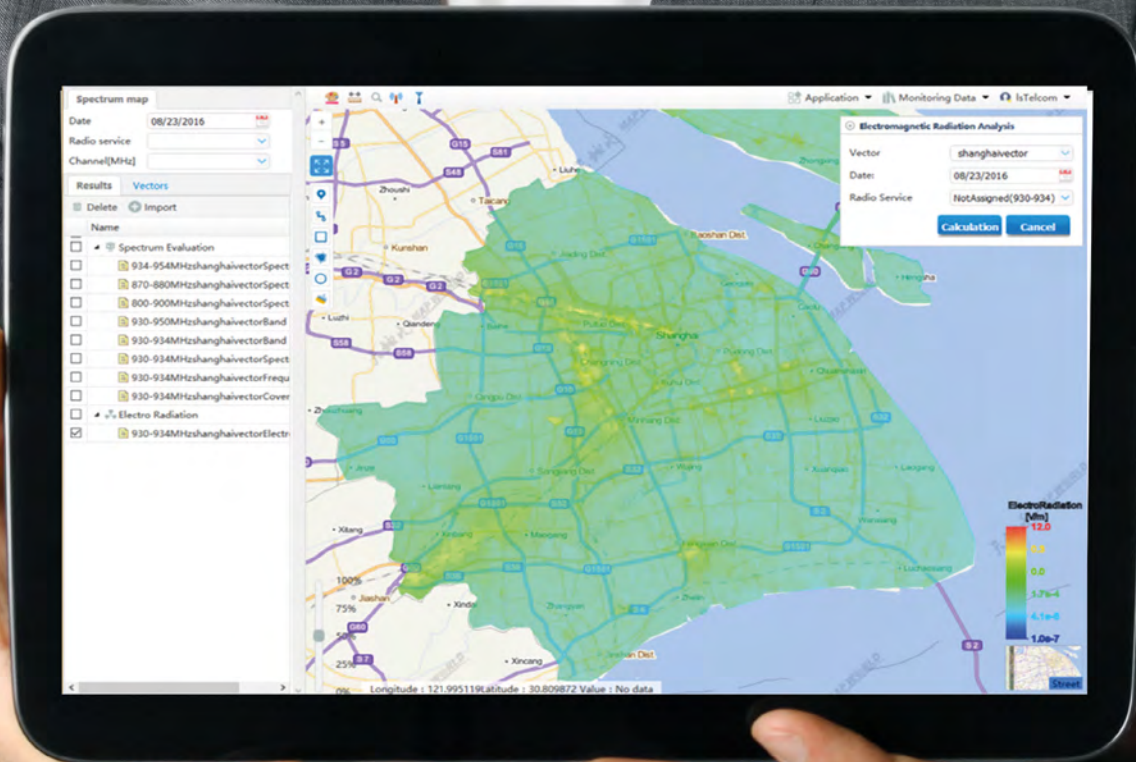
5 GENDER EQUALITY

▶ Stay current with fresh examples of how tech is boosting the SDGs

▶ Share your successes globally

▶ Use our communications tools

ITU

fast forward together
#ICT4SDG

SpectrumMap™ – Cloud Based Solution to Visualize Spectrum Usage

Global Spectrum Experience

Smart Spectrum Solutions

Systems Solutions and Expertise in

Spectrum Management, Spectrum Monitoring and Radio Network Planning & Engineering.

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WEEKLY

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