Buenos Aires Declaration

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017), which took place from 9 to 20 October 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the theme of "ICT for Sustainable Development Goals" (ICT④SDGs),

recognizing

a)   that telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a key tool for implementing **the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Vision beyond 2015**, approved by Resolution 70/125 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and a key enabler for social, environmental, cultural and economic development; and consequently for accelerating the timely attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets set out in UNGA Resolution 70/1: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development";

b)   that technological change and the new and innovative opportunities provided by telecommunications/ICTs should be accompanied by ambitious decision-making and measures aimed at reducing poverty and inequalities and fostering the protection of our planet, all of which are spheres that are critical to the progress of humankind;

c)   that telecommunications/ICTs also play a significant role in various areas such as health, education, agriculture, governance, finance, postal services, transportation, energy, commerce, disaster risk reduction and management, climate-change mitigation and adaptation, particularly in least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and countries with economies in transition;

d)   that timely access to modern, secure, affordable and accessible telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, applications and services offers opportunities for boosting productivity and efficiency to end poverty, improving peoples' lives and ensuring that sustainable development becomes a reality in LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition, and across the world;

e)   that widespread conformance and interoperability of telecommunication/ICT equipment and systems through the implementation of relevant programmes, policies and decisions can increase market opportunities, competitiveness and reliability as well as encouraging global integration and trade;

f)   that telecommunication/ICT services and applications can be life-changing for individuals, communities and societies at large, but they can also entail challenges in building confidence and trust in the availability, reliability and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

g)   that telecommunication/ICT services and applications, including broadband access technologies, offer enhanced opportunities for interaction among people, for sharing the world's knowledge resources and expertise, for transforming peoples' lives and for contributing to inclusive and sustainable development, which enables digital transformation and socio-economic benefits for all;

h)   that, despite all the progress made during past years, the digital divide still remains, and is compounded by disparities and inequalities in access, use and skills between regions, between individual countries and within countries, in particular between urban, rural and underserved areas and between women and men, as well as in the availability of accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs, in particular for the empowerment of women and girls, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs;

i)   that ITU is committed to improving people's lives and making the world a better place through the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

j)   that developing telecommunication/ICT infrastructure in rural, remote, underserved and hard-to-access areas and ensuring the availability of affordable and accessible ICTs is a priority, calling for the identification of effective, innovative, affordable and sustainable solutions;

k)   that the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), in accordance with its functions, defined by the ITU Constitution and the Convention, is playing a significant role in implementing the relevant parts of the WSIS Outcomes, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Connect 2020 Agenda,

therefore declares

1   that ITU-D should adapt and reinforce the existing links between the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets through the regional initiatives, ITU-D contributions to the ITU Strategic Plan and the ITU-D Action Plan, in order to support global development;

2   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;

3   that innovation is essential in enabling infrastructure deployment and boosting the penetration of high-capacity, high-quality telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services, especially for rural and remote areas;

4   that the exchange of experiences and cooperation among the ITU membership and other interested parties and stakeholders on improving international connectivity should be encouraged, especially for the benefit of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs;

5   that the use of various telecommunication/ICT systems is essential to ensuring connectivity for all the world's underserved and unserved populations, to meet the needs of governments and citizens in a timely manner;

6   that policy-makers and regulators should continue to promote widespread, affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs, including Internet access, through fair, transparent, stable, predictable, non-discriminatory enabling policies and legal and regulatory environments, including common approaches to conformance and interoperability , while at the same time providing investment incentives at national, regional and international levels;

7   that new and emerging technologies/trends in telecommunications/ICTs should be better harnessed for purposes of supporting global efforts aimed at further development of the information society;

8   that ITU provides capacity building and tools for effective and efficient spectrum management that is critical for policy-makers, regulators, operators, broadcasters and other relevant parties, given the increasing demands for scarce radio-frequency spectrum and satellite-orbit resources;

9   that increased participation of developing countries in ITU activities to bridge the standardization gap is needed, in order to ensure that they experience the economic benefits associated with technological development, and to better reflect the requirements and interests of developing countries in this area;

10   that, given the crucial role of telecommunications/ICTs in digital transformation and, in particular, in the advancement of the digital economy, it is important to enhance international cooperation on sharing best practice in digital transformation and the development of approaches, regulatory texts, standards and applications for the digital economy;

11   that innovation and evolution in the use of telecommunications/ICTs play, or are capable of playing, a fundamental role in the development of the digital economy, having a transforming effect on individuals, societies and economies throughout the world;

12 that digital literacy and ICT skills, as well as human and institutional capacity in the development, uptake and use of telecommunication/ICT networks, applications and services should be enhanced to ensure inclusive, egalitarian and quality education that would enable all people, in particular women and girls, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs, to contribute to knowledge and human development;

13 that measuring the information society and elaborating proper and comparable indicators/statistics, in sex-disaggregated form, as well as analysing ICT trends, is important for both Member States and the private sector with the former being able to identify gaps that need public policy intervention, and the latter, in identifying and finding investment opportunities, and that particular attention should be focused on tools for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

14 that an inclusive information society should take into account the needs of women and girls, persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs, and the needs of children in the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

15 that opportunities provided by telecommunications/ICTs should be fully exploited with the aim of ensuring equitable access to telecommunications/ICTs and to innovations that foster sustainable socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, job creation, gender equality, child online protection, entrepreneurship and the promotion of digital inclusion and empowerment for all;

16 that building an inclusive, development-oriented information society will require an unremitting multistakeholder effort;

17 that building trust, confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs as well as personal data protection is a priority, with the need for international cooperation and coordination between governments, relevant organizations, private companies and entities in building capacity and exchanging best practices for the development of related public policies and legal, regulatory and technical measures that address, *inter alia*, personal data protection, and that stakeholders should work together to ensure the reliability and security of ICT networks and services;

18 that capacity building, information sharing and other international cooperation should be supported by ITU, particularly with emerging technologies, so that telecommunications/ICTs may play a more crucial role in disaster management and emergency telecommunications;

19 that cooperation between developed and developing countries as well as among developing countries is encouraged to bridge the digital divide, as this paves way for technical cooperation, technology and knowledge transfer, joint research activities, sharing best practices and socio-economic development;

20   that the promotion of investment for the development of broadband infrastructure, services and applications contributes to the sustainable and integrated economic growth of peoples, and that in this respect ITU-D must be a key player in the creation of alliances and spaces for cooperation between Member States, the private sector, international funding agencies and other stakeholders;

21   that public investment, private investment, as well as public-private partnerships and resource mobilization, need to be further strengthened in order to identify and apply innovative technological solutions and financing mechanisms for inclusive and sustainable development;

22   that innovation should be integrated into national policies, initiatives and programmes, with cooperation and partnership between developing countries and between developed and developing countries to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer to promote sustainable development and economic growth;

23   that international cooperation should be continuously enhanced and promoted among the ITU membership and other interested parties and stakeholders in the interest of achieving the SDGs, and in the implementation of the Connect 2020 Agenda through the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

24   that the regions have articulated their specific priorities in a set of regional initiatives, which can be found in the Buenos Aires Action Plan adopted by this conference, and that the implementation of those initiatives deserves high priority on the part of ITU-D.

Accordingly, we, the delegates to the World Telecommunication Development Conference, declare our commitment to accelerate the expansion and use of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, applications and services for building and further developing the information society and bridging the digital divide, the timely implementation of WSIS Action Lines (as per UNGA Resolution 70/125) and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets set out in UNGA Resolution 70/1: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

The World Telecommunication Development Conference calls upon the ITU membership and other interested parties and stakeholders, including those from the United Nations system, to contribute towards the successful implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan.