

Statement of ITU for the Roundtable discussion: “Charting progress: Follow up to the 2022 review of ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies”, 6 June 2024, ECOSOC Chamber, delivered by Ursula Wynhoven, Director and Representative to the United Nations, International Telecommunication Union, New York

Mr. Vice President, Madame Moderator, Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists, All, ITU is honoured to participate as a discussant in this important roundtable.

Our engagement across various ECOSOC subsidiary bodies underscores our commitment to leveraging information and communication technologies as a critical means of implementation for the achievement of the SDGs. ITU's strategic goals of universal meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation align with Agenda 2030's vision that the spread of ICTs and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies.

Reflecting on the recommendations in the 2022 review, we wish to draw attention to recommendation 8 on the importance of financing and other means of implementation. The dynamic landscape of digital technologies presents both unprecedented opportunities and challenges. In response, we have observed ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies are increasingly integrating discussions around digital technologies' role in sustainable development. To offer a few examples, the Commission of Social Development's Emerging issue this year was “The influence of digital transformation on inclusive growth and development: a path to realizing social justice”; also, the Priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women last year was Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and this year's CSW integrated an Interactive Dialogue on Artificial intelligence to advance gender equality: challenges and opportunities'. There is also the Commission on Science and Technology for Development's key role in reviewing the progress of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, to which ITU actively contributes and organizes together with UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, and in close collaboration with many other UN Agencies, the annual WSIS Forum, the global multi-stakeholder platform

for discussing the implementation of WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development.

We were also pleased to see this year 23 references to digital issues in the Synthesis of submissions by ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums. Looking back at the one from 2019, we counted just 7 such references.

The significant increase in focus on digital issues and cooperation in UN sustainable development agendas, underscores the escalating relevance of digital transformation in our collective pursuit of the SDGs. Our SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda developed with UNDP, BCG and IDB released last September showed how sustainable and inclusive digital solutions can accelerate progress across the SDGs in areas ranging from climate action, education, hunger, to poverty, and the role of data and digital technologies in achieving at least 70% of the 169 SDG targets. By enhancing digital connectivity and digital literacy, especially for the 2.6 Billion people who have never been online, investing in sustainable ICT infrastructure, and advocating for ethical standards in emerging technologies, we can ensure that digital transformation benefits all, paving the way towards a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable future.

ITU stands ready to continue to collaborate with the ECOSOC bodies and all stakeholders for a digitally inclusive world that will propel us towards achievement of the SDGs.

Thank you.

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