Peer Learning Round Table

Partnerships for the goals: SDG 17

Session 4: Online

Simultaneous interpretation: English, French and Russian

Accelerating digital development through multistakeholder partnerships

Wednesday, 6 April 2022, 15:00 – 17:30

Guiding questions for round table

Question 1	*What are the challenges faced by countries to develop robust and reliable ICT infrastructure, and what are the related key solutions to enhance accessible, affordable, and safe connectivity?*
Question 2	*How to empower communities to enjoy the full fruit of the digital society and ensure to leave no one behind?*
Question 3	*What actions can be put in place to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, the development of application and services, and accelerate the development of a digital economy in order to build digital ecosystems and create value out of the digital transformation?*
Question 4	*What type of collaborative solutions worked to overcome the hurdles of attracting investment in and financing the digital development of a country; and how can they be scaled up?*
Question 5	*What type of efforts and mechanisms - and at what level - are required to facilitate the establishment and upscaling of multi-stakeholders partnerships fostering digital development in Europe and Central Asia Region, and beyond?*

Scenario

Draft Agenda

15:00 – 15:10   **Opening remarks**
- Stephen Bereaux, Deputy to Director, ITU Development Sector
- Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE

15:10 – 16:10   **Segment 1: Connecting people everywhere**

This segment will focus on answering the question: *"What are the challenges faced by countries to develop robust and reliable ICT infrastructure, and what are the related key solutions to enhance accessible, affordable, and safe connectivity?"*

- Mr. Ashat ORAZBEK, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry, Kazakhstan
- Mr. Simon Manley CMG, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, UK Mission to the WTO, UN and Other International Organisations (Geneva)
- Mr. Draško Milinović, Director-General of Regulatory Authority, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Segment 2: Empowering communities

This segment will focus on answering the question*: "How to empower communities to enjoy the full fruit of the digital society and ensure to leave no one behind?"*

- Ms. Kristine Gyonjyan, Director of the Union of Operators of Armenia
- Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the International Disability Forum (IDA) and the European Disability Forum (EDF)

16:10-16:15   **Special statement from the youth**

This statement of a youth representative will focus on how to meaningfully engage young persons in policy and strategy making on digital transformation.

[16:15-17:15]   **Segment 3: Building digital ecosystems**

This segment will focus on answering the question*: "What actions can be put in place to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, the development of application and services, and accelerate the development of a digital economy in order to build digital ecosystems and create value out of the digital transformation?"*

- Mr. Oleg Pekos, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication of Uzbekistan
- Ms. Liliana Fratini Passi, Vice-chair of the Ministry of Digitalization of Italy
- Mr. Simon Zajc, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia
- Mr. David Nadirashvili, Head, Digital Governance Agency, Georgia
- Dr. Umberto Modigliani, Deputy Director, Forecasts Department, European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts

	Segment 4: Incentivizing investments This segment will focus on answering the question: *"What type of collaborative solutions worked to overcome the hurdles of attracting investment in and financing the digital development of a country; and how can they be scaled up?"* • Mr. Dirk Werner, Director, Head of Telecommunications, Media and Technology, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) • Mr. Hoa Binh Adjemian, Deputy Head of Unit – An economy that works for people, green, digital and connected , DG NEAR A3, European Commission
17:15 – 17:20	**Special statement from the youth** This statement of a youth representative will focus on how to meaningfully engage young persons in policy and strategy making on digital transformation.
17:20 – 17:30	**Summary of the discussion and closing remarks** This segment will intend to summarize the discussion and key policy actions put forward by panellists to be considered in the ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2022, in order to answer the question: *"What type of efforts and mechanisms - and at what level - are required to facilitate the establishment and upscaling of multi-stakeholder partnerships fostering digital development in Europe and Central Asia Region, and beyond?"*

*The timing is expressed in CEST (UTC+2)

Overall moderation of the event:
Jaroslaw Ponder, Head, ITU Office for Europe

Co-moderation of the building blocks:
• Natalia Mochu, Director, ITU Office for CIS
• Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade, UNECE

Background

The peer-learning session on 'Accelerating digital development through multistakeholder partnerships' is organized by the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, and coordinated by ITU and UNECE, with the facilitation of EDF, UNDP, UNIDO and WMO.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs), meaningful and universal internet connectivity, capacity building, financing mechanism, and financial inclusion are intrinsic to SDG17 "Partnerships for the Goals", and all are crucial for an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient digital transformation. In addition, and as highlighted by SDG 17, digital development can only be made through a multistakeholder and partnership-based approach, and with the direct leadership of governments, policymakers, and the regulator community. The UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for

Digital Cooperation has called for concrete actions by diverse stakeholders and a more effective architecture to enhance the global digital cooperation in order to: (i) connect all communities and overcome the digital divide; (ii) take a human- centered digital transformation which respects rights and (iii) protect everyone from online risk and harms. Since then a series of concrete actions have been supported by the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

In light of the above, and with the aim to review the achievement of the SDG17, in particular targets related to internet connectivity (17.6) and technology, including ICTs (17.7 and 17.8), this session will seek to strengthen and promote the development of digital society and economy through multistakeholder partnerships.

It will provide an opportunity for UN Agencies, Member States, the private sectors, the academia sector, NGOs, and additional stakeholders to discuss collaborative actions, initiatives, and partnerships that advance digitalization and digitization processes alongside encouraging global partnerships for SDG focused digital development.

In particular, the session will address four pillars: connecting people everywhere, empowering communities, building digital ecosystems, and incentivizing investments. It will provide an opportunity for highlighting a series of strategic multistakeholder partnerships aiming at providing concrete support to the countries in their endeavours of accelerating digital transformation, ensuring that no one is left behind. It will include and is not limited to the following:

- Partner2connect Digital Coalition, an alliance gathering actors from the private sectors, UN sister agencies, Governments, and Youth organizations, aiming to foster digital transformation and meaningful connectivity;
- Giga initiative, which aims to grasp the power of meaningful connectivity to fast track young people's access to educational resources and opportunities, and works with partner countries to systematically help governments connect every school to the internet through a four pillars approach: mapping, connecting, financing and empowering.
- GovStack Initiative: The GovStack initiative aims to build a common understanding and technical practice on fundamental reusable and interoperable digital components, which we collectively refer to as Building Blocks. It aims to enable countries to kickstart their digital transformation journey by adopting, deploying, and scaling digital government services.

Partnerships among member states and regional actors of development are also prominent. The session will be the occasion to update and exchange on the European Commission's recently launched 'Global Gateway', a 'Team Europe' (EU-Members

States- Financial institutions) commitment unveiled by Commission President Von der Leyen; or to explore different investment models with the EBRD's "Approach to accelerating the digital transition, 2021-25".

The discussion and key policy actions put forward by panellists will be channelled to the ECOSOC High- Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2022, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2022, and the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition.

Organizers

Lead organizers

ITU; UNECE (co-chairs of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia)

Contributor: UNDP; UNIDO; WMO.

Focal points: Jaroslaw Ponder; Sarah Delporte

E-Mail: : jaroslaw.ponder@itu.int sarah.delporte@itu.int