

BUCHAREST DECLARATION

on

“BUILDING A BETTER DIGITAL FUTURE FOR ALL”

We, the Ministers and high representatives of Member States of the International Telecommunication Union, representing 52 countries from all regions worldwide, met today, on 25 September 2022, in Bucharest, Romania, at the Ministerial Roundtable, ahead of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022, at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization of the Government of Romania, to further collective action in accelerating digital transformation, universal connectivity and digital inclusion to address the growing digital divide and ensure no one is left behind.

As the pace of technological development accelerates and the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is imperative to consider common international approaches to unlock the full potential of a digital economy and society, while empowering people with the skills to navigate it confidently. Digitalization is a critical enabler of innovation, competitiveness and development, making it a key driver of economic prosperity.

As stated in the UN Secretary-General Roadmap for Digital Cooperation: “Future generations will judge whether the present generation seized the opportunities presented by the age of digital interdependence. The time to act is now.”

This “Declaration on Building a Better Digital Future for All” is a call to action to affirm and share our commitment: **a)** to ensure an Open, Reliable, and Secure Internet for all; **b)** to enable and foster universal access to affordable, high-quality and secure telecommunications/ ICTs for all (Universal Connectivity); **c)** to foster equitable and inclusive use of telecommunications/ICTs to empower people and societies for sustainable development (Sustainable Digital Transformation); **d)** to collaborate closely with related global and regional organizations to catalyze efforts towards an inclusive, connected, sustainable and secure digital economy and society; and, **e)** to raise ambition for our contribution in addressing the climate crisis.

1. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to achieve universal, secure, inclusive and affordable access to the Internet for all.
2. We will strengthen our efforts in the design and advance implementation of future-oriented policies to leverage the power of connectivity and facilitate new and emerging telecommunications/ ICTs for sustainable development.
3. We will develop and adopt strategies and policies to increase the uptake of digital technology and to define coherent actions that address ongoing and future challenges.

4. We will prioritize policies that build sustainable, innovation-driven digital ecosystems to empower all people and to ensure that no one is left behind, fostering inclusiveness and equality.
5. We will join forces to promote meaningful youth engagement, as well as gender, inclusiveness and accessibility in the decision-making processes concerning the development of the ICT sector, thus increasing innovation and job opportunities.
6. We will shed light on the need to promote more diversified sources of financing for capacity development, digital skills and competencies, to improve overall readiness of all citizens to engage in and benefit from the digital economy.
7. We remain fully committed to promote digital literacy for all and stress the need to increase educational investment. In support of a digital-first future, we are determined to partner with other stakeholders to invest in digital literacy, digital public services and local content, in an effort to bring us closer together, not further apart.
8. We recognize the urgency of strong political commitment and concrete steps to address climate change and to support research and deployment of emerging and innovative digital technologies to help mitigate their effects on our societies while building a sustainable future.
9. We will commit to apply these principles at national, regional and global levels and use them as guidance for further collective actions, transforming them into tangible results, while respecting each other and our international legal obligations. By fulfilling these commitments, we can achieve concrete reforms and establish a valuable framework for building an inclusive digital future for all.
10. We commit ourselves to seize this opportunity through change, in order to make a meaningful impact in our society and build momentum for a positive future for all.

We commit to work together by upholding these key principles, which can be used as a guidance for policy makers, as well as citizens, businesses, and all relevant stakeholders.

We are fully aware of our role as governments in encouraging digital innovations and in fostering the development of digital technologies for a sustainable, inclusive economy and society. With our declaration today, we continue to contribute to the achievement of the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.