



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-eighth session

Agenda item 15

### Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

#### Report of the Second Committee

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Ivaylo Gatev (Bulgaria)

#### I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 8 September 2023, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-eighth session, the item entitled “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development” and to allocate it to the Second Committee.
2. The Committee held a general discussion, considered proposals and took action on the item at its 10th, 11th, 21st and 23rd meetings, on 6 October, and 9 and 21 November 2023. An account of the Committee’s consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records.<sup>1</sup> Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 2nd to 6th meetings on 2 to 4 October 2023.<sup>2</sup>
3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels ([A/78/62-E/2023/49](#)).
4. At the 10th meeting, on 6 October 2023, the Head of Science, Technology and Innovation in the Division on Technology and Logistics of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, made an introductory statement.
5. At the 21st meeting, on 9 November, the representative of the United States of America made a statement with regard to the draft resolutions before the Committee.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [A/C.2/78/SR.10](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.11](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.21](#) and [A/C.2/78/SR.23](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [A/C.2/78/SR.2](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.3](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.4](#), [A/C.2/78/SR.5](#) and [A/C.2/78/SR.6](#).

<sup>3</sup> See [A/C.2/78/SR.21](#).



## II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/78/L.11](#) and [A/C.2/78/L.53](#)

6. At the 21st meeting, on 9 November 2023, the representative of Cuba, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development” ([A/C.2/78/L.11](#)).

7. At the 23rd meeting, on 21 November 2023, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development” ([A/C.2/78/L.53](#)), submitted by the Rapporteur of the Committee, Ivaylo Gatev, on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.11](#).

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.53](#) (see para. 11).

9. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union.

10. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.53](#), draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.11](#) was withdrawn by its sponsors.

### III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

11. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### **Information and communications technologies for sustainable development**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution [77/150](#) of 14 December 2022 on information and communications technologies for sustainable development, as well as previous resolutions on the issue,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling also* Economic and Social Council resolution [2023/3](#) of 7 June 2023 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, as well as previous resolutions on the issue,<sup>2</sup>

*Reaffirming* its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

*Reaffirming also* its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming further* the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,<sup>3</sup>

*Recognizing* the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations focal point for science, technology and innovation for development and as a forum in the examination of science and technology questions and the role of science and technology as enablers for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the advancement of understanding of science and technology policies, particularly in respect of developing countries, and the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters for development within the United Nations system,

<sup>1</sup> Resolutions [56/183](#), [57/238](#), [59/220](#), [60/252](#), [62/182](#), [63/202](#), [64/187](#), [65/141](#), [66/184](#), [67/195](#), [68/198](#), [69/204](#), [70/184](#), [71/212](#), [72/200](#), [73/218](#), [74/197](#), [75/202](#) and [76/189](#).

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/46, 2008/3, 2009/7, 2010/2, 2011/16, [2012/5](#), [2013/9](#), [2014/27](#), [2015/26](#), [2016/22](#), [2017/21](#), [2018/28](#), [2019/24](#), [2020/12](#), [2021/28](#) and [2022/15](#).

<sup>3</sup> Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

*Recognizing also* the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

*Recognizing further* the role of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which includes the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the online platform, as a tool to facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships among Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders in order to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through forging partnerships, such as the Partnership in Action on STI for SDGs Road Maps,

*Recalling* the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,<sup>4</sup> and endorsed by the General Assembly,<sup>5</sup> and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,<sup>6</sup> and endorsed by the Assembly,<sup>7</sup>

*Recalling also* the references to information and communications technologies contained in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and reiterating calls for close alignment between the World Summit on the Information Society process and the 2030 Agenda, as well as other relevant intergovernmental outcomes,

*Recalling further* the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,<sup>8</sup> held in New York on 15 and 16 December 2015, in which it took stock of the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit, addressed potential information and communications technology gaps and identified areas for continued focus,

*Recalling* its resolution [76/307](#) of 8 September 2022 on the modalities for the Summit of the Future and its decision 77/568 of 1 September 2023 on the scope of the Summit, to be held on 22 and 23 September 2024, mandating a concise, action-oriented outcome document entitled “A Pact for the Future”, including a chapter on science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation,

*Reaffirming* its common desire and commitment to the World Summit on the Information Society vision as laid out in the Geneva Declaration of Principles,

*Reaffirming also* the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, which provides an overview of implementation action lines, challenges, vision and priority areas, and recognizing the need for all people to have media and information literacy skills, which are important in order to fully participate in an inclusive information society,

*Recognizing* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing new technologies, stressing the need to close the digital divides, both between and within countries and including

<sup>4</sup> See [A/C.2/59/3](#), annex.

<sup>5</sup> See resolution [59/220](#).

<sup>6</sup> See [A/60/687](#).

<sup>7</sup> See resolution [60/252](#).

<sup>8</sup> Resolution [70/125](#).

the rural-urban, youth-older persons and gender digital divides, and to harness information and communications technologies for development, and recalling the need to emphasize quality of access to bridge digital and knowledge divides, using a multidimensional approach that includes speed, stability, affordability, language, training, capacity-building, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities,

*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels,<sup>9</sup>

*Taking note also* of the report on the economic impact of broadband in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, jointly prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the International Telecommunication Union, as well as the United Nations E-Government Survey prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat,

*Noting* the call for the continuation of annual reports on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to the Economic and Social Council, and reaffirming the role of the Commission, as set forth in Council resolution 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit,

*Noting also* the holding of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development from 27 to 31 March 2023, and looking forward to the twenty-seventh session, which will have as priority themes “Data for development” and “Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development”, thus providing a platform for all stakeholders to share experiences and pursue partnerships for capacity-building,

*Taking note* of the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, entitled “The age of digital interdependence”, submitted to the Secretary-General on 10 June 2019, also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Road map for digital cooperation”, presented on 11 June 2020,<sup>10</sup> as well as the establishment of the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, and further taking note of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, in his report entitled “Our Common Agenda”,<sup>11</sup> to improve digital cooperation, with a view to bridging digital divides and accelerating the positive contribution that digital technologies can play in society, including towards achieving the 2030 Agenda,

*Noting* the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum, jointly organized annually by the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, and noting also the virtual holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum from 13 to 17 March 2023,

*Taking note* of the United Nations Development Programme Digital Strategy 2022–2025, which seeks to assist countries, upon their request, in their efforts towards digital transformation through the creation of inclusive and resilient digital ecosystems,

<sup>9</sup> [A/78/62-E/2023/49](#).

<sup>10</sup> [A/74/821](#).

<sup>11</sup> [A/75/982](#).

*Taking note also* of the report of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development entitled *The State of Broadband Report 2023: Digital Connectivity – A Transformative Opportunity*, which provides an evaluation of the progress made towards achieving the Broadband Commission’s advocacy targets for broadband and the state of broadband development worldwide,

*Recognizing* the fact that information and communications technologies are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare, by lowering barriers to economic participation, and that the increasing pervasiveness of information and communications technologies within society has had profound impacts on the ways in which Governments deliver services, businesses relate to consumers and citizens participate in public and private life,

*Noting* the outcome and agreed policy recommendations of the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy on its sixth session,<sup>12</sup> which was held from 10 to 12 May 2023,

*Noting also* the holding of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development eWeek 2023, under the theme “Shaping the future of the digital economy”, from 4 to 8 December 2023 in Geneva,

*Taking note* of the *Digital Economy Report 2021* of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which examines the role of cross-border data flows for development in maximizing equitable development gains, while minimizing risks and impacts of a potential fragmentation in the digital space, and recognizing the need to continue discussions on the connection between data and sustainable development, including data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data,

*Noting* the tax challenges arising from digitalization of the economy and the importance of ensuring that tax is paid where value is created, and noting also international efforts to address this issue,

*Stressing*, however, that recent progress notwithstanding, important and growing digital divides remain between and within developed and developing countries in terms of the availability, affordability and use of information and communications technologies and access to broadband, stressing also the urgent need to close digital divides, including with regard to such issues as the affordability of the Internet, and to ensure that the benefits of information and communications technologies, including new technologies, are available to all, in this regard reaffirming its commitment to significantly increasing access to information and communications technologies and striving to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020, and noting the many efforts to help to bridge digital divides and expand access, including the Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology, including Broadband, for Sustainable Development,

*Recalling* the vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [TD/B/EDE/6/4](#).

<sup>13</sup> Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

*Stressing* the necessity for all forms of development cooperation, including aid flows, to promote digital transformation,

*Recalling* the Working Group on the Digital Gender Divide of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and the recommendations for action in bridging the gender digital divide contained in its progress report, and taking note of the report of the Working Group on Education of the Broadband Commission entitled “Digital skills for life and work”,

*Recognizing* that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all of the Sustainable Development Goals, and emphasizing the need to target science, technology and innovation strategies to address the empowerment of women and girls and to reduce inequalities, including the gender digital divide,

*Noting with great concern* the fact that a gender digital divide persists in women’s access to and use of information and communications technologies, including in education, employment and other areas of economic and social development, and in this regard welcoming the many initiatives that focus on access, skills and leadership to promote the equal participation of women and girls in the digital age, such as the International Girls in ICT Day of the International Telecommunication Union and the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, known as the Equals Partnership,

*Noting with great concern also* that many developing countries lack meaningful and affordable access to information and communications technologies and that, for the majority of the poor, the promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizing the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, data management, and promote inclusive digital literacy to bridge the digital and knowledge divides,

*Recognizing* the need to focus on capacity-development policies and sustainable support to further enhance the impact of activities and initiatives at the national and local levels aimed at providing advice, services and support, with a view to building an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society,

*Recognizing also* that harnessing the benefits of digital technologies for inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities requires the advancement of connectivity, capacities and content, and electricity coverage, and acknowledging the need for access to broadband Internet and technology devices, digital inclusion and literacy, and to incorporate digital competencies into the education system for the capacity-building of educators and students,

*Noting* that a range of topics continues to emerge on issues related to the access to and use and applications of information and communications technologies and their effects on economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,

*Recognizing* the important role that information and communications technologies can play in protecting the environment and addressing climate change,

*Reaffirming* that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, and emphasizing that progress towards the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society should be considered not only as a function of economic development and the spreading of information and communications technologies but also as a function of progress with respect to the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Reaffirming also* that Internet governance, including the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, should continue to follow the provisions set forth in the outcomes of the summits held in Geneva and Tunis,

*Taking note* of the “WSIS+20 Forum High-level Event” to be held in Geneva in 2024, co-hosted by Switzerland and the International Telecommunication Union,

*Recalling* the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, most recently held in Kyoto, Japan, in 2023, and taking note of the meeting to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2024,

*Recalling also* the convening of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Pertaining to the Internet, based on the proposal by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development regarding the structure and composition of the Working Group, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125 of 16 December 2015 and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2017/21, and taking note of its work,

*Noting* that information and communications technologies can help to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and noting also that, inter alia, the International Telecommunication Union has an important role in supporting Member States in the implementation of the Goals,

*Noting also* the convening of the World Telecommunication Development Conference by the International Telecommunication Union in Kigali from 6 to 16 June 2022, under the theme “Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development”,

*Noting further* the holding of the fourth United Nations World Data Forum in Hangzhou, China, 24 to 27 April 2023,

*Noting* that technological change includes new and powerful tools for development, and mindful of its impacts, opportunities and challenges and that Governments, the private sector, international organizations, civil society and the technical and academic communities should take into account the social, economic, ethical, cultural and technical issues related to rapid technological advancements in order to deepen their understanding of how to harness their potential to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,

*Reaffirming* the value and principles of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the World Summit on the Information Society process since its inception, and recognizing that the effective participation, partnership and cooperation of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders, within their respective roles and responsibilities, especially with balanced representation from developing countries, have been and continue to be vital in developing the information society,

*Recognizing* the important contributions and full participation of all stakeholders to help bridge, in their roles and responsibilities, the digital divides,

*Acknowledging* that differences in individual stakeholders’ capabilities to both use and create information and communications technologies represent a knowledge divide that perpetuates inequality,

*Conscious* of the challenges faced by States in preventing and combating the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, including by terrorists, and emphasizing the need to continue international cooperation in this regard and to reinforce technical assistance and capacity-building activities, at their



request, for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of such use in accordance with national and international law,

*Reiterating* the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

*Noting with great concern* the severe negative impact on human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help to reduce the risk of and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and recognizing that equitable and timely access for all to safe, quality, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are an essential part of a global response based on unity, solidarity, renewed multilateral cooperation and the principle of leaving no one behind,

*Noting with grave concern* that approximately a third of the world's population, especially women and girls, the elderly and people in vulnerable situations, as well as approximately two thirds of people in the least developed countries, do not have access to the Internet, and noting that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates inequalities caused by the digital divides, since the poorest and the most vulnerable who are the hardest hit are also those who lag behind the most in access to information and communications technologies,

*Taking note* of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, trade and development, poverty eradication, gender equality and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

2. *Welcomes* the remarkable evolution and diffusion of information and communications technologies, underpinned by the contributions of both the public and private sectors, which have seen penetration into almost all corners of the globe, created new opportunities for social interactions, enabled new business models and contributed to economic growth and development in all other sectors, while noting the unique and emerging challenges related to their evolution and diffusion;

3. *Recognizes* the potential of information and communications technologies and digital transformation to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>14</sup> and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, accordingly urges all Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to integrate

<sup>14</sup> Resolution 70/1.

information and communications technologies and digital solutions into their approaches to implementing the Goals, and requests United Nations system entities facilitating the World Summit on the Information Society action lines to review their reporting and workplans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

4. *Reaffirms its commitment* to bridging digital and knowledge divides, recognizes that its approach must be multidimensional and include an evolving understanding of what constitutes access, emphasizing the quality of that access, and acknowledges that speed, stability, affordability, language, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities are now core elements of quality and that high-speed broadband is already an essential enabler of sustainable development;

5. *Emphasizes*, in this regard, the vital importance of multilingualism and local content in the information society, and urges all stakeholders to encourage the creation of, and access to, educational, cultural and scientific content online so as to promote quality of access and ensure that all people and cultures can express themselves and have access to the Internet in all languages, including Indigenous languages;

6. *Stresses* the important role played by the private sector, civil society and technical communities in information and communications technologies;

7. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing countries, including the least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector;

8. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to ensure its full and effective implementation;

9. *Reiterates* the call for support for the full operationalization of all components of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and to explore a voluntary funding model in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and relevant United Nations entities;

10. *Notes* the progress that has been made by United Nations system entities in cooperation with national Governments, regional commissions and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, and encourages the use of those action lines for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

11. *Also notes* that the digital economy is an important and growing part of the global economy and that connectivity is correlated with increases in gross domestic product, recognizes the critical importance of expanding the participation of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the digital economy, and further notes that the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will explore the connection between data and sustainable development at its twenty-seventh session, in 2024;

12. *Encourages* countries to take advantage of capacity-building mechanisms and opportunities from the entire United Nations system in this regard;

13. *Urges* a continued focus on maximizing development gains from e-commerce, through initiatives such as eTrade for All, launched by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which provides a new approach to trade development through electronic exchanges by allowing developing countries to more easily navigate the supply of technical assistance for building capacity in e-commerce readiness and by enabling donors to have a clear picture of the programmes that they could fund;

14. *Recognizes* in this regard that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has initiated and implemented rapid e-trade readiness assessments of the least developed countries in cooperation with other donors and organizations in order to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges related to leveraging e-commerce in the least developed countries;

15. *Looks forward* to the holding of the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy, on 30 November and 1 December 2023, and the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, from 6 to 8 May 2024, which will focus on “Building digital readiness: from assessments to implementation”;

16. *Recognizes* the need for international cooperation to examine and address the opportunities, risks and challenges associated with dealing with data, and the need for urgent action aimed at reducing digital divides and inequalities in data generation, accessibility and infrastructure, within and among countries and regions, and encourages strengthening of international collaboration on inclusive governance of data and greater interoperability in this regard, building on contributions from international organizations, including the United Nations system, and to find common ground on these issues, ensuring no one is left behind;

17. *Further calls upon* the international community to enhance its support to developing countries, including by increasing resources available, to build their capacities to equally and meaningfully benefit from data and participate in the digital economy;

18. *Emphasizes* that efforts to close all digital divides and ensure that no one is left behind in the digital economy must be expanded;

19. *Notes* the holding of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development eWeek 2023, under the theme “Shaping the future of the digital economy”, from 4 to 8 December 2023;

20. *Welcomes* the work of the Information for All Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which aims to assist Member States in formulating policies to bridge digital divides and ensure equitable knowledge societies, and also welcomes the holding of Global Media and Information Literacy Week from 23 to 25 October 2023;

21. *Recognizes* that, despite recent progress and significant gains, there is still uneven growth in access to and the use of information and communications technologies, and expresses concern over the substantial continued digital and broadband divides between and within developed and developing countries, including the fact that while 90 per cent of people use the Internet in developed countries, only 57 per cent of the population of developing countries is online, and that the cost of access is higher in developing countries in relation to average household income, resulting in a lack of affordable access to information and communications technologies;

22. *Stresses* the need to provide universal, meaningful and affordable access to the Internet by 2030, particularly in all developing countries, welcomes efforts by the United Nations to assist countries, upon their request, in achieving this, and calls upon all stakeholders, including the international community, to support further actions, including investment, to improve broadband access and connectivity in developing countries;

23. *Recognizes* the importance of broadband connectivity to users in rural and remote areas, and in this regard notes that small and non-profit community operators, including community networks and other affordable, scalable and inclusive technology and business models that provide last-mile connectivity solutions, as appropriate and among others, can provide these services through, inter alia, appropriate regulatory measures that allow them to gain access to basic infrastructure;

24. *Stresses* the importance of rapid technological change in ensuring food security and nutrition by 2030, and information technology in agriculture systems with due regard for sustainability;

25. *Encourages* research and development, and the development of viable strategies that could result in further competitiveness, investment and rapid reductions in the cost of information and communications technologies, and urges all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, inter alia, strengthened enabling policy environments at all levels, legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and international cooperation to improve affordability, education, capacity-building, multilingualism, cultural preservation, investment and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms;

26. *Acknowledges* the importance of more inclusive and equitable access to the benefits of the emerging digital economy, and recognizes that collective efforts are needed towards new rule-setting that not only favours large digital enterprises, but also provides for an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment, including support for the access of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including those owned or operated by women, to finance, information and markets, while protecting and empowering consumers;

27. *Recognizes* that a gender digital divide persists and that, worldwide, 69 per cent of men use the Internet compared with 63 per cent of women, notes that in the least developed countries only 30 per cent of women use the Internet, compared with 43 per cent of men, and calls upon all stakeholders to close the gender digital divide, ensure the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of all women in the information society and women's access to information and communications technologies for development, including women's and girls' access to new technologies, in this respect reiterates its request for relevant United Nations system entities, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to support the implementation and monitoring of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society by enhancing the emphasis on gender equality and all women's empowerment, and reaffirms the commitment to ensuring women's full and meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to information and communications technologies, including policies and approaches to promote women's online safety to facilitate their participation in the digital world, and to address any potential negative impacts of digital technologies on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and committing to eliminating, preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls;

28. *Notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level, facilitated by the regional commissions, as

observed in the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;

29. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates and strategic plans, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the importance of allocating adequate resources in this regard;

30. *Acknowledges* the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum through 2025, as set out in the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

31. *Recognizes* the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, including discussion of public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum,<sup>15</sup> in particular those on enhancing the participation of developing countries;

32. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of Governments and stakeholders from all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

33. *Notes* the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, established by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125, to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda, and also notes that the Working Group ensured the full involvement of Governments and other relevant stakeholders, in particular from developing countries, taking into account all their diverse views and expertise;

34. *Also notes* that the Working Group held five meetings between September 2016 and January 2018 at which it discussed inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125;

35. *Recalls* the report of the Chair of the Working Group,<sup>16</sup> which includes references to the full texts of all proposals and contributions, and expresses its gratitude to the Chair and all participants who submitted inputs and contributed to the work of the Working Group;

36. *Welcomes* the good progress made by the Working Group in many areas and the fact that consensus seemed to emerge on some issues, while significant divergence of views in a number of other issues persisted, and in that regard regrets that the Working Group could not find agreement on recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda;

<sup>15</sup> [A/67/65-E/2012/48](#) and [A/67/65/Corr.1-E/2012/48/Corr.1](#).

<sup>16</sup> See E/CN.16/2018/CRP.3.

37. *Recognizes* the importance of enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, and notes the need for continued dialogue and work on the implementation of enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda;

38. *Encourages* the use of and engagement with forums and expertise available within relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, by all relevant stakeholders to promote global digital cooperation;

39. *Recognizes* that a lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies and services remains a critical challenge in many developing countries, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters, and that all efforts should be deployed to reduce the price of information and communications technologies and broadband access, bearing in mind that deliberate interventions, including through research and development and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, may be necessary to spur the development of lower-cost connectivity options;

40. *Also recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in engaging with and accessing new technologies, such as an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education and literacy, capacity, investment and connectivity, as well as issues related to technology ownership, setting standards and technology flows, and in this regard urges all stakeholders to consider ensuring adequate means of implementation, including appropriate financing for digital development and strengthened capacity-building of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, towards a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, and in this regard welcomes efforts by United Nations entities in providing such capacity-building support to countries, upon their request;

41. *Further recognizes* the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome digital divides, and stresses that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;<sup>17</sup>

42. *Notes* that, while a solid foundation for capacity-building in information and communications technologies has been laid in many areas with regard to building the information society, there is still a need for continuing efforts to address the ongoing challenges, especially for developing countries and the least developed countries, and draws attention to the positive impact of broadened capacity development that involves institutions, organizations and entities dealing with information and communications technologies and Internet governance issues;

43. *Recognizes* the importance of assisting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to address the challenges and opportunities in relation to the use of the Internet and e-commerce to develop their international trade capacities, among other things;

44. *Also recognizes* the importance of the free flow of information and knowledge, and the need to reduce disparities in information flows at all levels, as

<sup>17</sup> Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

the amount of information distributed worldwide grows and the role of communication becomes all the more important, and acknowledges that the mainstreaming of information and communications technologies in school curricula, open access to data, the fostering of competition, the creation of transparent, predictable, independent and non-discriminatory regulatory and legal systems, proportionate taxation and licensing fees, access to finance, the facilitation of public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder cooperation, national and regional broadband strategies, efficient allocation of the radio frequency spectrum, infrastructure-sharing models, community-based approaches and public access facilities have in many countries facilitated significant gains in connectivity and sustainable development;

45. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to keep the goal of bridging digital divides, in their different forms, an area of priority concern, to put into effect sound strategies that contribute to the development of e-government and to continue to focus on pro-poor information and communications technology policies and applications, including access to broadband at the grass-roots level, with a view to narrowing the digital divides among and within countries and, in turn, building information and knowledge societies;

46. *Calls for* the promotion of new research, the development and transfer of the technologies on mutually agreed terms, including in the areas of food and nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and energy, in order to contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions and the achievement of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, human well-being and sustainable development;

47. *Notes* the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and recognizes that official development assistance and other concessional financial flows for information and communications technologies can make significant contributions to development outcomes, in particular where they can reduce the risk of public and private investment, and increase the use of information and communications technologies to strengthen good governance and tax collection;

48. *Invites* all relevant stakeholders to support more comprehensively those countries that are trailing in the digital economy in order to reduce the digital divides, strengthen the international enabling environment for value creation and build capacities in both the private and public sectors;

49. *Recognizes* the critical importance of private sector investment in information and communications technology infrastructure, content and services, encourages Governments to create legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, and also recognizes the importance of public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and other approaches to that end;

50. *Encourages* the promotion of digital solutions through access to and use of digital public goods, which may include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open standards and open content that adhere to international and domestic laws, in unlocking the full potential of rapid technological change to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

51. *Welcomes* the holding of the eighth annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, takes note of its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations,<sup>18</sup> looks forward to further advancement in the follow-up process, and welcomes the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, the progress made in operationalizing the three components of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the holding of the eighth

<sup>18</sup> See [E/FFDF/2023/3](#).

annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals;

52. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

53. *Recognizes* the important role of information and communications technologies for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and calls upon all stakeholders in the information and communications technologies sector, including Governments and the United Nations system, to fully consider the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as they strengthen their efforts to bridge the digital divides within and between developed and developing countries, with particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable, as well as women and girls, and to ensuring affordable and reliable connectivity, the promotion of digital access and digital inclusion, and the expansion of accessible and inclusive distance-learning solutions and digital health services;

54. *Notes that*, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution [2023/3](#), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will collect inputs from member States, all facilitators and other relevant stakeholders and will organize, during its twenty-seventh session, in 2024, and its twenty-eighth session, in 2025, substantive discussions on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit during the past 20 years, and will report thereon, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly;

55. *Looks forward to* the comprehensive review by the General Assembly, in 2025, of the progress made since the World Summit on the Information Society;

56. *Stresses* the need to better realize the benefits and address the challenges of artificial intelligence, taking note of the ongoing efforts by the United Nations in undertaking analysis and advancing options;

57. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, an action-oriented report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, taking into account the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the review process of the World Summit on the Information Society, the summary by the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>19</sup> and other relevant processes, as part of his annual report on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels;

58. *Invites* the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in 2024 to include an update on the midterm reviews of science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Co-Chairs' summary;

59. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled "Information and communications technologies for sustainable development", unless otherwise agreed.

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<sup>19</sup> [E/HLPF/2023/6](#).