



Statement of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)  
by  
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Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

- On behalf of the ITU Secretary-General, it is an honour to contribute to this debate.
- We all recognize the overwhelming importance that technology – and especially information and communication technology, ICT – plays in all of our lives today.
- What we may forget is how small a role ICTs played back at the beginning of the millennium, when the MDGs were set.
- In the year 2000, there were only **740 million mobile subscriptions globally**.
- **Just 7% of the global population was online** --We had no tablettes, no smart phones, no social media...
- By the end of this year, there will be **7.1 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide**.
- And approximately 43% of the global population will be online.
- As Jeffrey Sachs asked yesterday, who doesn't love their phones – with our phones we can get the necessary medical info to cure malaria, kids can do their homework, farmers can get the needed weather forecast information for their crops –... and much more
- The growth in this sector has been tremendous, and the potential for innovative development solutions is infinite. For example - mobile ICT banking systems, created in Africa for Africans, that have given millions of people much needed economic confidence and security.
- While we have begun to see an avalanche of innovation that access to ICTs can create, there are gaps that remain. These include an access gap, an affordability gap and a digital gender divide.

- A study released last year noted that Connecting everyone in developing countries to the same levels as in developed economies could create 140 million jobs and lift 160 million people out of poverty.
- The final draft **outcome document released yesterday for the September Summit it recognizes in para 12 that** ICT and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress.
- That progress will be assured by Goal 17, which recognizes ICTs as an essential means of implementation, and applied as a cross-cutting enabler for each of the sustainable development goals.
- I think we all understand that sustainable development itself, and the successful implementation of the sustainable development agenda, **cannot, and will not,** happen without the smart use of ICTs.
- We need to recognize that the success of any sustainable development strategy **will be measured by** how effectively that strategy integrates a digital means of implementation AND accountability. This is not something **that can** or **should** be left to technocrats. It can only happen when policy AND practice are integrated and the inputs from the many stakeholders in our growing information society are considered.
- Just like the SDGs, ICTs are universal, transformational, and aspirational – and ICTs are an essential enabler to achieving sustainable development for all.
- Progress **can** be achieved – and we believe it **will** be achieved – through the smart application of new technologies from leveraging the power of big data, software-defined networks, and mobile and cloud computing, to harnessing the advantages being offered in fast-growing fields such as robotics, nanotechnologies and the internet of things.
- As the IMF said back in April, during the ECOSOC integration segment, *‘technology will change everything’*.
- The challenge for the UN system as a whole, will be to integrate this knowledge and understanding into the yearly assessment – not only of the SDGs, but in line with the upcoming ten-year review of the outcomes of the UN World Summit on the Information Society - WSIS+10 outcomes, the FfD outcomes, and of course the Climate Change conference in Paris.

- We must also recognize that the power of ICTs to advance the sustainable development agenda will also be dependent on how well we manage complex issues such as privacy and security.
- The WSIS high-level meeting at the end of the year here in NY, under the auspices of the GA, is an unprecedented opportunity to integrate the SDG and WSIS agendas – and by doing so, unleash the power of ICTs as a means of implementing sustainable development for all.

Thank you for your attention.