Summary

HLPF Side-Event: ICTs and Poverty Eradication

17 July, 2017

The Side-Event "ICTs and Poverty Eradication" was co-hosted by Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Italy, Zimbabwe, UNDP and ITU with a high-level panel that included Viet Nam's Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment (Mr. Nguyen The Phuong), Bangladesh's Principal SDG Coordinator (Mr. Md.Abul Kalam Azad), UNDP Director of Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (Mr. Haoliang Xu), Italy's Under Secretary of State for Environment, Land and Sea (Ms. Silvia Velo) and Head of the ITU Liaison Office to the United Nations (Mr. Gary Fowlie).

The speaker from Bangladesh introduced the Digital Bangladesh Vision with detailed examples on ways to apply ICTs in multi-dimensional poverty eradication, moving from "business as usual" to "leapfrogging mindset", including service decentralization through Public-Private Partnership such as in land records, government forms or financial inclusion.

UNDP's representative provided an insightful presentation on the role of ICTs in poverty eradication in the Asia-Pacific region and the work that United Nations, UNDP and UN Group on Information Society have done to advance ICTs and solutions to bridge digital divide and support sustainable development.

Viet Nam's representative shared his national progress in ICTs development, ICTs' role in supporting poverty eradication policies through national strategies and National Target Programs. He also highlighted the importance of concerted efforts among policy-makers, line ministries, private sector and international donors in advancing ICTs for sustainable development in Viet Nam; as well as pointing out the challenges in ICTs-related policy design, planning, capacity building and database.

Italy shares valuable experience in identifying the role ICTs can play in ensuring food security, adapting to climate change and developing renewable energy, as well as its efforts in supporting developing countries in this domain, especially those in Africa.

ITU's representative focused on how international institutions, including ITU and UN Group on Information Society, can support national endeavors in promoting ICTs, especially in access to the internet and broadband infrastructure; at the same time analyzing the challenges, such as inequalities and online security, and ways to address them.

During the interactive discussions, participants provided noteworthy examples of tapping upon the potential of ICTs for the implementation of SDGs, which includes ICTs in education and public services, among others. Many also commented that in the promotion of ICTs for sustainable development, the most vulnerable groups should be given priority and the challenges they face due to digital divide should be quickly and appropriately addressed.