

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Information and Communications Technology,
Science, Technology and Innovation
Fourth session
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ITU DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL REMARKS

Good morning excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues.

I would like to thank ESCAP for inviting ITU to this important meeting and congratulations on the progress made on the AP-IS Action Plan to date, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One thing the pandemic has proven is that ICTs have a huge role to play in helping the world build back better in its aftermath. No one can doubt now that digital technologies will be vital for the achievement of each of the 17 SDGs.

The pandemic has also shown how interconnected and interdependent we are, as illustrated in the Asia-Pacific Digital Transformation Report, as well as ITU's new Global Connectivity Report.

Most UN organisations are now making use of digital technologies to achieve their goals. It is important, therefore, that we each bring our own specific competencies to the table, avoid duplication, and pool our limited resources.

This is why the role of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), which is an integral part of the WSIS Process and has the participation of more than 30 UN agencies, is particularly important to ensure that the UN is well coordinated in its use of ICTs for the achievement of the SDGs.

New and emerging technologies promise a significant boost to progress on the SDGs - if harnessed correctly, and if universally available.

These technologies are critical to addressing the challenge of climate change. Whether for monitoring climate change, responding to natural disasters or creating smart cities, islands, and villages. The ITU Smart Islands initiative which is helping boost connectivity and services is expected to be recognised in the G20 Digital Economy Ministers' declaration at its meeting in Bali this week.

The interplay between climate change and digital transformation is fundamental, and dialogue is crucial between technology specialists, policymakers, and environmental experts.

The Joint Task Force between ITU, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and WMO on SMART Subsea cables is progressing well with the objective to integrate environmental sensors into submarine cable networks to provide measurements on ocean climate, sea level rise and tsunami warnings. I am pleased that yesterday's Steering Committee agreed to collaborate with this Task Force.

Mr. Chairman, the ITU's mission is to connect the world so we support the objectives of the AP-IS action plan. It will be important that we work closely together in its implementation to pool our resources and avoid duplication of effort, as we do in many related areas such Disaster Risk Reduction, ICT and older persons, and ICTs and persons with disabilities.

As the world grows increasingly reliant on ICTs, we will certainly need closer collaboration, cooperation, and coordination at the national, regional, and international levels.

I wish you a very successful meeting.

Thank you, Mr. chairman.