WTISD 2021: Message from ITU Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao

Driven by information and communication technologies, our societies have undergone a digital transformation that gave birth to the digital economy and information society.

The information society has emerged as one of the main lines of defense against COVID-19. There have been many successful stories, which have shone a spotlight both on the vital importance of ICTs and deep digital inequalities between and within countries.

In this decisive year, ITU will use World Telecommunication and Information Society Day to unite the world in pursuit of digital transformation in every area of business and all parts of life. It will be an opportunity to strengthen national strategies on ICT development, implement smart policies and effective measures to encourage investments in ICTs and digital skills, and upgrade our services with new technologies ranging from AI to 5G that are central to the digital economy.

This moment in history calls for cooperation and partnerships. I am calling on our members and other stakeholders to continue our efforts to harness the power of ICTs to advance the WSIS Action Lines, ITU's Connect 2030 Agenda, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the theme “Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development" of the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021, so that the accelerating digital transformation we are witnessing leaves no one behind, no one offline.

We want to hear about your success stories, but also about your challenges and lessons learned. Share them with ITU now and we will give them the place they deserve during the 17 May celebrations of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2021 under the theme of “Accelerating digital transformation in challenging times". Until then, stay safe, stay well and be strong!

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