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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2022 to
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

Submission by

Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN 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" (to the 26th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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Implementation of Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

Response by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

October 2022

Part One

The Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (hereinafter referred to as "the Office") was established in 2021. Since its creation, the Office has focused on the implementation of the Secretary-General's *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation* (hereinafter "Roadmap"), which contributes to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and preparatory work towards the adoption of the Global Digital Compact at the Summit of the Future in 2024. Currently, the Envoy is Under-Secretary-General Amandeep Singh Gill.

Progress continues to be made in the areas of universal connectivity, digital capacity-building, digital inclusion, and other thematic priorities outlined in the Roadmap through the Office's support to eight thematic Roundtables comprising over 100 Member States, United Nations entities, and private sector and civil society actors, as well as initiation and implementation of other activities with partners.

Part Two

The Office continues to serve as a key advocate and focal point for digital cooperation and other technology-related activities at the United Nations. At this year's High-Level Week of the 77th General Assembly, the Office co-organized or spoke at over twenty separate events, including the Envoy representing the Secretary-General on several occasions.

The Office plays an informal "coordinating" role to support greater coherence and collaboration across the UN system on digital issues as well as greater visibility of relevant activities by UN entities. It participates in key UN interagency processes on digital and broader technology issues, such as the Interagency Task Team within the Technology Facilitation Mechanism mandated by the 2030 Agenda, the interagency meetings supporting the WSIS and UNGIS processes, the UN's ICT Steering Committee, and relevant work of the Chief Executives Board.

The Office also plays a leadership role in several UN interagency process. Besides its coordination role on key digital aspects in the Secretary-General's Common Agenda, it serves on the interim Advisory Board for the GIGA initiative for school connectivity and coordinates a UN systemwide interagency working group on the issue of freedom of expression and social media, which has developed internal key messages for senior UN leadership.

To ensure that Member States and all stakeholders are kept informed of its activities and engage openly and inclusively, the Office continues to maintain a website in all 6 official UN languages (www.un.org/techenvoy) and an active Twitter account, all of which are regularly updated with information on key events and activities.

Part Three

As called for in the Roadmap, the Office of the Envoy on Technology, together with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), has undertaken an internal mapping exercise for an overview of digital-related initiatives across the UN system, in order to foster greater collaboration among UN entities in harnessing digital technologies for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over 500 submissions from 40-plus entities were received.

Together with UN DESA, the Office presented the initial results of the mapping exercise at a side-event at the 6th Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) in May 2022. The event also showcased digital programmes by different UN agencies (including ITU, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, WFP and others), focusing in particular on UN efforts at the country level, including perspectives of the UN Resident Coordinators in Cabo Verde and Mongolia. The Office is now working to bring this mapping online through an interactive public database.

Examples of contributions of the Office to WSIS implementation in specific action lines follow.

WSIS Action Line C2. Information and communication infrastructure

Achieving universal and meaningful digital connectivity —the possibility for everyone to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, productive and affordable online experience— is key for enabling digital transformation and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to reach the Roadmap’s goal of ensuring that every person has safe and affordable access to the Internet by 2030, including meaningful use of digitally enabled services, the Office has adopted a collaborative and people-centered approach that blends supply-side (push down) and demand-side (pull up) actions on global connectivity.

In fulfillment of this vision, following extensive multistakeholder engagement and review process, the Office and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), working with multistakeholder partners, have established a set of aspirational targets for 2030 to help prioritize interventions, monitor progress, evaluate policy effectiveness, and galvanize efforts around achieving universal and meaningful connectivity by the end of the decade. This work also builds on the seven 2025 Advocacy Targets of the Broadband Commission for national and international action in broadband development. A first assessment of progress towards the targets was conducted in the 2022 Global Connectivity Report released in June 2022.

The ITU has launched the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, a multistakeholder alliance, in close cooperation with the Office, and in line with the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, to foster meaningful connectivity globally, with a focus on but not limited to hardest- to-connect communities in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and

Small Island Developing States (SIDS). To date, the groundbreaking P2C Coalition has mobilized over USD\$ 25 billion in almost 400 pledges from over 200 entities to connect and support the hardest to reach communities. The Office is now in discussions with the ITU as to the next steps for the Coalition, including in connection with the Global Digital Compact.

The Office works closely with key UN agencies on initiatives to achieve global connectivity by stimulating and aggregating demand for the Internet. In this regard, 'GIGA', the UNICEF-ITU initiative to connect all schools around the world to the Internet, which has its roots in the UNSG's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, continues to make important progress. As of June 2022, GIGA has mapped the location of over one million schools on their open-source platform (www.projectconnect.world) of which over 40% do not yet have connectivity. The Office also worked closely with UNICEF and the ITU to ensure that school connectivity was a key element of the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022.

The Office is also working to accelerate discussions on connectivity as part of emergency preparedness, response and aid, including working through the inter-agency Emergency Telecommunication Cluster. Partners in the ETC, among others ITU, UNHCR and GSMA, are working on an actionable framework that guides inclusive and meaningful connectivity in the context of emergency preparedness, resilience, and response.

The Office has also made important progress in promoting the use of open-source technologies and DPGs within and outside the United Nations system in collaboration with its partners. The Office continues to work closely with the Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA), a multi-stakeholder initiative established by the Governments of Norway and Sierra Leone, UNICEF and the civil society technology initiative iSPRIT in direct response to the UN's call to promote DPGs. The Office is now actively collaborating with other departments to explore how best to build the UN Secretariat's internal capacity to develop and use open-source technologies, including working with Github to explore specific needs within the UN Secretariat on open source. A major High-level Event was held during the High-Level Week of the 77th UNGA, where Heads of States, heads of UN agencies and Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands spoke. The event saw the announcement of almost \$300million in funding to support the development and adoption of inclusive digital public infrastructure and digital public goods.

WSIS Action Line C3. Access to information and knowledge

Narrowing the digital divides, promoting digital inclusion and strengthening global digital capacity-building remains at the heart of the implementation of the Roadmap. To address the fact that digital divides reflect and amplify existing social, cultural and economic inequalities, the Roadmap calls for a definition and a framework to better measure digital inclusion, so as to establish a measurable and evidence-based foundation for further work.

The Office has launched a definition of digital inclusion, which was developed through the multistakeholder Digital Inclusion Roundtable group co-championed by UN Women and the Governments of Mexico and Canada. The definition, while a living document, represents a first

attempt to create a global understanding for further work to reinforce digital inclusion and address the digital divide. This effort was undertaken in collaboration with key actors working on inclusion issues, and leverages existing digital inclusion indices, such as the UN Capital Development Fund's Inclusive Digital Economy Scorecards and the World Benchmarking Alliance's Digital Inclusion Benchmark for companies released in December 2020.

WSIS Action Line C4. Capacity building

The Roadmap further stresses the need for digital capacity development as an absolute prerequisite for achieving real and sustained progress, including in terms of meaningful affordable access, and to this end, called for more coherent, coordinated and inclusive digital capacity-development support. To implement the Roadmap's recommendations in this area, UNDP and ITU conducted a mapping exercise of digital capacity development providers to better understand the landscape of available initiatives as well as launched a Joint Facility for Global Digital Capacity in May 2021, including a 'clearinghouse function' to help direct specific requests for support to potential providers of digital capacity development services.

In December 2021, during the Internet Governance Forum in Katowice, Poland, the ITU, UNDP, and the Office of the Envoy on Technology (OSET) launched the global Multi-Stakeholder Network (MSN) for Digital Cooperation and an online platform (www.digital-capacity.org), which provides consolidated information on global digital capacity development, including the ITU-UNDP Joint Facility. ITU and UNDP, in conjunction with other partners, are also developing tools to help countries better assess their digital capacity needs.

Working with other partner agencies, the Office has supported the development of a specific thematic window within the Fund to ensure greater support to the UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, particularly in supporting programme countries in building national capacity on digital and their own national digital transformation efforts.

WSIS Action Line C7. ICT Applications: E-environment

The Roadmap also calls attention to the significant impacts of advancing technologies on the environment, particularly in terms of "ground-breaking opportunities to monitor and protect the environment, as well as overall planetary health." In response to this, the Coalition for Digital Environment Sustainability (CODES), initiated by UNEP, UNDP, the International Science Council, the German Environment Agency, the Kenyan Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Future Earth and Sustainability in the Digital Age, and supported by the Office, has launched an ambitious Action Plan at the Stockholm+50 Conference in June 2022. The Action Plan presents a comprehensive and strategic approach to embed sustainability in all aspects of digitalization and was developed following extensive multistakeholder events and consultations.

WSIS Action Line C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continues to coordinate United Nations entities in the development of UN system-wide guidance on human rights due

diligence and impact assessments in the use of new technologies. The digital human rights recommendation group, working on the implementation of the Secretary-General's Roadmap, also continues to undertake a range of activities to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights online, including through a draft action plan with a series of planned actions for each of the relevant Roadmap recommendations. OHCHR and the Office have held joint consultations with member States and civil society on the ethical and human rights implications of emerging technologies.

Within the United Nations, working groups have been set up to discuss and coordinate approaches on issues such as hate speech, disinformation, data protection and privacy and freedom of expression and social media, which the Office is deeply engaged in. For instance, the Office co-leads an informal working group across the United Nations system which has prepared a document for senior UN officials with background and key messages on freedom of expression and social media and is also deeply engaged on issues related to enhancing civil society engagement in UN processes, including through the use of digital technologies. Moreover, the Office works with OHCHR and other relevant UN agencies on the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* on relevant areas, such as the prevention of Internet shutdowns.

WSIS Action Line C11. International and regional cooperation

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) have already made considerable efforts to implement the Roadmap's recommendations to strengthen the IGF. In line with the Roadmap's recommendations on strengthening the IGF, the UN Secretary-General established the IGF Leadership Panel as an empowered, multistakeholder high-level body. The Panel was announced in late August 2022 and the Envoy on Technology is an ex-Officio member of the fifteen-member panel, which has met virtually and will also meet in-person ahead of this year's Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

The Office also continues to regularly engage with the IGF MAG to share information and promote engagement.