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**CSTD 2024-2025 priority theme on “Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated  
digitalization”**

Statement submitted by

ITU

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**CSTD 2024-2025 priority theme on**  
**“Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization”**

**Statement submitted by**  
**The International Telecommunication Union**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with pleasure to present the ITU’s contribution to the Priority Theme: Diversifying Economies in a World of Accelerated Digitalization.

The rapid pace of digitalization offers unprecedented opportunities for economic growth and diversification. The ITU is playing a pivotal role in advancing these efforts through strategic collaborations with UN agencies, member states, and the private sector.

First, ITU is driving the push for universal and meaningful connectivity. This means ensuring that everyone can access the digital world in a way that is safe, affordable, and productive. To achieve this, ITU is expanding broadband access in developing countries, particularly focusing on least developed and landlocked regions, as well as small island states.

Second, we’ve seen tremendous progress in global internet connectivity. As of 2023, 66% of the world is now online, compared to 43% a decade ago. However, disparities still exist, especially in developing regions. ITU is working tirelessly to close this gap by upgrading networks and advocating for widespread 4G and 5G services.

Third, ITU places great emphasis on digital skills and literacy. While more people are connected, many still lack the skills needed to fully leverage digital technologies. ITU supports national strategies for digital literacy, especially focusing on underrepresented groups such as women and persons with disabilities, to ensure that everyone benefits from digitalization.

Additionally, ITU has been at the forefront of supporting artificial intelligence development. Through its AI for Good platform, ITU is helping countries harness AI to drive innovation in sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and finance, which is essential for economic diversification.

Furthermore, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), led by ITU, continues to align digital efforts with sustainable development goals. Initiatives like Giga, aiming to connect every school to the internet, and the Broadband Commission, which advocates for expanding digital infrastructure, are critical to building inclusive digital economies.

ITU's work in promoting connectivity, digital skills, AI deployment, and fostering partnerships is essential for economic diversification in this era of accelerated digitalization. By bridging the digital divide and enabling innovation, ITU is helping to create a more inclusive and sustainable digital future.

Thank you.