

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**MS. MARIA FRANCESCA SPATOLISANO  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL  
FOR POLICY CO-ORDINATION AND INTER-AGENCY AFFAIRS  
ACTING ENVOY ON TECHNOLOGY**

**Remarks**

---

**Commission on Science and Technology for Development Panel on  
World Summit on the Information Society  
31 March 2022, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. New York time via Zoom**

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is a pleasure to participate in this session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in my capacity as the Secretary-General's Acting Envoy on Technology.**

**It has now been just over one year since the establishment of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology. A key priority for the Office has been the implementation of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, where key priorities are in line with and contribute to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, or WSIS.**

**I am pleased to note that significant progress has been made in developing workplans and advancing concrete actions in the areas of universal connectivity, digital capacity-building, digital inclusion, and other thematic**

**priorities outlined in the Roadmap, through the Office's coordination and 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 various activities with partners.**

**Informed by global consultations convened on the occasion of the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, and building on the Roadmap, in September, the Secretary-General presented his report entitled Our Common Agenda. Member States, the private sector, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders have already provided inputs on how to implement the Common Agenda, including at thematic sessions convened by the President of the General Assembly. Taking these views into account, and as requested by the Secretary-General, my Office has started informal preparatory work on the digital-related elements in the Common Agenda, in particular the proposal for a Global Digital Compact, working closely with other key UN agencies such as ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, OHCHR, and others.**

**Indeed, there has been strong support from the Member States in New York for the Global Digital Compact at next year's Summit of the Future, which is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring governments, the private sector, and civil society together and build new understanding on the digital future that we want. We see the role of the UN Secretariat as preparing the ground for the discussions on the Compact, by creating an open and inclusive space for feedback, inputs and views to be submitted, collected and consolidated, so that these can then be considered by Member States.**

**The Office of the Envoy on Technology serves as a key advocate and focal point for digital cooperation and other technology-related activities at the United Nations. For example, the Office has already made significant progress in promoting the use of open-source technologies and digital public goods within and outside of the United Nations system in collaboration with our partners, an issue that has been increasingly recognized by the Member States as a priority. The Office works closely with the Digital Public Goods Alliance, including in ensuring that the Alliance’s flagship five-year strategy is aligned with United Nations priorities in accelerating the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals through digital public goods.**

**In line with the Roadmap, where the Secretary-General outlined his intention to map the technology and digital parts and functions throughout the United Nations system, so as to assess where there is room for consolidation and strengthening, the Office is working with DESA and the InterAgency Task Force that is part of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism mandated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to map initiatives, mechanisms, and programmes on digital technologies, so as to promote inclusive digital transformations for the SDGs.**

**In addition to supporting digital cooperation more broadly, the Office regularly contributes to WSIS implementation in specific action lines, as described in our submission for the annual WSIS report. For example, a key priority of the Roadmap, the multistakeholder technology track of Our Common Agenda, and at the heart of our Office’s work, is promoting global connectivity, including putting in place the information and communication infrastructure, or WSIS Action Line C2. Implementation of Roadmap**

**recommendations on global connectivity has focused on ensuring a “people-centred” approach in leaving no one behind. This entails prioritizing aspects such as affordability and socio-economic aspects of accessibility, in addition to broader issues of broadband infrastructure and coverage.**

**Ensuring connectivity is also related to my Office’s work on digital inclusion and implementing the relevant recommendations of Our Common Agenda such as preventing Internet shutdowns.**

**Under WSIS Action Line C3, Access to information and knowledge, narrowing the digital divides remains at the heart of Roadmap implementation, underpinning efforts at promoting digital inclusion and strengthening global digital capacity-building, which is WSIS Action Line C4.**

**For example, my Office, together with UNDP and ITU, has launched an online platform ([www.digital-capacitybuilding.org](http://www.digital-capacitybuilding.org)) which will provide consolidated information on global digital capacity-building, including the ITU-UNDP Joint Facility, which was launched in August 2021. Working with UNDP and ITU, the Office also launched a MultiStakeholder Network on Capacity-building and is now exploring how to better support more coordinated digital capacity-building efforts at the country-level through closer partnership with the UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators**

**These are just some examples of concrete contributions of my Office and many partners to WSIS implementation. I would encourage you to consult our submission to the annual report for additional examples and our website for more details.**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**As we prepare for the Summit of the Futures, I encourage each of you to contribute actively to the consultations and calls for input that will be convened by all our partners, including UN entities and through various ongoing initiatives and processes. The Global Digital Compact is starting with a blank slate, so we look to the international community to provide important inputs on its substance, for instance, the important discussions that arise from the CSTD. I look forward to your input and our continued collaboration.**

**\*\*\*\*\***