



Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 16

Information and communications technologies for sustainable development**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 21 December 2020***[on the report of the Second Committee (A/75/454, para. 11)]***75/202. Information and communications technologies for sustainable development***The General Assembly,*

Recalling its resolution [74/197](#) of 19 December 2019 on information and communications technologies for sustainable development, as well as previous resolutions on the issue,¹

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/12](#) of 17 July 2020 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, as well as previous resolutions on the issue,²

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

¹ Resolutions [56/183](#), [57/238](#), [59/220](#), [60/252](#), [62/182](#), [63/202](#), [64/187](#), [65/141](#), [66/184](#), [67/195](#), [68/198](#), [69/204](#), [70/184](#), [71/212](#), [72/200](#) and [73/218](#).

² Economic and Social Council resolutions [2006/46](#), [2008/3](#), [2009/7](#), [2010/2](#), [2011/16](#), [2012/5](#), [2013/9](#), [2014/27](#), [2015/26](#), [2016/22](#), [2017/21](#), [2018/28](#) and [2019/24](#).



Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Reaffirming further the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,³

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations focal point for science, technology and innovation for development and as a forum in the examination of science and technology questions and the role of science and technology as enablers for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the advancement of understanding of science and technology policies, particularly in respect of developing countries, and the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters for development within the United Nations system,

Recognizing also the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Recognizing further the role of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which includes the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the online platform, as a tool to facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships among Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders in order to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,⁴ and endorsed by the General Assembly,⁵ and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,⁶ and endorsed by the Assembly,⁷

Recalling also the references to information and communications technologies contained in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and reiterating calls for close alignment between the World Summit on the Information Society process and the 2030 Agenda, as well as other relevant intergovernmental outcomes,

Recalling further the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,⁸ held in New York on 15 and 16 December 2015, in which it took stock of the progress made in the implementation of the

³ Resolution 71/256, annex.

⁴ See A/C.2/59/3, annex.

⁵ See resolution 59/220.

⁶ See A/60/687.

⁷ See resolution 60/252.

⁸ Resolution 70/125.

outcomes of the World Summit, addressed potential information and communications technology gaps and identified areas for continued focus,

Reaffirming its common desire and commitment to the World Summit on the Information Society vision as laid out in the Geneva Declaration of Principles,

Reaffirming also the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, which provides an overview of implementation action lines, challenges, vision and priority areas, and recognizing the need for people to have media and information literacy skills, which are important in order to fully participate in an inclusive information society,

Recognizing that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing new technologies, stressing the need to address prevailing challenges to bridge the digital divides, both between and within countries and between women and men, and between girls and boys, and to harness information and communications technologies for development, and recalling the need to emphasize quality of access to bridge digital and knowledge divides, using a multidimensional approach that includes speed, stability, affordability, language, training, capacity-building, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the 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,⁹

Taking note also of the report on the economic impact of broadband in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, jointly prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the International Telecommunication Union, as well as the United Nations E-Government Survey prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat,

Noting the call for the continuation of annual reports on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to the Economic and Social Council, and reaffirming the role of the Commission, as set forth in Council resolution 2006/46, in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit,

Noting also the holding of the twenty-third session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in informal virtual meetings from 10 to 12 June 2020, and looking forward to the twenty-fourth session, which will have as priority themes “Using science, technology and innovation to close the gap on Sustainable Development Goal 3, on good health and well-being” and “Harnessing blockchain for sustainable development: prospects and challenges”, thus providing a platform for all stakeholders to share experiences and pursue partnerships for capacity-building,

Taking note of the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, entitled “The age of digital interdependence”, submitted to the Secretary-General on 10 June

⁹ [A/75/62-E/2020/11](#).

2019, and further taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Road map for digital cooperation”, presented on 11 June 2020,

Noting the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum, jointly organized annually by the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme,

Taking note of the report of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development entitled *The State of Broadband 2020: Tackling Digital Inequalities – A Decade for Action*, which provides an evaluation of the progress made towards achieving the Broadband Commission’s advocacy targets for broadband and the state of broadband development worldwide, with the acknowledgement that 2019 was the first year when more than half of the world’s population was connected to the Internet, noting the need to bridge digital divides, and recalling the report of the special session of the Commission, entitled *Working Together to Connect the Next 1.5 Billion by 2020*,

Recognizing the fact that information and communications technologies are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare, by lowering barriers to economic participation, and that the increasing pervasiveness of information and communications technologies within society has had profound impacts on the ways in which Governments deliver services, businesses relate to consumers and citizens participate in public and private life,

Taking note of the *Digital Economy Report 2019* of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which examines the scope for value creation and capture in the digital economy by developing countries and gives special attention to opportunities for these countries to take advantage of the data-driven economy as producers and innovators, and notes that platformization and the monetization of the rapidly expanding volume of digital data are increasingly driving value creation, while acknowledging the risk that digitalization may contribute to rising inequality and further consolidation rather than to more inclusive development,

Noting the tax challenges arising from digitalization of the economy and the importance of ensuring that tax is paid where value is created, and noting also international efforts to address this issue,

Stressing, however, that recent progress notwithstanding, important and growing digital divides remain between and within developed and developing countries in terms of the availability, affordability and use of information and communications technologies and access to broadband, stressing also the urgent need to close digital divides, including with regard to such issues as the affordability of the Internet, and to ensure that the benefits of information and communications technologies, including new technologies, are available to all, in this regard reaffirming its commitment to significantly increasing access to information and communications technologies and striving to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020, and noting the many efforts to help to bridge digital divides and expand access, including the Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology, including Broadband, for Sustainable Development,

Stressing also the necessity for all forms of development cooperation, including aid flows, to promote digital transformation,

Recalling the Working Group on the Digital Gender Divide of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and the recommendations for action in bridging the gender digital divide contained in its progress report, and taking note of

the report of the Working Group on Education of the Broadband Commission entitled “Digital skills for life and work”,

Recognizing that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all of the Sustainable Development Goals, and emphasizing the need to target science, technology and innovation strategies to address the empowerment of women and girls and to reduce inequalities, including the gender digital divide,

Noting with great concern the fact that a gender digital divide persists in women’s access to and use of information and communications technologies, including in education, employment and other areas of economic and social development, and in this regard welcoming the many initiatives that focus on access, skills and leadership to promote the equal participation of women and girls in the digital age, such as the International Girls in ICT Day of the International Telecommunication Union and the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, known as the Equals Partnership,

Recognizing the need to focus on capacity development policies and sustainable support to further enhance the impact of activities and initiatives at the national and local levels aimed at providing advice, services and support, with a view to building an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society,

Noting that a range of topics continues to emerge on issues related to the access to and use and applications of information and communications technologies and their effects on economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,

Reaffirming that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, and emphasizing that progress towards the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society should be considered not only as a function of economic development and the spreading of information and communications technologies but also as a function of progress with respect to the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming also that Internet governance, including the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, should continue to follow the provisions set forth in the outcomes of the summits held in Geneva and Tunis,

Recalling the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, in Vilnius in 2010, in Nairobi in 2011, in Baku in 2012, in Bali, Indonesia, in 2013, in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2014, in João Pessoa, Brazil, in 2015, in Guadalajara, Mexico, in 2016, in Geneva in 2017, in Paris in 2018 and in Berlin in 2019 and convened virtually by the Secretary-General in 2020,

Recalling also the convening of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, based on the proposal by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development regarding the structure and composition of the Working Group, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/125](#) of 16 December 2015 and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution [2017/21](#), and taking note of its work,

Noting that information and communications technologies can help to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and noting also that, inter alia, the International Telecommunication Union has an important role in supporting Member States in the implementation of the Goals,

Noting also the convening of the World Telecommunication Development Conference by the International Telecommunication Union in Buenos Aires, from 9 to 20 October 2017, under the theme “Information and communications technology for Sustainable Development Goals”,

Noting further that technological change includes new and powerful tools for development, and mindful of its impacts, opportunities and challenges and that Governments, the private sector, international organizations, civil society and the technical and academic communities should take into account the social, economic, ethical, cultural and technical issues related to rapid technological advancements in order to deepen their understanding of how to harness their potential to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Reaffirming the value and principles of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the World Summit on the Information Society process since its inception, and recognizing that the effective participation, partnership and cooperation of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders, within their respective roles and responsibilities, especially with balanced representation from developing countries, have been and continue to be vital in developing the information society,

Conscious of the challenges faced by States in preventing and combating the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, including by terrorists, and emphasizing the need to continue international cooperation in this regard and to reinforce technical assistance and capacity-building activities, at their request, for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of such use in accordance with national and international law,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

Noting with great concern the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to help to reduce the risk of future shocks, and recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,

Noting with grave concern that almost half of the world’s population, especially women and girls and people in vulnerable situations, as well as more than four in five people in the least developed countries, do not have access to the Internet, and noting that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates inequalities caused by the digital divides, since the poorest and the most vulnerable who are the hardest hit are also those who lag behind the most in access to information and communications technologies,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, trade and development, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will

help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

2. *Welcomes* the remarkable evolution and diffusion of information and communications technologies, underpinned by the contributions of both the public and private sectors, which have seen penetration into almost all corners of the globe, created new opportunities for social interactions, enabled new business models and contributed to economic growth and development in all other sectors, while noting the unique and emerging challenges related to their evolution and diffusion;

3. *Recognizes* the potential of information and communications technologies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁰ and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, accordingly urges all Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into their approaches to implementing the Goals, and requests United Nations system entities facilitating the World Summit on the Information Society action lines to review their reporting and workplans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

4. *Reaffirms its commitment* to bridging digital and knowledge divides, recognizes that its approach must be multidimensional and include an evolving understanding of what constitutes access, emphasizing the quality of that access, and acknowledges that speed, stability, affordability, language, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities are now core elements of quality and that high-speed broadband is already an essential enabler of sustainable development;

5. *Stresses* the important role played by the private sector, civil society and technical communities in information and communications technologies;

6. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing countries, including the least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector;

7. *Welcomes* the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, and invites Member States, as well as international organizations, foundations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to ensure its full and effective implementation;

8. *Notes* the progress that has been made by United Nations system entities in cooperation with national Governments, regional commissions and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society, and encourages the use of those action lines for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

9. *Also notes* that the digital economy is an important and growing part of the global economy and that connectivity is correlated with increases in gross domestic product, and recognizes the critical importance of expanding the

¹⁰ Resolution 70/1.

participation of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the digital economy;

10. *Encourages* countries to take advantage of capacity-building mechanisms and opportunities from the entire United Nations system in this regard;

11. *Urges* a continued focus on maximizing development gains from e-commerce, through initiatives such as eTrade for All, launched by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which provides a new approach to trade development through electronic exchanges by allowing developing countries to more easily navigate the supply of technical assistance for building capacity in e-commerce readiness and by enabling donors to have a clear picture of the programmes that they could fund;

12. *Recognizes* in this regard that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has initiated and implemented rapid e-trade readiness assessments of the least developed countries in cooperation with other donors and organizations in order to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges related to leveraging e-commerce in the least developed countries;

13. *Welcomes* the holding of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy and the establishment of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy in 2018;¹¹

14. *Also welcomes* the holding of virtual E-commerce Week from 27 April to 1 May 2020, with the theme “Creating value in the digital economy”, and looks forward to the first Asia E-commerce Week, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2021;

15. *Further welcomes* the work of the Information for All Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which aims to assist Member States in formulating policies to bridge digital divides and ensure equitable knowledge societies, and also welcomes the holding of Global Media and Information Literacy Week from 24 to 31 October 2020;

16. *Recognizes* that, despite recent progress and significant gains, there is still uneven growth in access to and the use of information and communications technologies, and expresses concern over the substantial continued digital and broadband divides between and within developed and developing countries, including the fact that there are 122 mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 people in developed countries, compared with 75 in developing countries and 33 in the least developed countries, and that the cost of access is higher in developing countries in relation to average household income, resulting in a lack of affordable access to information and communications technologies;

17. *Also recognizes* the importance of broadband access to all developing countries, and calls upon all stakeholders, including the international community, to support further actions, including investment, to improve broadband access and connectivity in these countries;

18. *Further recognizes* the importance of broadband connectivity to users in rural and remote areas, and in this regard notes that small and non-profit community operators, as appropriate and among others, can provide these services through, inter alia, appropriate regulatory measures that allow them to gain access to basic infrastructure;

19. *Encourages* research and development, and the development of viable strategies that could result in further competitiveness, investment and rapid

¹¹ See [TD/B/EDE/4/3](#).

reductions in the cost of information and communications technologies, and urges all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, inter alia, strengthened enabling policy environments at all levels, legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and international cooperation to improve affordability, education, capacity-building, multilingualism, cultural preservation, investment and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms;

20. *Recognizes* that a gender digital divide persists and that the proportion of women using the Internet is 17 per cent lower than that of men worldwide and 43 per cent lower in the least developed countries, notes with concern that, while the gender digital divide has narrowed in many regions since 2013, it has widened overall, in particular in the least developed countries and in Africa, in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to information and communications technologies for development, including new technologies, in this respect reiterates its request for relevant United Nations system entities, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to support the implementation and monitoring of the action lines contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society by enhancing the emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, and reaffirms the commitment to ensuring women's full participation in decision-making processes related to information and communications technologies;

21. *Notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level, facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels;

22. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates and strategic plans, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the importance of allocating adequate resources in this regard;

23. *Acknowledges* the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum through 2025, as set out in the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

24. *Recognizes* the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, including discussion of public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the 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, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum,¹² in particular those on enhancing the participation of developing countries;

25. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of Governments and stakeholders from all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to support the participation of

¹² [A/67/65-E/2012/48](#) and [A/67/65/Corr.1-E/2012/48/Corr.1](#).

Governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

26. *Notes* the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, established by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125, to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda, and also notes that the Working Group ensured the full involvement of Governments and other relevant stakeholders, in particular from developing countries, taking into account all their diverse views and expertise;

27. *Also notes* that the Working Group held five meetings between September 2016 and January 2018 at which it discussed inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/125;

28. *Recalls* the report of the Chair of the Working Group,¹³ which includes references to the full texts of all proposals and contributions, and expresses its gratitude to the Chair and all participants who submitted inputs and contributed to the work of the Working Group;

29. *Welcomes* the good progress made by the Working Group in many areas and the fact that consensus seemed to emerge on some issues, while significant divergence of views in a number of other issues persisted, and in that regard regrets that the Working Group could not find agreement on recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda;

30. *Recognizes* the importance of enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, and notes the need for continued dialogue and work on the implementation of enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda;

31. *Encourages* the use of and engagement with forums and expertise available within relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, by all relevant stakeholders to promote global digital cooperation;

32. *Recognizes* that a lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies and services remains a critical challenge in many developing countries, in particular African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries, countries in situations of conflict, post-conflict countries and countries affected by natural disasters, and that all efforts should be deployed to reduce the price of information and communications technologies and broadband access, bearing in mind that deliberate interventions, including through research and development and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, may be necessary to spur the development of lower-cost connectivity options;

33. *Also recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in engaging with and accessing new technologies, such as an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, as well as issues related to technology ownership, setting standards and technology flows, and in this regard urges all stakeholders to consider ensuring appropriate financing of digital development and adequate means of implementation, including strengthened

¹³ See E/CN.16/2018/CRP.3.

capacity-building of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, towards a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy;

34. *Further recognizes* the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome digital divides, and stresses that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;¹⁴

35. *Notes* that, while a solid foundation for capacity-building in information and communications technologies has been laid in many areas with regard to building the information society, there is still a need for continuing efforts to address the ongoing challenges, especially for developing countries and the least developed countries, and draws attention to the positive impact of broadened capacity development that involves institutions, organizations and entities dealing with information and communications technologies and Internet governance issues;

36. *Recognizes* the importance of assisting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to address the challenges and opportunities in relation to the use of the Internet and e-commerce to develop their international trade capacities, among other things;

37. *Also recognizes* the importance of the free flow of information and knowledge, as the amount of information distributed worldwide grows and the role of communication becomes all the more important, and acknowledges that the mainstreaming of information and communications technologies in school curricula, open access to data, the fostering of competition, the creation of transparent, predictable, independent and non-discriminatory regulatory and legal systems, proportionate taxation and licensing fees, access to finance, the facilitation of public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder cooperation, national and regional broadband strategies, efficient allocation of the radio frequency spectrum, infrastructure-sharing models, community-based approaches and public access facilities have in many countries facilitated significant gains in connectivity and sustainable development;

38. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to keep the goal of bridging digital divides, in their different forms, an area of priority concern, to put into effect sound strategies that contribute to the development of e-government and to continue to focus on pro-poor information and communications technology policies and applications, including access to broadband at the grass-roots level, with a view to narrowing the digital divides among and within countries and, in turn, building information and knowledge societies;

39. *Notes* the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and recognizes that official development assistance and other concessional financial flows for information and communications technologies can make significant contributions to development outcomes, in particular where they can reduce the risk of public and private investment, and increase the use of information and communications technologies to strengthen good governance and tax collection;

40. *Invites* all relevant stakeholders to support more comprehensively those countries that are trailing in the digital economy in order to reduce the digital divides, strengthen the international enabling environment for value creation and build capacities in both the private and public sectors;

41. *Recognizes* the critical importance of private sector investment in information and communications technology infrastructure, content and services,

¹⁴ Resolution [69/313](#), annex.

encourages Governments to create legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, and also recognizes the importance of public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and other approaches to that end;

42. *Welcomes* the holding of the fifth annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, takes note of its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations,¹⁵ looks forward to further advancement in the follow-up process, and welcomes the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, the progress made in operationalizing the three components of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the holding of the fourth annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals;

43. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

44. *Recognizes* the important role of information and communications technologies for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and calls upon all stakeholders in the information and communications technologies sector, including Governments and the United Nations system, to fully consider the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as they strengthen their efforts to bridge the digital divides within and between developed and developing countries, with particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable, as well as women and girls, and to ensuring affordable and reliable connectivity, the promotion of digital access and digital inclusion, and the expansion of accessible and inclusive distance-learning solutions and digital health services;

45. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, an action-oriented report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, taking into account the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the review process of the World Summit on the Information Society, the summary by the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁶ and other relevant processes, as part of his annual report on the 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;

46. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development”, unless otherwise agreed.

*48th plenary meeting
21 December 2020*

¹⁵ See [E/FFDF/2020/3](#).

¹⁶ [E/HLPF/2019/6](#).