

## **Note by the Secretary-General**

### ITU ACTIVITIES ON YOUTH

#### **Summary**

Motivation and overview of ITUs activities related to youth in 2013/14.

#### **Action required**

This report is transmitted to the Council for **information**.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 1 In 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made 'working with and for women and young people' a key priority in his [five-year action agenda](#). In response, the Inter-Agency Network for Youth Development (IANYD) was established as a reporting and coordination mechanism for the entire UN system's work related to youth. ITU has been active in the IANYD, and chairs a sub-working group on young people and political inclusion.
- 2 Broadly speaking, ITU activities in this area have sought to improve the understanding of the role of ICTs in empowering youth as a marginalized group, through research, awareness raising, capacity building and providing policy advice.
- 3 Young people are seen to be pioneering ICT usage, and are driving trends in a fluid and major growth industry. As avid and creative users of ICTs, young people are key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society and bridging the Digital Divide. ITU research has shown the benefits of ICT access across all major sectors. For young people, access to information means better access to capital, markets and training needed to pursue a career or studies, increased participation in political processes, and recognition of youth as responsible citizens in today's society.

### **ITU ACTIVITIES ON YOUTH IN 2013/14:**

#### ***BYND2015 Summit on Youth and ICTs***

- 4 From 9-11 September 2013, ITU and the government of Costa Rica co-organized the BYND2015 Summit, to leverage the ideas and aspirations of young people who are helping dictate trends in the ICT sector, to advocate for ICTs in the UN Post-2015 global development frameworks.

The Summit took the pulse of a worldwide community of youth to discover the five hottest topics in social tech, which were crowd-sourced through online and onsite consultation and collaboration.

5 The Summit resulted in the [BYND2015 declaration](#), which serves as a high-level framework to encourage and guide Member States in the development of their own ICT-based youth initiatives, while mandating universal access to ICTs for young people's empowerment. The declaration also proposes key areas and methods for ITU's future engagement with young people, and with wider public audiences moving forwards.

6 The event brought young people closer to ITU, to help them understand the role and function of the organization. It made use of some unique and innovative ICT tools to connect young citizens with policy-makers, proving that such collaborative techniques and public consultations can have immensely powerful impact, and will surely help us create a world where citizens are more engaged with the decisions that affect them.

7 The Summit assembled some 600 young people from 68 nationalities onsite, with a further 8,000 from 173 countries actively tuning-in online to contribute to the Summit's crowdsourcing platform, and to participate in the remote workshops and mini-Summits hosted by the 43 official Summit Hubs situated in 31 locations around the world – mobilized in most instances by ambitious and committed young people themselves. In total the crowdsourcing yielded a little under 1000 unique ideas from 2,700 contributors in the two months leading up to, and then during the Summit itself.

8 Follow-up from the Summit includes:

- BYND2015 Declaration presented to Member States during the High-Level Segment of the 69th United Nations General Assembly by President Laura Chinchilla, where it was granted status as an official document of the 69th UNGA.
- BYND2015 Declaration presented to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President of the General Assembly Amb. John Ashe by President Chinchilla and ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun I. Touré.
- BYND2015 Declaration provided as input to the 8th meeting of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, a high-level lobbying group which meets every year on the side of the UNGA to bring attention to the issue of ICTs for development in international policy frameworks.
- Commitment from the office of the UN Special Representative on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, to continue advancing the goals of the Summit and increase recognition of the role of ICTs for young people's empowerment.
- BYND2015 Declaration warmly received by the UN Interagency Network for Youth Development (IANYD), which serves as a reporting mechanism for the UN system-wide efforts/actions, while further campaigning to ensure youth are entrenched on the international political agenda.
- Language from BYND2015 Declaration used to frame discussions during Arab States + European regional preparatory meetings for the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

- United Nations – ITU – shortlisted for ‘UK Cloud Awards 2014’ best public sector initiative for crowdsourcing work on BYND2015 Summit.
- UN Special Envoy for Youth has approached ITU to employ crowdsourcing platform and technique pioneered on the BYND Summit to source input from young audiences towards the proposed post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Crowdsourcing results due to be injected into member state and official processes overseeing formation of the post-2015 goals. The initiative is being moderated and supported by a system-wide team of 10+ UN agencies, as well as youth-led organizations and members of civil society.
- Crowdsourcing proposed Post-2015 goals is endorsed by President of the UN General Assembly and hailed as ‘ground-breaking’. Other senior officials of the UN system also offer their support for the initiative.

**Research and analysis:**

9 The Telecommunication Development Bureau released the report *‘Digital Opportunities: Innovative ICT Solutions for Youth Employment’*. The report details the skills young people need in a modern workplace, including digital literacy, computer literacy, web literacy and others. It also includes positive steps for policy-makers to enable youth training and entrepreneurship. The BDT maintains an online youth portal where this and further information and resources are available.

**Statistical monitoring:**

10 In 2013, ITU BDT’s flagship ‘Measuring the Information Society’ publication included the first in-depth analysis on young people’s use of ICTs, with a special focus on measuring the world’s digital natives. Analysis and reporting on young people’s use of ICTs is crucial for identifying gaps and ensuring proper implementation and follow-up, and allows for the creation of more intelligent and effective policies and frameworks to facilitate services roll-out. Key findings from the report include:

- In the developing world, the proportion of 15-25 year-olds using the internet is more than double that of other age brackets.
- 99.6% of young people in South Korea can be considered digital natives<sup>1</sup>, compared to 79% in Europe and just 9% in Africa.
- Numbers of digital natives in the developing world are expected to double by 2017.
- Overall, there are approximately 363 million digital natives out of a world population of nearly 7 billion (5.2 percent). The digital natives are, globally speaking, a minority of today’s youth.
- Digital natives are driving ICT usage in many of the developing nations, insofar as young people are inimitably online relative to the population as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> Digital natives defined as those active online for at least five years.

***ITU Kaleidoscope academic conferences:***

11 The ITU Kaleidoscope academic conferences, organized by ITU-T, with the technical co-sponsorship of the IEEE ComSoc, are peer-reviewed events that increase dialogue between academics and experts working on ICT standardization.

Kaleidoscope, ITU's flagship academic event, was launched in 2008 and aim at identifying emerging developments in ICTs and, in particular, areas in need of international standards to support the development of successful products and services. A prize fund totaling \$10,000 is awarded to the three best papers. Selected papers, after a double-blind review by a technical committee of over 100 international experts, are published in the conference's proceedings and in IEEE Xplore. The best papers are evaluated for potential publication in IEEE Communications Magazine. Young authors presenting a paper at the conference receive Young Author Recognition certificates.

12 Kaleidoscope 2013, themed "Building Sustainable Communities", took place in Kyoto, Japan, 22-25 April. Following K-13, a one-day Workshop on ITU and Academia provided information on ITU's Academia membership category and presented and discussed the standards-focused activities of ITU's academic members.

13 In June 2014, the sixth ITU Kaleidoscope event, "Living in a converged world – impossible without standards?", will take place in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. The event's programme includes a scientific welcome speech by the Nobel Prize Winner Academician Z. Alferov, four high-level keynote speeches from the academic world, and the presentation of 38 academic papers offering bold, innovative approaches to research and development of standards on the subject of industries' and technologies' convergence in today's ICT-dependent world.

***ITU Telecom Young Innovators Competition:***

14 An integral part of ITU Telecom World events, the Young Innovators Programme works with promising start-ups run by young people from all over the world who are using technological innovation to improve the social reality of their communities.

15 Each year, the Young Innovators Competition invites new start-ups and concepts to compete for one of the ten prestigious places in the programme. Chosen by a committee of world-class experts from public, private and academic sectors, the ten winners join the ITU Telecom World event for a four-day accelerator programme of pitching sessions, hands-on workshops and mentoring – plus the chance to win up to USD 10,000 in funding.

16 The Young Innovators Competition has a budding online community of 3,500 followers and continues to enjoy strong growth.

***UN System coordination + input to Post-2015 development agenda:***

17 ITU participates in the ***UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)***, which consists of UN entities at the headquarters level, and whose work is relevant to youth. In response to the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda, and the requests from Member States, the IANYD has prepared a System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP). To develop the Youth-SWAP, a consultative and preparatory process was carried out through an online survey in all six official UN languages. ITU spread the information globally via its Regional Offices. Over

13,000 respondents from 186 countries participated in the survey. Throughout the process, 27 UN entities actively participated and another 22 were consulted or provided input. As a result, in 2013, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed the Youth-SWAP as a framework to guide youth programming for the UN system.

18 The Youth-SWAP provides strategic guidance to the entire UN system in its work on youth within the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). The SWAP focuses on the following thematic areas: employment, entrepreneurship, protection of rights, civic engagement and political inclusion, health, and education - including comprehensive sexuality education. ITU has helped raise awareness on the role that ICTs can play in all Youth –SWAP thematic areas, as a tool for social and economic development of youth worldwide.

19 To support the UN Special Envoy for Youth in its initiative to crowdsource input to the global Post-2015 development agenda, ITU is providing an online platform where young people can express their views on possible Post-2015 targets and indicators. ITU is providing direct technical and analytical support to a team of UN System experts involved in the Post-2015 negotiations, who are helping moderate the platform, therefore illustrating that ICT tools and collaboration can improve public policy and consultations. The platform is available at:  
<https://crowdsourcing.itu.int/>.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

20 Young audiences could be a means of exploring new and innovative approaches to ordinary working methods, innovating new formats to help improve efficiency across the organization, and providing a test bed for methods which could scale internally or across the larger UN system. As a highly specialized organization, ITU's focus is evolving from engagement with a broad-based youth audience to targeting the next generation of ICT engineers, researchers and economists, bringing these future policy- and decision-makers of the industry closer to the work of the Union, and exposing them to international ICT diplomacy, treaty-making and standardization.

21 The organization is becoming more focused in its outreach to young people, by targeting new models of academic membership to bring young ICT specialists closer to the technical work in the sectors, thereby leveraging their valuable intellectual capital and giving them a unique recognition and exposure at an international level.

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