

# Financing Digital Infrastructure for Universal Meaningful Connectivity: Pathways to an Ambitious FFD4

10:00-11:30 ET, Tuesday 3 December

Room S15-23, United Nations Headquarters

**Date:** December 3, 2024

**Time:** 10:00 – 11:30 ET

**Venue:** Room S15-23, United Nations Headquarters, NY

**Format:** Hybrid. The link for online participation is available [here](#)

## Event Abstract:

In an increasingly digital world, digital infrastructure is the cornerstone for building thriving digital economies and driving economic and social progress<sup>1</sup>. This fundamental role is underscored in the recently adopted [Pact for the Future](#), where world leaders committed to investing in resilient digital infrastructure and developing innovative, blended financing mechanisms to connect the remaining 2.6 billion people to the internet<sup>2</sup>.

Despite these commitments, the lack of adequate digital infrastructure remains one of the primary barriers preventing nearly one-third of the global population from accessing connectivity<sup>3</sup>, particularly in low and lower-middle-income countries.

The FFD4 presents an unprecedented opportunity to prioritize digital infrastructure investments within the "Science, Technology, Innovation, and Capacity Building" action area, ensuring that no one is left behind.

This session will showcase actionable initiatives proposed by the ITU and key stakeholders—including Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), governments, and the private sector—to accelerate investment in digital infrastructure. It will also discuss and ensure alignment with the Digital Economy Working Group under Brazil's and South Africa's G20 Presidencies, where digital infrastructure investment is identified as a key priority.

Through an interactive discussion, we will identify key success factors and potential solutions to overcome current investment challenges, examining their ability to transform digital development on a global scale.

By presenting concrete initiatives and tangible implementation strategies, this session will help chart a bold path forward to secure the financing required for universal digital inclusion and the achievement of the SDG goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda, 70% of the SDG Goals Targets have a digital component (ITU, UNDP, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> ITU, 2023

<sup>3</sup> ITU, 2023.

## Draft agenda:

**DECEMBER 3****10:00 – Welcome and opening remarks****10:10**

- Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU
- H.E. Ambassador Ms. Mathu Joyini, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN

**10:10 – Digital infrastructure: A cornerstone for economic and social progress****10:25**

*This segment will delve into the critical role of digital infrastructure in advancing the SDGs and provide an overview of key investment challenges, building on findings from the Digital Infrastructure Investment Initiative (DIII). It will also present specific proposals by the ITU aimed at driving investments in digital infrastructure, which could serve as actionable outcomes of the FFD4 conference.*

- Alex Wong, Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement and Initiatives, ITU
- Maikel Wilms, Partner and Director at BCG and DIII knowledge partner

**10:25 - Solutions for an inclusive connected future: Success factors and challenges****11:10**

*Through an interactive discussion, participants will examine the essential factors for the success of the presented initiatives, alongside potential challenges. They will address the transformative effects of enhanced digital infrastructure and share their ongoing efforts to bridge the digital divide.*

- Christopher S. Yoo, Professor, University of Pennsylvania
- Francesco Saverio Ambrogetti, Principal Adviser Innovative and Alternative Finance for Children, UNICEF
- Heather Johnson, Vice President for Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, Ericsson
- Ivan Rossignol, Senior Advisor, AIIB
- John Simon, Founding and Managing Partner, Total Impact Capital
- Lauren Bieniek, Digital Inclusion Advisor, USAID
- Moderated by Alex Wong, Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement and Initiatives, ITU

**11:10 – Interactive Q&A****11:20****11:20 – Closing remarks****11:30**

- H.E. Mr. José Gilberto Scandiucci, Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Brazil to the UN
- H.E. Ambassador Ms. Ana Jiménez de la Hoz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN