



**ARAB HIGH-LEVEL
FORUM on WSIS
and 2030 AGENDA**
for Sustainable Development
Beirut, 19-21 March 2019



Final Statement

Messages of the Second Arab High-level Forum on World Summit on the Information Society and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

United Nations House, Beirut, 19-21 March 2019

We, the participants in the Second Arab High-level Forum on World Summit on the Information Society and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at the United Nations House in Beirut, 19-21 March 2019,

Building on the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the comprehensive review process for its implementation in 2015 and its extension to 2025 towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and harnessing the potential of digital technologies to accelerate sustainable development,

Confirming our firm conviction that the achievement of sustainable development is the only way to ensure the foundations of a decent life for all,

Commending the continued efforts of the Arab States to support and develop their information and communications technology (ICT) sector,

Building on regional cooperation among States, and with United Nations organizations, including the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Regional Office for Arab States of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), as well as with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations,

We stress the importance of:

1. The strong partnership between ESCWA and ITU Regional Office for Arab States (ITU ARO) represented at Second Arab High-level Forum on WSIS and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the importance of encouraging all stakeholders, especially United Nations organizations working in the region, to work together to achieve the outcomes of the WSIS and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which positively affect the lives of people in the Arab region;
2. The ESCWA initiative in the field of digital development through launching the process of preparing national and regional reports to analyse the status of the Arab information society from a sustainable development perspective and the importance of the participation of States in this activity;
3. Developing a key strategic framework in each country, deriving from the Digital Development Report, to link SDGs with other digital strategies and action plans, and ensure complementarity and synergy between activities to achieve the goals of sustainable development;

4. The cooperation between ESCWA and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through the ESCWA Digital Development Initiative, in particular with regard to the United Nations E-Government Survey;
5. Implementing the Arab ITU initiatives in various areas, within a four-year plan that includes several projects, capacity-building activities, regional studies and direct assistance, and inviting all stakeholders to participate in this plan and strengthening efforts and establishing new partnerships to implement regional initiatives, outcomes of the WSIS and the SDGs;
6. Providing a broad and affordable infrastructure that offers access to the Internet and e-services to the entire population, regardless of location and geographic dimension, and to all segments of society, including women and youth, in order to achieve inclusion, equality and digital transformation in society;
7. Research, development and innovation in building a strong and prosperous digital economy at national and regional levels, allowing competition with other national economies and promoting job creation for youth;
8. E-government as the national backbone and the main engine for building a digital society, accelerating development and guiding it in the right direction by creating demand for emerging digital applications, and encouraging e-government programme directors in Arab countries to continue cooperating on digital transformation and digital government issues during 2019 and 2020 and implementing the Government Electronic and Mobile Services (GEMS) maturity index as a tool to measure the digital transformation in the Arab countries;
9. Education and training using digital means to enable a new digital generation capable of raising expectations in the Arab region and accelerating the development of society;
10. Promoting the availability of the rich heritage in the Arab region through digital platforms, accessible to the entire world, with a focus on its multicultural and multilingual aspects as well as its contribution to human development throughout history;
11. The use of social media to accelerate development through a participatory approach for political and socioeconomic development at the local, national and regional levels;
12. The cooperation in the development of open data and open government in the Arab region;
13. Continuing the efforts of ESCWA and the League of Arab States in the Arab dialogue on public Internet policies at the global and regional levels and in the process of the Arab Internet Governance Forum, which will benefit the Internet community in the region and communicate the regional perspective to global Internet governance forums;
14. Urging all Governments, the private sector and civil society in the region to play an active role in participating in meetings and events of the Arab Internet Governance Forum and its various committees;
15. The capacity-building initiatives related to security, safety and sustainability of the Internet for network development in the region, including those undertaken by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Riseaux IP Europeens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC) and Internet Society (ISOC) organizations, alone or jointly.

We also note the importance of organizing the Second Arab High-level Forum on WSIS and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations House, Beirut, from 19 to 21 March 2019, and the request from ESCWA and the ITU ARO to continue organizing the Forum periodically (in collaboration with other United Nations organizations), to discuss priority issues for the development of ICTs and their use to achieve sustainable development in the Arab region, and request regional and international organizations working in technology, particularly the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, to continue to cooperate and build partnerships to promote regional integration.