

Emerging Trends | ICT4SDG | Infrastructure

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Top Contributors: Why China supports ITU

By ITU News

This interview with ZHAO Yonghong, Director-General, Department of International Cooperation, The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China, is part of an occasional series about why ITU's Top Contributors support ITU.

1. Why do you support ITU?

The rapid development of ICT technologies and industries, as well as the accelerated integration with traditional industries, has become a new engine to advance economic and social development in many countries.

ITU has long been committed to facilitating the development of the global ICT industry, through a series of activities including management of radio frequency, satellite orbit and numbering resources, international standard development, regulatory policy coordination, sharing of development experience, strengthening global connectivity, with a view to promoting the building-up of the information society in Member States, especially in developing countries, all of which have contributed considerably to human civilization and social development.

It is our belief that the work of ITU is critical to achieving the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. China has been actively involved in various ITU activities by providing funding, technology and capacity-building support to ITU. We are very pleased to see ITU's achievements in the past four years under the able leadership of Secretary-General Houlin Zhao and we hope that ITU will continue to work for greater achievements.

2. How does the work of ITU help your strategic ICT initiatives?

In recent years, the Chinese government has implemented a series of major strategic initiatives such as "Broadband China" to promote the sound and rapid development of China's ICT industry.

We believe that the work of ITU can help China's ICT strategy in three aspects: firstly, strengthen the linkage with international ICT counterparts so that Chinese industries get a better understanding of current trends of the ICT industry and diversified exchanges within the industry are promoted; secondly, participate in international ICT technical studies and standardization activities. In doing so, China will not only contribute to the development of the global ICT industry, but also vigorously promote the research and development (R&D) and the wide spreading of new ICT technologies and applications in the country; thirdly, exchange with and learn from each other. By sharing and exchanging development experiences with other Member States, China is committed to further deepen cooperation in the ICT field between China and the rest of the world.

3. What specific benefits do you see from your work with ITU? And/or which ITU activities are most relevant to you?

China attaches great importance to ITU activities. The government, industry, research institutes and academic institutions have actively participated in ITU's standardization, radiocommunication and development work, which is very beneficial.

Our focuses include:

- 1) Promoting ICT infrastructure roll-out and inter-connectivity, including promoting standards development and application development in areas such as transmission, access networks and fibre-optic communications, facilitating the development of new technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence and next-generation networks, improving the conformance, interoperability and security of communication systems and networks so that network interconnection between countries will be enhanced.
- 2) Promoting the rational and efficient use of radio frequency and satellite orbit resources. The ITU Radio Regulations is the main guiding instrument for the formulation and revision of domestic frequency allocations in China. The filing, coordination and registration of satellite and terrestrial stations carried out by ITU is of great importance for ensuring the normal operation of radiocommunication systems. The development and revision of standards by ITU has played an active role in guiding the application and development of various radiocommunication systems such as 5G and satellite communications.
- 3) Promoting the convergence of ICT in other sectors, such as smart manufacturing, Internet of Things, digital financing, e-health, e-agriculture, smart cities and communities as well as e-government.

4. Can you provide some examples of how ICTs are helping drive sustainable development in your country?

In recent years, China's high-speed broadband networks and services have become increasingly popular. A significant number of innovative Internet and new technology applications are emerging. ICT application and digital transformation in various industries are accelerating, which has profoundly changed people's work and lifestyle.

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For instance: Industrial Internet. With the close integration between manufacturing and the Internet, Industrial Internet has become a key pillar for the new industrial revolution and an important cornerstone for intelligent manufacturing. Through the comprehensive interconnection between people, machines and things, the Industrial Internet not only promotes the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, leading to the optimized distribution of various resources and enhanced economic benefits of the industry, but also accelerates the fostering of emerging industries, enabling intelligent production, customization and many others.

Mobile Internet. With the evolution and development of mobile telecommunication standards, the speed of mobile broadband networks continues to increase while the cost of voice and data traffic continues to decrease. Innovations in mobile Internet applications flourish. The Chinese people are enjoying faster broadband networks at lower prices. Electronic applications are widely used in areas such as payment, transportation, medical care, making life more convenient for the general public.

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Sharing Economy. In recent years, driven by ICT technologies, the sharing economy has become a reality in transportation, rental housing, logistics and express delivery services as well as social welfare. By making use of Internet platforms, idle resources are used more efficiently and many new jobs are created, which contributed significantly to China's economic and social development.

5. What do you see as the main ICT industry trends in your country?

In the future, the ICT industry will continue to witness a dynamic trend of innovation and accelerated integration with various sectors in the economy and society. With the development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain and rapid evolution of ICT networks, China's digital economy is picking up the pace. The ICT's role in driving innovation and stimulating social and economic development will continue to grow, which will promote China's sustainable development and create more jobs.

6. Which priority issues should ITU address in the coming years?

As the global ICT environment is undergoing profound changes, ITU still has a long way to go in bridging the digital divide, promoting the global digital economy and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It is recommended that ITU should focus on the following issues in the coming years:

- Promote the roll-out and interconnection of global ICT infrastructure, and help developing countries improve their ICT industry;
- Strengthen the leading role of ITU in ICT technical standardization and further enhance its influence in the field of global standardization of emerging ICT technologies;
- Promote more efficient and rational use of radio spectrum and satellite orbit resources by countries to reduce interference and identify spectrum to support the development of new radiocommunication technologies and applications;
- Play a more active role in the global ICT public policy consultation and coordination process;
- Strengthen cooperation with other international organizations to promote digital economy;
- Further bridge the digital divide and increase access and accessibility to ICT services for people of all countries and regions irrespective of their genders, ages, income levels, particularly for the marginalized and vulnerable communities;
- Encourage Member States to work together in strengthening the security of international telecommunication networks.

7. How should ITU evolve to meet the changing needs of the ICT industry?

As the ICT industry continues to evolve, we expect ITU will keep pace with the times and to play a bigger role in global ICT-related affairs. ITU needs to speed up its decision-making process, continue to improve management and operational efficiency and better adapt itself to the rapidly changing environment.

ITU needs to fully leverage its advantages in areas such as standardization, radiocommunication and telecommunications development, and play a more active part in emerging areas such as big data, cloud computing and the Internet of Things. It shall also enhance cooperation with relevant stakeholders in the private sector, research institutions and international and regional organizations to promote coordinated development of global ICT industry.

For a full list of ITU's Top Contributors click [here](#).

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