

Department of Telecommunication
Sanchar Bhawan, 20 Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001
(International Relations Wing)

No. 6-4/2022-IR

Dated 20.01.2023

Sub: Participation for taking pledge & nominations for promote nominations for awards by ITU in different categories, viz. Access, Skills, Leadership in Tech, Leadership in SMEs and Research.

Ref: - Letter no. GEN/PMI/161/05/2022 dated 19.12.2022 from PMI, Geneva

Sir,

Please find enclosed herein the report on the 1st Annual Meeting of the Partners2connect Digital Coalition (P2C) held on 8.12.2022 as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) at Geneva.

The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition is a multistakeholder alliance launched by ITU in close cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, and in line with the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally, with a focus on but not limited to hardest-to-connect communities in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

It is heartening to note that a lot of Indian Companies have pledges in different categories, viz. Access, Skills, Leadership in Tech, Leadership in SMEs and Research in Partners2connect Digital Coalition (P2C). However, to increase the pledges by India in the program, DoT call upon more companies to extend the pledges in the future and participate in the awards organized by ITU.

All the stakeholders are requested to circulate the details about Partner2Connect among the industries/SMEs/Start-ups/Academia for larger participation in awards & pledges.

This issues with the approval of competent authority.

Encl: - A/A



(Narendra Choubey)
Director (IR-II)

Room No. 509, Ph-01123036749

To,

Industry representatives

To be uploaded to DoT website for wider publicity.

Permanent Mission of India to UN

Geneva

Subject: Report on 1st Annual Meeting of Partner2Connect held at ITU on 8.12.2022.

1. **Background**

Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C)¹ is a multi-stakeholder alliance launched by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, and in line with the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation², to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally. The coalition focusses on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It was launched on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in September 2021. Four key focus areas of P2C to ensure a sustainable global digital transformation are **Access** (connecting people everywhere), **Adoption** (empowering communities), **Value Creation** (building digital ecosystems) and **Accelerate** (incentivizing investments).

As a follow-up to the initiative, ITU announced the *P2C Online Pledging Platform*³ on 16.03.2022. The platform facilitated the interested entities to submit their pledges which would support P2C objectives of mobilizing resources to transform societies, promoting sustainable digital technology uptake, and to ensure meaningful connectivity for everyone. It was positioned to serve as a key place for leaders to declare their organizations' commitment to close the digital divide and as a marketplace to catalyse new partnerships and collaboration. Initially the platform received high-profile statements of support from several governments and an initial set of pledges from the German development agency GIZ, and global firms like Microsoft and Vodafone. Over the period of time, the Platform received pledges and commitments from across the government, business, civil society, and academic sectors to drive digital transformation.

2. **Brief on Annual P2C Meeting held on 08.12.2022**

1st Annual P2C meeting held on **08.12.2022** at ITU headquarters at Geneva, attended by Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Technical Expert & Councillor, Permanent Mission of India to UN, Geneva.

The opening session had high-level representatives from government, private sector, and civil society to discuss the challenges and opportunities to achieve universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation. It was attended by Secretary General ITU along with Directors of all three bureaus of ITU, namely, Radio,

¹ <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/partner2connect/>

² <https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/>

³ <https://www.itu.int/partner2connect-pledges/>

Development & Standardization. Director-elect of Standardization and Development bureau were also present in the inaugural session. Permanent Representative of South Africa, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS) and Head of International Affairs, Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM), Switzerland also addressed the meeting.

Next session was a panel discussion on '*Accelerating Connectivity for Sustainable Digital Transformation*' which had participants such as Director General GSMA, CEO Vodafone, CEO SAMENA (industry association of 85 telecom operators across 25 countries), Sr. Director Microsoft and Permanent Representatives of Singapore & European Union.

This was followed by the Reporting Session which presented the key findings of the progress reports submitted by P2C pledgers, as well as the aggregated results available via the P2C dashboard. It was reported by Ms. Doreen, Director BDT that so far the initiative received **582 pledges worth US\$ 29.93 Bn from 281 entities spread over 118 countries**. It was also informed that nearly 10% of the pledges made have been completed while work is reported to be in progress in 74% of the pledges. Mr. Amir Azeem Bajwa, Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority was one of the panellist among the panel of 13 participants.

Next session was focussed on ITU's support to Cambodia for national digital transformation strategies. It was followed by Tech Awards ceremony to celebrate initiatives and organizations around the world working towards gender digital equality. The awards were given in **five categories** and winners were announced as follows: **Access (Mexico), Skills (Czech Republic), Leadership in Tech (Sri Lanka), Leadership in SMEs (Zimbabwe) and Research (Nigeria)**.

3. **India's contribution to the pledges**

ITU's online dashboard⁴ displays that **7 pledges** were made from India, including the pledge by Government of India for Bharat Net program. Other pledges were made by Bharti Airtel (for financial inclusion), Satcom Industry Association (for ITU guideline implementation), IIM Kashipur (for Digital Storytelling), Digigaon Job Foundation (for connecting rural areas in India using PM-WANI) and ADA Lovelace Software Pvt Ltd (two pledges for empowering women and elderly through AI tools). **The estimated financial value of the pledges made by India's organizations is reported as US\$ 25.1M.**

⁴ <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/partner2connect/pledges/explore-pledges/>

A summary of pledges from India are as below:

Entity	Entity Type	Name of Pledge
India Ada Lovelace Software Private Limited	Private Sector	Empower Children and Women with Disability with Simplex Educational Platform with Artificial Intelligence and Assistive Technology
Bharti Airtel Limited	Private Sector	Financial Inclusion and Support through digital infrastructure.
India Satcom Industry Association	Regional Organization	Foster implementation of ITU guidelines and recommendations on National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP) and Last Mile Connectivity Guidelines.
Indian Institute of Management Kashipur	Academia	Introducing Digital Storytelling and Design Thinking Skills for School Children in Local Communities.
Digigaon Job Factory Foundation	Other	Create a platform to empower 10K rural folks to connect 2Mn unconnected rural people leveraging PM-WANI Framework in 3 years
Department of Telecommunications, Government of India	Government	BharatNet Project to promote Broadband for all as a tool for socio-economic development, while ensuring service quality and environmental sustainability.
Ada Lovelace Software Private Limited	Private Sector	Empowering Children's, women and older persons with Disability through Artificial Intelligence and Assistive Technology

4. Observations & Action Points

It is seen that ITU is giving much importance to P2C initiative. Perhaps it is because of the fact that the initiative is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Secretary General's report on *'Our Common Agenda'* on Roadmap for Digital Cooperation presented to UN on 10 September 2021 and with the proposed agenda of *'Global Digital Compact'* proposed by Tech Envoy to Secretary General, which is under discussion at present.

In view of this following action points may be considered:

- a. A periodic review of the pledges made by India's contributors may be carried out and progress reported on the portal which has been developed by ITU for this purpose.
- b. There were no nominations from India for the Tech Awards in five categories mentioned in para (3) above. In future editions of Annual Meeting, possibility of sending nominations from India may be explored by DoT & MEITY.
- c. If found feasible, DoT & MEITY may identify champions for P2C initiative from private as well as public sector in India, who may be encouraged to participate in various forum of P2C for highlighting India's contribution to the cause of societal transformation using ICT, promoting sustainable digital technology uptake, and extending meaningful connectivity.
- d. PMI can liaison with ITU for providing a platform for participation of champions in P2C activities.

The report is submitted to Secretary DoT & Secretary MEITY for further action with the approval of Ambassador & PR, PMI Geneva.
