

Bilel Jamoussi

Tunisia

Candidate
for the post of
**Director of the
ITU Telecommunication
Standardization Bureau**



What is your view on the role of digital technologies in a rapidly changing world?

COVID-19 demonstrated the crucial importance of connectivity and digital technologies as essential services to citizens – through teleworking, distance education, digital health care, digital financial inclusion, and more.

Digital technologies accelerate our ability to reach all 17 United Nations-backed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. International standards are critical to drive that achievement in our rapidly changing world of digital transformation.

How should the work of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector evolve to maintain relevance in today's world?

Industry and governments need an efficient, effective, speedy, and fair and transparent international standards development process that enables interoperable networks and services ready for market implementation.

The private sector needs the best possible platform for development of technical standards for fibre optic networks – in support of 5G and beyond – to carry world data traffic. It needs standards for video compression to efficiently carry 80 per cent of global Internet traffic, to measure electromagnetic fields based on World Health Organization guidelines, and for quality of service, among other areas. It also needs effective security protocols to provide trust in information and communication technologies (ICTs).



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ITU members require a neutral and impartial platform, able to collaborate with other standards development organizations and UN agencies for global digital transformation through a consensus-based process. As Chief of the Study Groups Department in the ITU Standardization Bureau (TSB) for the past 12 years, I have helped our membership achieve these goals. Through a clear articulation of the value proposition of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), paired with rising interest in digital transformation, we succeeded in attracting 200 new private sector companies to join ITU-T in the last four years.

In my 15 years in the private sector as Director of Standards at Nortel in the US and Canada, and as a holder of 23 US patents, I have experienced first-hand the importance of a stable patent policy that allows industry to quickly turn technological innovation into international standards.

I shall strive to ensure that ITU-T continues to quickly react and adapt to the ever-changing ICT landscape and keeps developing timely and relevant international standards.

If elected, what are your top three priorities and how do you plan to achieve them?

1. **Reform and restructure ITU-T Study Groups:** Transparently provide the required data, expertise, and guidance to help members optimally structure ITU-T Study Groups, leveraging collaboration, and ensuring this platform's continued relevance and attractiveness.
2. **Strengthen inclusive standards:** Through the Bridging the Standardization Gap programme and interfacing with the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau and regional offices, streamline the transfer of new and emerging standards and expertise to projects in developing countries. I firmly believe in a more efficient and inclusive ITU and that no one should be left behind in the ongoing digital revolution.
3. **Accelerate ITU transformation:** Step up the application of innovative, transformational working methods for standards development through physical, hybrid, and fully virtual meetings. With the planned new ITU building in Geneva, ensure service continuity to members while accelerating ITU's digital transformation and improving environmental sustainability.

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How can the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector contribute to progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

International standards that enable digital transformation are central to achieving the SDGs and will be crucial in addressing some of the most pressing needs of the planet, including eradicating hunger and mitigating climate change. New technologies and tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI) help ensure that technological advancement benefits all.

As the Global Standardization Symposium that I had the honour of organizing in 2022 made clear, digital channels are bringing life-changing financial services to millions for the very first time. ITU-T has a powerful role in advancing standards with a continued focus on inclusion and accessibility.

Tell us about your achievements in leadership and building consensus.

In my 12-year career at ITU, I've had the privilege of leading several efforts that bridged divides and brought diverse stakeholders to consensus, including:

- **WTSA-20:** Leading ITU's World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) team, serving as Secretary of the Plenary, and handling a range of challenging agenda items.
- **ITU-T continuity plan:** Putting together ITU-T's response plan during COVID-19, including the postponement of WTSA-20 until February 2022.
- **Bridging the Standardization Gap:** Helping developing countries participate in the development and implementation of ITU-T standards; leading efficient resource allocation for international numbering that identifies mobile and fixed telephone networks and users and creates an effective ecosystem for the Internet of things and mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs); and handling politically sensitive allocations through careful diplomatic mediation and expertise.
- **Financial Inclusion Global Initiative:** Creating a framework to develop trusted digital payment guidelines and standards in collaboration with telecommunication and finance regulators.
- **Grant management:** Securing and managing a multi-million-dollar grant to foster global financial inclusion.
- **Inter-agency cooperation:** Creating synergies and strengthening partnership with key UN sister agencies.
- **Smart cities:** Leading the Smart Sustainable Cities initiative for more than 200 cities worldwide.
- **Internal leadership:** Chairing various vital ITU staff committees.



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What else would you bring to the table as the next Director of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau?

If elected, I will bring decades of public and private sector experience to ensure ITU-T develops the standards for interoperable networks and services to connect the world. I will continue to facilitate global digital transformation through an inclusive, collaborative, and efficient standardization process, balancing the needs of developing and developed countries as well as large and small private-sector stakeholders.

My election will bring a wider geographic balance among ITU elected officials, ensure rotation among regions in TSB, and enable TSB to succeed as a coordinated and collaborative team. I shall engage productively with other ITU elected officials, inspiring confidence through competence, integrity, transparency, and accountability.

As a technologist at heart, I have a keen interest in continuing to build an agile and innovative bureau, using the latest AI-powered collaboration and analytics tools to increase efficiency and stay ahead of the curve.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Everyone should have the necessary access, as well as the ability, to use and develop ICTs effectively.

As a Tunisian, Arab, and African who has lived and worked in four countries – Tunisia, Canada, the US, and Switzerland – and being multilingual (I am fluent in English, French, Arabic, and speak some Spanish), I am deeply aware of what developing countries need from ITU and capable of communicating clearly with our staff and membership from different regions of the world.

Lastly, if elected, I will not need to go through a newcomer's learning curve. I will hit the ground running.



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