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Joint Declaration on Accelerating Sustainability in Telecoms
Embracing Technological Innovation for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Preamble

The telecommunications industry stands at the intersection of digital transformation and sustainability, playing a crucial role in driving the twin transition—towards a greener economy and inclusive digitalization. Emerging technologies, including AI, IoT, 5G/6G, cloud computing, quantum technologies, and blockchain, present unprecedented opportunities for efficiency, security, and social progress. However, these advancements also pose challenges related to energy consumption, workforce transformation, and ethical concerns.
This declaration, based on findings from the "Accelerating Sustainability in Telecoms" project, underscores the commitment of telecom stakeholders—including industry leaders, workers' representatives, and policymakers—to responsibly adopt and efficiently regulate rapidly developing technologies, ensuring they serve both environmental and social sustainability.

Key Commitments

1. Driving Environmental Sustainability

- **Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction:** Adopt technologies such as **5G, fiber optic networks, AI-driven analytics, and edge computing** to enhance energy efficiency and reduce emissions across telecom infrastructure.
- **Green Data Centers:** Invest in sustainable cloud computing practices, utilizing **renewable energy-powered data centers, energy-efficient cooling solutions, and circular economy principles** to minimize environmental impact.
- **IoT for Sustainability:** Deploy **IoT-enabled smart grids, energy management systems, and smart agriculture solutions** to optimize resource consumption across industries.
- **Lifecycle Management:** Commit to responsible **e-waste management, recycling, and refurbishing** strategies, ensuring the longevity of telecom hardware and infrastructure.

2. Supporting Fair and Inclusive Work Environments

- **Labour market Transformation & Digital Skills:** Establish robust **upskilling and reskilling programs** to ensure workers remain competitive in the evolving job market, particularly in **AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing**.

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- **Hybrid Work & Right to Disconnect: Develop and** implement policies that ensure **equitable treatment of remote and on-site workers**,**mental well-being, data privacy, work-life balance** and **the right to disconnect**.
- **Fair AI & Algorithmic Transparency:** Enforce ethical AI principles to **prevent worker surveillance, bias, and job displacement**, promoting **human-centric AI applications** in telecom operations.

3. Strengthening Social Dialogue, Regulation and Innovation

- **Collaboration with Social Partners:** Engage **trade unions, works councils, policymakers, and businesses** in shaping policies that balance innovation with social protection.
- **Regulatory Alignment:** Support **EU Green Deal & Digital Compass** objectives by adhering to sustainability reporting frameworks, Digital Market Act, Data Act, **AI Act provisions, GDPR compliance and further relevant legislation, while promoting digital sovereign innovation in Europe**.
- **Responsible Deployment of Disruptive Technologies:** Prioritize **inclusive decision-making and transparency** when introducing new technologies to mitigate adverse labour and environmental effects.

Call to Action

As social partners in the telecom sector, UNI Europa and Connect Europe call upon governments, industry leaders, and labour representatives to jointly pursue the responsible adoption of disruptive technologies, ensuring that the telecom sector remains a catalyst for sustainability, digital equity, and economic resilience.

By committing to these principles, we reaffirm our dedication to building a smarter, greener, and fairer telecom ecosystem—one that advances digitalization without leaving workers, communities, or the environment behind.

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