GIGA
CONNECTIVITY
FORUM2025

Empowering Governments to Accelerate Universal School Connectivity by 2030

Dates: 8-9 July 2025 (and optional sessions on 10 July)

Venue: Campus Biotech (Chemin des Mines 9, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland)

Language: English (However, simultaneous interpretation in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish will be provided for the plenary sessions)

Event Website: https://giga.global/giga-connectivity-forum/

Wednesday, 9 July 2025
Campus Biotech
(Chemin des Mines 9, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland)

Segment II: Giga at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

07:30 – 12:30	**Campus Biotech Auditorium**
07:30 – 18:00	*Badging at Campus Biotech Building Main Entrance*
09:00 – 10:00	**WSIS High-Level Ministerial Session: "*The Digital Imperative: The Critical Role of School Connectivity*"** *Connectivity has become pivotal and therefore critical for the socio-economic development of every country and across all aspects of life. Its transformative impact on the education sector, in particular, cannot be overstated. Connectivity opens new pathways for students and teachers to access a world of information, fosters inclusive lifelong learning, drives socio-economic growth, and supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4.* *The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process identified the connection of universities, colleges, secondary, and primary schools to ICTs as a key priority in the 2003 Geneva Plan of Action. WSIS Action Line C2, focused on information and communication infrastructure, highlights the*

	vital importance of connecting schools to achieve digital inclusion. *Despite this, the cost of connecting every school remains a major challenge, especially for governments in developing countries. High investment risks further complicate the issue, making school connectivity a less attractive undertaking for market players compared to other ventures. This session will explore the future of school connectivity in the digital age, examining the challenges to achieving universal school connectivity from the perspectives of various stakeholders in national ecosystems—and identifying what is needed to catalyse and accelerate national efforts.* Introduced by • **Christopher Fabian,** Giga Co-Lead, Office of Innovation, UNICEF Opening Remarks by • **Tomas Lamanauskas,** Deputy Secretary-General, ITU Panel Session with • **Kátia Helena Serafina Cruz Schweickardt,** National Secretary for Basic Education, Ministry of Education of Brazil • **Ervin C. Williams**, CEO, National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC), St. Kitts and Nevis • **Pilar Orero PhD** (UMIST, UK), Professor at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) in the TransMedia Catalonia Lab. • **Basma Tawfik**, National Telecommunications Regulatory Autoprity (Egypt) Chaired by • **Irene Kaggwa,** Giga Programme Manager, ITU *This session is part of the official programme of The World Summit on The Information Society (WSIS).*
10:15 – 11:15	**World Cafe with Help Desks on Mapping, Modelling, Financing, Contracting, and Capacity Development at the Giga Connectivity Centre** *Country delegations will have the opportunity to ask more specific questions about Giga's main areas of work in one-on-one sessions at the World Cafe.*

Segment III – Challenges on Financing and Fostering the Sustainability of School Connectivity

11:30 – 18:00	**Campus Biotech Auditorium**
11:30 - 11:45	**Spotlight Talk "unconnected.org: A Proven, Scalable Model for**

	Sustainable School Connectivity" • **Mea Thompson**, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Unconnected.org
	Financing School Connectivity *Achieving universal school connectivity by 2030 will require bold public investment, catalytic private capital, and fit-for-purpose financial instruments. While many governments have outlined ambitious digital strategies, financing these at scale remains a systemic challenge—especially in frontier and underserved markets. This session convenes key public and financial actors to unpack how these challenges are being addressed in real time, through national efforts and global partnerships.* *This two-part session explores the practical realities of financing school connectivity.*
11:45 – 12:45	**Mobilizing Capital for Connectivity I: Countries Financing Journeys** *In Part I of this two-part session, government representatives from some of the countries engaged with Giga will share their journey to mobilize capital, including challenges and lessons learned.* Panel Session with • **Francis Karanja,** Deputy Director of Education, Head of National ICT Innovation and Integration of Kenya, • **Cecilio Quaresma Sacramento,** Technical Director of Water, Energy, Telecommunications, and Postal Services of São Tomé and Príncipe • **Ilich Valladares, Deputy** Minister for Technical and Pedagogical Affairs, Ministry of Education of Honduras, • **Dr. Suada Hadzovic,** Head of International Regulation Division, Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Chaired by • **Elena Ogram,** Finance Lead, Giga, UNICEF
13:00 - 14:00	**Networking Lunch in the Campus Biotech Cafeteria** *Vouchers to be distributed as people leave the Auditorium.*
14:15 - 15:15	**Mobilizing Capital for Connectivity II: The Role of Multilateral Development Banks and Financial Partners** *Part II of this two-part session will feature speakers from the international finance and investment community for a conversation on financing school connectivity and the requisite infrastructure for connecting last mile communities, sharing how they evaluate digital infrastructure projects and*

	collaborate with governments. Panel Session with • **Frank Belitz,** Manager, Sectors, Themes and Finance Solutions Department, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank • **Syed Mohammad Shaharyar Jawaid**, Senior ICT Specialist, Islamic Development Bank Chaired by • **Lauren Bieniek**, Giga Program Officer, Development Finance, ITU Introduced by • **Alex Wong**, Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement and Initiatives, Executive Office, and Giga Co-Lead, ITU
15:15 – 15:30	**Coffee Break in the Foyer of Campus Biotech Auditorium**

15:30 - 16:30

Next Steps: Giga Action Plan

Five breakout groups on each of Giga's main pillars of activity.

Breakout Session I *Next Steps in Mapping*	Breakout Session II *Next Steps in Modelling*	Breakout Session III *Next Steps in Finance*	Breakout Session IV *Next Steps in Contracting*	Breakout Session V *Next Steps in Capacity Development*

15:30 - 16:30	**Breakout Session 1: Next Steps in Mapping** Facilitators • **Naroa Zurutuza,** Co-Lead, Barcelona Giga Tech Center, UNICEF • **Michael Larson,** Giga Mapping and Tech Program Coordinator, Barcelona Giga Tech Center, UNICEF
15:30 - 16:30	**Breakout Session 2: Next Steps in Modelling** Facilitator • **Ihar Shchetko,** Project Officer, ITU
15:30 - 16:30	**Breakout Session 3: Next Steps in Finance** Facilitators • **Elena Ogram**, Finance Lead, Giga, UNICEF • **Lauren Bieniek**, Giga Program Officer, Development Finance,

	ITU
15:30 - 16:30	**Breakout Session 4: Next Steps in Contracting** Facilitators • **Jaime Archundia**, Procurement and Market Development Lead for Giga, UNICEF • **Genaro Cruz,** Market Development, Giga, UNICEF
15:30 - 16:30	**Breakout Session 5: Next Steps in Capacity Development** Facilitators • **Alex Högback,** Senior Project Officer, ITU Academy, ITU • **Carolina Anselmino,** Programme Officer, Giga, ITU
16:30 –16:45	**Tech Talk on Satellite Connectivity in the World Today and the Future Outlook of the Industry** • **Alexandre Vallet**, Chief of the Space Services Department, Radiocommunication Bureau, ITU
16:45 - 17:20	**Giga Action Plan Plenary** *Summary of takeaways from breakout sessions followed by open plenary discussion towards developing a collective action plan.* Chaired by • **Nobuntu Ndlovu,** Communications Manager, Giga, UNICEF • **Yannick Heiniger,** Partnerships Lead, Giga, ITU
17:20 - 17:30	**Giga Connectivity Forum Closing:** **Destination 2030 – Actionable Commitments for Universal Connectivity** *Identify priority outcomes and outline concrete next steps for stakeholders.* • **Alex Wong**, Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement and Initiatives, Executive Office, and Giga Co-Lead, ITU • **Christopher Fabian,** Giga Co-Lead, Office of Innovation, UNICEF
17.30	**Final Group Official Picture of the GCF 2025**

Thursday, 10 July 2025
Campus Biotech
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Segment IV - Optional Sessions on Special Topics

08:00 – 13:00	**Campus Biotech Auditorium**
08:00 – 13:00	*Badging at Campus Biotech Building Main Entrance*
09:00 – 12:00	**"The Clubhouse" at Giga Connectivity Centre** *If you need a place to meet and work, consider the Centre your home.*
09:00 - 10:00	**Workshop on Connectivity Planning Platform (CPP)** coordinated by ITU BDT and Ericsson *This session will provide an overview of the Connectivity Planning Platform, a toolkit planned for launch for ICT infrastructure infrastructure analysis and planning. The session will walk you through the platform's architectural concepts and the entire workflow, from data submission, project creation, and project management to the calculation and visualization of results. It will also cover future plans.* • **Ihar Shchetko,** Project Officer, ITU • **Gonzalo Suardiaz,** Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility Program Manager**,** Ericsson
10:00 – 10:30	**Coffee Break in the Connectivity Centre**
10:30 - 11:45	**Interactive Workshop on Mapping Tools** coordinated by ITU BDT *This hands-on session will guide participants through practical exercises using open-source geospatial tools to support connectivity mapping and infrastructure planning. Based on real-world workflows from GIGA's applied geospatial tools, the workshop is ideal for anyone working in digital development, education connectivity, or spatial data analysis. Don't miss this opportunity to build your skills and engage with experts driving data-driven decision-making for universal connectivity!* • **Idir Benferhat,** Data Scientist, ITU, • **Aleksandra Jastrzebska,** Junior Mapping Expert, ITU
12:00 – 13:00	**Light Giga Lunch at Giga Connectivity Centre** *All participants are invited for a drink and snacks in thanks for everyone's active participation in the Giga Connectivity Forum.*