

Doreen Bogdan-Martin

United States

Elected ITU Secretary-General



“
We’re 157-years old, but what we represent – connecting the unconnected, bringing digital technologies and applications to all the world’s people – it’s never mattered more.”

Doreen Bogdan-Martin received 139 votes from Member States at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. 172 Member States were present and voting, and the required majority was 83.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin's vision for ITU

"We're 157-years old, but what we represent – connecting the unconnected, bringing digital technologies and applications to the world's people – it's never mattered more," says Doreen Bogdan-Martin, newly elected as the next Secretary-General of the International Communication Union (ITU). "The role of ITU has never been more important."

Connectivity will be a key enabler for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations for 2030, Bogdan-Martin notes. This has become especially evident over the past three years. "The pandemic demonstrated how much we rely on connectivity, and how much digital undercuts every sector of the economy," she says.

"COVID-19 was a wake-up call. It was a real game changer for connectivity." As countries around the world strive to build back better, Bogdan-Martin adds, "ITU can, and must, be at the very centre of global digital transformation."

This means mobilizing global support to connect the 2.7 billion people who still lack Internet access, with unprecedented funds, commitment, and public-private partnerships. One good example is Partner2Connect, the global initiative Bogdan-Martin put together as Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau over the last four years.

“

It's not just connecting you to the Internet. It's about what you can do with that connectivity.”



“

Let's not talk about One ITU, let's actually be One ITU.”

For more insights, watch the full [video](#) interview.

Partnerships and collaboration will remain a key focus in her new role, as ITU strives to ensure making connectivity not only universally available but meaningful for every kind of user. "It's no longer just about the connection, Bogdan-Martin explains in an interview following her election in Bucharest, Romania. "It's not just connecting you to the Internet. It's about what you can do with that connectivity."

Promoting digital skills to leverage and use connectivity, while ensuring that connectivity is trusted and safe, affordable, and empowering, remains an important focus. "It's the whole of what the digital ecosystem can bring – that goes much beyond the actual connection," she says.

At a time of heightened global tensions, the world needs a neutral forum for international cooperation on connectivity where all members can work together to connect the world, regardless of current geopolitical challenges, she adds, calling this "the beauty of ITU being 193 Member States, having close to 900 Sector Members, 150-plus academic institutions and civil society." This unique multi-stakeholder membership "makes ITU rich, makes ITU meaningful, and makes us relevant."

The need for digital connectivity to achieve sustainable development stands out as an important point of consensus across the international community. "That's the sort of shared vision around which we can all unite, put aside our differences, and find ways to connect the unconnected – because a fully connected planet benefits everyone," she says.

Asked about her first 100 days in office, which will begin on 1 January 2023, Bogdan-Martin outlines her vision of an "ITU that inspires, includes and innovates."

Key objectives for her include fostering **meaningful strategic partnerships** with ITU staff and Member States through "much listening and intensive dialogue"; **transforming delivery** to make ITU the preeminent thought leader and reference point on digital issues; and ensuring **results-based implementation** of ITU's strategic, financial and sectoral plans.

Does being the first woman ever elected as leader of the 157-year-old organization entail added responsibility to pave the way for other women in the field? "I think all of us would like to see more women and girls engaged in the technology sector as a whole – and in the work of ITU," she says. (See: [Setting sights on gender parity](#))

Lastly, Bogdan-Martin has earmarked "One ITU" as the overarching theme for her first hundred days – and beyond – as ITU's next Secretary-General. Regional officials and headquarters need to work in tandem, while radiocommunication, standardization, and development work must be consistently integrated with each other. "Let's not talk about One ITU, let's actually be One ITU."



Career path | Doreen Bogdan-Martin

Doreen Bogdan-Martin was elected at the ITU Plenipotentiary in 2018 to the position of Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, and has nearly completed her four-year term in that position.

From 2008 until 2018, she served as Chief of ITU's Strategic Planning and Membership Department, advising two Secretary-Generals and overseeing ITU's corporate communications, external affairs, corporate strategy and membership – as well as managing the ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission for Digital Development.

Prior to this, she headed the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau's Regulatory and Market Environment Division and Regulatory Reform Unit.

Prior to joining ITU in 1994, Bogdan-Martin was a Telecommunication Policy Specialist at the National Telecommunication and Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.