

Opening remarks by Question5/1 Rapporteur

I welcome all of you to this Joint Workshop of Question 5/1 and Question 4/1 on the Universal Service Fund.

During the past Study cycle and since the beginning of this current study cycle, we have faced a number of issues in our work to ensure that rural and remote areas, as well as small island developing states, are not left behind digitally. The first one is how we can diversify sources of income of the Universal Service Fund.

The second, is to determine the best or most efficient disbursement method or an optimum mix of disbursement models for the resources of the Universal Service Fund .

The third, is how to ensure that the USF policies do not treat access as the ultimate destination , but to also look at using the fund to enable Use of digital resources ,and break the barriers to use of ICTs, which are faced by rural and remote area inhabitants.

The fourth one , one is to create solutions for the challenges and make use of the opportunities that we face and have, in the implementation of universal service funds, as well as effectively evaluate our USF strategy.

Last but not least, we also need insight into the work of the BDT on universal service funds.

Today we will have these issues tackled by our presenters. Today Universal Service Policy, will meet the financial solutions that enable policy to be implemented

Today the importance of collaboration between Question 41/ and Question 5/ 1, will be made very clear, as we cannot effectively connect underserved areas and rural and remote areas, without making hard decisions relating to our economic strategies and the management of financial resources, which are managed by the Universal Service Fund, in many of our member states.

The expectation is that the interim deliverable that will come out of this workshop, will assist our members greatly, in managing their universal service funds.

Thank you all for Participating. I wish you all fruitful deliberations.