

**Council Working Group on International  
Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet)**



**Twelfth meeting – Geneva, 1 February 2019**

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**Document WG-Internet 12/5-E  
18 January 2019  
English only**

**Canada**

The role of Community Networks in advancing connectivity to remote, unserved or underserved communities

**Introduction**

Based on discussions held during the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference, Canada is please to submit this contribution to the Council Working Group on international Internet-related Public Policy Issues (CWG-INT).

Canada believes that there is an urgent need within the ITU to have a better understanding of the important and successful role of Community Networks in promoting connectivity to remote, unserved or underserved communities, particularly in developing and least-developed countries.

Canada would welcome in particular the input of stakeholders in the open consultation meetings as such input would allow the Council Working Group to benefit from a very wide range of expert knowledge and empirical evidence on this matter.

**Proposal**

Experiences in the deployment of community networks as an innovative solution to improve connectivity to remote, unserved or underserved communities have proven to be successful in many countries, providing access to broadband connectivity, empowering people, particularly women and girls playing a fundamental role for the social, economic, cultural and environmental

development of society as a whole. But there are still too many parts of the world where broadband is unavailable. A digital divide still persists, between and within nations, particularly in rural, remote, unserved or underserved areas. Closing the digital divide and providing broadband for all remains an unachieved yet critically important strategic goal for the ITU's work, and for the attainment of the 2030 SDGs.

RESOLUTION 203 (REV. DUBAI, 2018) "Connectivity to broadband networks" recognizes that many countries have already established broadband plans. However, still more is needed to enable such countries to implement their plans exploiting new and innovative approaches to increase broadband connectivity and close the digital divide. A consultation on this topic would help inform countries of alternative means of reaching their objectives. The Council Working Group (Internet) can provide an important platform to develop this topic, to learn more about the perspectives of different stakeholders and to raise awareness of the challenges and possible solutions.

We propose the following questions for consultation:

1. What was your experience (from a community, government, or other stakeholder perspective) in deploying a community network to improve connectivity to broadband in your region?
2. What were the challenges faced in the deployment process?
3. What were the lessons learned?
4. What can governments do to help overcome these challenges?
5. What were the overall economic and social impacts on the community of having access to such a network on a previously unserved or underserved area?