



The Secretary-General

Geneva, 15 January 2020

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- Administrations of ITU Member States
- Permanent Missions in Geneva
- National Regulatory Authorities
- ITU Sector Members & Associates

Subject: Invitation to global dialogue on broadband development

Dear Sir/Madam,

May I start by presenting my very best wishes to you for 2020. The world has witnessed an accelerated increase in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and services, with half of the world's population now online. Nonetheless, the Internet is still not accessible to the other half of the world's population. We need to redouble our efforts, and broadband infrastructure will play a vital role in this respect.

I am pleased to note that the construction of broadband networks has now been incorporated into the development strategies of many countries. However, broadband development still faces a series of problems and challenges. These include, amongst others, a lack of effective guidance on industry policies; slow network roll-out; the improvement of end-to-end capabilities for planning, construction, operation, installation and maintenance; traffic growth in traditional services not yielding additional revenue; future-oriented new services requiring the enhancement of network profitability, a reduction in operation and maintenance costs, and a shorter cycle of return on investment; the relatively scattered nature of various industry standard organizations and the need to establish global collaboration mechanisms; and the need to involve new stakeholders to roll out network infrastructure and attract investors.

Discussions on the topic both within and outside ITU demonstrate a common interest and pressing need to hold further exchanges among all interested stakeholders in order to accelerate progress towards bridging the broadband divide effectively and rapidly.

To initiate this dialogue, I would therefore like to invite you to a series of in-depth discussions on broadband development throughout the course of 2020, taking advantage of existing events such as WEF in Davos in January, MWC in Barcelona in February, WSIS Forum in Geneva in April, and ITU Digital World in Ha Noi in September.

I would appreciate if you could contact guestrelations.telecom@itu.int to confirm your interest. I will keep you updated on further developments and progress.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Houlin ZHAO