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| **Informal Experts Group on WTPF-21 Third meeting (virtual), 14-16 September 2020** |  |
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| possible DRAFT OPINIONS for wtpf-21 | |

**OPINION X –** **Mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development in the context of helping to eliminate and manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic**

The sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021),

*Recalling*

a) Article 40 of the ITU Constitution on the priority of telecommunications related to the safety of human life;

b) Chapter VII of the ITU Radio Regulations for distress and safety communications and Article 5 of the International Telecommunication Regulations on the safety of human life and telecommunication priorities;

c) Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) Resolution 136 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) on the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies for humanitarian assistance and for monitoring and management in emergency and disaster situations, including health-related emergencies, for early warning, prevention, mitigation and relief;

d) PP Resolution 202 (Busan, 2014) on using information and communication technologies to break the chain of health-related emergencies such as Ebola virus transmission;

e) United Nations General Assembly Resolution 74/270 on global solidarity in the fight against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which calls on the United Nations system to work with all relevant actors to mobilize a coordinated global effort in response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial consequences for all countries;

f) Subparagraph “c)” of paragraph 20 of Action Line C7 (Electronic Environmental Protection) of the Geneva Plan of Action, which calls for the establishment of ICT-based monitoring systems for forecasting and monitoring the impact of natural and man-made disasters, especially in developing countries;

g) Sustainable Development Goal 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, as well as SDG 9 “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation” and SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable» the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*bearing in mind*

*a)* the significant potential of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs in improving the response to emergencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and improving the effectiveness of their prevention and mitigation;

*b)* the tragic events around the world related to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which clearly show the need for a high-quality communications infrastructure, as well as the collection and dissemination of relevant information to assist public safety, health and disaster relief agencies, as well as ensuring the continuity of everyday social and economic processes and leaving no one excluded from them by using the capabilities of telecommunications / ICTs;

c) the need to minimize risks to human life and health and the need to meet the urgent needs of the population for information and communication, which requires the effective functioning of telecommunication/ICT systems necessary to ensure effective and appropriate humanitarian assistance, as well as measures to mitigate social consequences and economic response measures for sustainable and inclusive recovery;

*recognizing*

*a)* that ITU, being the UN specialized Agency for Telecommunication/ICT, plays an important leading role in the implementation of WSIS and achieving the SDGs;

*b)* the ongoing work in ITU and ITU study groups related to new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs and trends, a wide range of ITU standards, ensuring the efficient use of telecommunication/ICT systems and applications for solving various social, economic and production tasks, as well as other relevant ITU's best practices;

*c)* ITU's already launched initiatives to defeat COVID-19, including with other UN organizations and the private sector, including but not limited to the Global Network Resiliency Platform (#REG4COVID) and webinar series on Digital Cooperation during COVID19 and beyond,

*in the view that there is a need for Member States, Sector Members and interested parties*

1to cooperate and offer all possible assistance and support to consumers, organizations, and, if possible, other countries, especially developing countries, in the provision of humanitarian assistance and support for sectors related to telecommunications/ICTs, including for disease tracking, response, and public warning on measures taken, ensuring conditions for preserving, if possible, jobs, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and continuing the educational process during a pandemic and mitigating its adverse social, economic and financial consequences;

2 to assist in the implementation of international, regional, subregional, multilateral and bilateral projects and programs that serve the interests of using telecommunications / ICTs as a support tool in responding to the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic, in order to break the chain of emergency situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to facilitate the elimination of its consequences, including providing local communities with infrastructure and information, especially in local languages, to help preserve human life;

3 to take an active role in developing standards, guidelines and best practices for the use of telecommunications / ICTs in emergencies and disasters caused by epidemics and pandemics.

*invites*

Member States, Sector Members and interested parties to collaborate accordingly