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| **Informal Experts Group on WTPF-21Fourth meeting – Virtual meeting, 1-2 February 2021** |  |
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|  | **Document IEG-WTPF-21-4/7-E** |
|  | **23 December 2020** |
|  | **English only** |
| **Contribution submitted by the Federative Republic of Brazil** |
| DRAFT OPINION ON Fostering digital skills, education and inclusion |

We welcome the proposal submitted by the United States of America for the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) to adopt a draft Opinion on fostering digital skills, education and inclusion ([IEG-WTPF-21-3/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-WTPF21IEG3-C-0006/en)).

Reduce the gap between developed and developing countries should be always the focus of the global community and telecommunication/ICTs sector have a leading role in this regard. Additionally, Brazil believes that fostering digital skills, education and inclusion in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs it’s a form to accelerate the reducing of this gap, along with the education and training in traditional and legacy technologies.

We would propose some amendments to the draft Opinion (attached), which we believe will strengthen the text in view to highlight the role that new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs have in to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries, and we look forward to discussing this at the next meeting.

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**OPINION [X] – Fostering digital skills, education and inclusion**

The Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021),

*recalling*

1. that the UNGA Resolution 70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development says that “All people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.”
2. the Geneva Declaration of Principles, which says that everyone “should have the necessary skills and knowledge in order to benefit from the Information Society and the knowledge economy”;
3. UNGA Resolution 72/235, on Human Resources Development, which notes the requirement for “investments in basic education, vocational training, on-the-job training and more advanced managerial, engineering and scientific education to increase the supply of technological knowledge that can be absorbed by national innovation systems”;
4. the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Outcome Documents;
5. Resolution 139 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), Telecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;
6. Resolution 198 (Rev. Dubai 2018) Empowerment of youth through telecommunication/information and communication technology;
7. Resolution 205 (Dubai, 2018), ITU’s role in fostering telecommunication/information and communication technology-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society;
8. Resolution 40 (Rev. Buenos Aires 2017), Group on capacity building initiatives;
9. the Buenos Aires Declaration and the Buenos Aires Action Plan adopted at the 2017 World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), and in particular Objective 3 related to fostering an enabling environment conducive to sustainable telecommunications/ICT development and the implementation of programs on capacity building and human skills development to ITU membership;
10. Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), the ITU Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Goal 1 Growth, to enable and foster access to and increased use of telecommunications/ICT in support of the digital economy and society;

*considering*

1. that the effective “*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development,*” depend on thorough understanding of issues such as access and inclusion, digital literacy, training and skills development;
2. that the use of telecommunications/ICTs and digital technologies can raise productivity and improve overall welfare and creates opportunities and benefits for the economy, including the digital economy, but that such benefits will only be realized and broadly shared by improving internet access and basic digital literacy and skills;
3. that to capitalize on the benefits of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs and keep pace with technology advances, new skills for the digital economy are necessary;
4. that the development and improvement of human capacity building and a robust, predictable, enabling regulatory environment will ensure that technological development is sustainable;
5. that the development and improvement of human capacity building in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, Big Data, OTTs, is a fundamental part of an inclusive Information Society;
6. that ITU’s “Measuring digital development Facts and Figures 2019” identifies lack of ICT skills as a key barrier to the uptake and effective use of the Internet;[[1]](#footnote-1)
7. that since 1992 the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector has been supporting countries in their efforts to use telecommunications/ICTs as a catalyst for development, including provision for assistance with capacity building;
8. that the ITU Academy offers courses and capacity development, and brings together under one umbrella a wide range of training activities and knowledge resources in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital development,
9. the joint campaign of the ITU and the International Labour Organisation “Digital Skills for Jobs”, which aims to equip 5 million young people with job-ready digital skills;
10. UNESCO’s ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, which seeks to help countries develop comprehensive national teacher ICT competency policies and standards and integrate these in overarching ICT in education plans
11. that recent ITU data shows that an important barrier in the uptake and effective use of the Internet is a lack of ICT skills[[2]](#footnote-2);
12. that women and girls tend to have less training in STEM subjects than men and are less confident about their abilities; and that women who have some secondary education or have completed secondary school are six times more likely to use the Internet than women with only primary level education or no formal schooling;
13. that developing countries face particular challenges in strengthening skills development in areas of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs,

*noting*

that an inclusive digital society is one where all people regardless of their gender, age, ability, or location, have an equal opportunity to become empowered through ICTs, and that such empowerment and full participation in a digital society is only possible with digital literacy and skills,

*is of the view*

1. that education and training in digital skills are critically important in order to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;
2. that education and training in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs are critically important to reduce the gap and promote equal opportunities between countries with different levels of development in terms of economic growth and technological progress;
3. that Member States, Sector Members and other interested stakeholders should undertake efforts to improve education, training and skills necessary for participating effectively in the digital economy;
4. that education, digital literacy, training and skills development foster digital empowerment and inclusion;

*invites Member States*

1. to take measures to promote policies aimed at expanding opportunities and enhancing human potential to leverage telecommunications/ICTs focused on ICT-based education, training and skills development;
2. to take stock of digital skills curricula in education, apprenticeships and other youth skills development programs, bearing in mind that digital skills are key elements in many areas of the modern labor market and that new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs are developing at a rapid rate, in areas including AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, etc.;
3. to collect and share data on developing skills in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs;
4. to consider policies to ensure that women and girls, people with disabilities, indigenous people and other marginalized groups are able to share fully the benefits of sustainable development,

*invites Member States and other stakeholders*

1. to explore ways and means for greater collaboration and coordination among governments, the private sector, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, the Internet technical community and academia to implement human skills development in telecommunications/ICT and digital technologies, especially in developing countries, to apply telecommunications/ICTs effectively;
2. to foster the incorporation of telecommunications/ICT, digital literacy, and the development of ICT skills and higher-order cognitive skills into education and human resources development for all groups;
3. promote access to e-learning opportunities, particularly in rural and remote areas;
4. encourage investment in quality of teaching, education and training of digital skills,  including for women and girls, people with disabilities, indigenous people and other marginalized groups, in order to promote skills in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, in areas including AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, etc.

*requests the Secretary-General*

to ensure the effective implementation of the relevant ITU capacity building programs and activities, focusing in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs.

1. ITU. 2019. *Measuring digital development Facts and figures 2019*. Geneva: International Telecommunication Union. Available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2019.pdf> [Accessed 05/12/2019]. p. 10.  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ITU. 2019. *Measuring digital development Facts and figures 2019*. Geneva: International Telecommunication Union. Available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2019.pdf> [Accessed 05/12/2019]. p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)