|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Informal Experts Group on WTPF-21 Fifth meeting – Virtual meeting, 31 May-2 June 2021** |  |
|  |  |
|  | **Document IEG-WTPF-21-5/5-E** |
|  | **30 April 2021** |
|  | **English only** |
| Contribution submitted by the  United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  Proposed working methods for the Fifth meeting of IEG-WTPF-21 | |
|  | |

The United Kingdom is pleased to contribute to the Fifth meeting of the IEG-WTPF-21 and further the discussions of the Secretary General’s draft report and the draft Opinions. We would like to recognize the efforts exerted by all IEG-WTPF-21 delegates, and Brazil in particular, in working to advance the discussions of the IEG in the interim period and submitting contributions to the Fifth meeting.

At this time, the United Kingdom has serious concerns about the level of progress we as a group have made towards developing draft Opinions and discussion of text, including the adhoc group on terminology. This is particularly with the view of just two remaining meetings (including this, the Fifth Meeting) to discuss, edit, and agree consensus draft Opinions to be put forward at WTPF-21. Unfortunately, the IEG has continued conversations around the number and topics of Opinions (of which there are currently 10 proposals as noted in the Secretary General’s fifth draft report) without taking a concerted effort to review the quality or relevance of content or to progress texts which would provide the IEG with consensus Opinions to propose to WTPF-21.

In addition, we must take into account the wider landscape, including the COVID-19 pandemic as well as knowledge that all our delegations are simultaneously working to prepare for three high level meetings in 2022 (WTSA, WTDC, and the Plenipotentiary). We must also therefore be realistic about our abilities and what an achievable outcome looks like for WTPF-21 at this unprecedented time.

We reiterate our support for combining relevant contributions as set out in the United Kingdom’s [contribution IEG-WTPF 21 4/12](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S21-WTPF21IEG4-C-0012) and the focused approach proposed in the United States’ [contribution IEG-WTPF 21 4/13](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S21-WTPF21IEG4-C-0013) to the Fourth meeting. The United Kingdom would like to propose that the IEG uses this Fifth meeting to take a systematic approach to review the proposed Opinions. This should include prioritising opinions and discussion of a select number of texts with the aim of reaching one or two consensus texts by the end of this meeting.

For this meeting, the UK proposes the IEG focuses on developing Opinions on the following topics:

1. COVID-19
2. Skills and digital inclusion
3. Enabling Environment

This approach would allow the IEG to work towards a fruitful outcome of the WTPF-21. Our level of achievement at this meeting will guide us on where to focus our efforts at the Sixth meeting so as to most effectively use our time to develop Opinions which the IEG can forward by consensus to WTPF-21.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_