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| **Informal Experts Group on WTPF-21 Fifth meeting – Virtual meeting, 31 May-2 June 2021** |  |
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| Contribution submitted by the  United States of America  DRAFT OPINION ON ENABLING ENVIRONMENT | |
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The United States of America is pleased to submit this contribution to the fifth meeting of the Informal Group of Experts.

Building upon prior contributions, we are seeking to consolidate views around the Enabling Environment into a single, streamlined draft Opinion (refer to Annex A). We look forward to discussing this draft at the next meeting in an effort to work towards a consensus text.

***Annex: 1***

**ANNEX A**

OPINION [X] on an Enabling Environment

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

recalling

1. that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda notes that “Private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation”;

b) that the UN General Assembly Resolution 75/202 on *Information and Communications Technologies for Sustainable Development* urges “all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, inter alia, strengthened enabling policy environments”;

c) Resolution 201 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference on Creating an enabling environment for the deployment and use of information and communication technology applications;

d) Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);

considering

a) that effective policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development depend on a thorough understanding of issues such as, *inter alia*, competition, investment, access and inclusion, affordability, resiliency, digital literacy, training and skills development;

b) that the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023 aims to foster an enabling policy and regulatory environment conducive to sustainable telecommunication/ICT development;

c) that the Preamble of the ITU Constitution fully recognizes the sovereign right of each State to regulate its telecommunications policy,

is of the view

a) that more work is needed to foster an enabling environment for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

b) that an enabling policy environment is built upon transparent, stable, predictable, and non-discriminatory policies that promote innovation, competition, and investment from both public and private sources;

c) that various stakeholders including policymakers, regulators, the private sector, consumers, academic institutions, and others play an important role in fostering an enabling policy environment;

d) that fostering an enabling policy environment is critical in order to mobilize the investment in affordable connectivity for all needed to support new and emerging digital technologies and trends such as Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, 5G, Big Data, OTTs, etc.; and

e) that further education and training are critically important in order to build skills, increase participation in the digital economy, and empower people,

invites Member States

1. to consult with all stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, and civil society in order to foster an enabling policy environment that reflects stakeholder views and needs;

2. to remove barriers to investment and innovation in order to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

3. to consider opportunities to increase competition and promote liberalization, including, for example, the privatization of state-owned national incumbent operators;

4. to consider how best to ensure that their regulatory frameworks maintain a separation between policy, regulator, and sector operation functions in order to ensure a transparent, predictable, independent and non-discriminatory regulatory environment;

invites Member States, Sector Members and other stakeholders to work collaboratively

1. to foster an enabling environment for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

2. to promote competition and private sector investment to encourage the continuing growth and adoption of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs that will advance economic growth and opportunities at the national, regional, and global levels;

3. to increase investment in network infrastructure deployment, including 5G and next-generation technologies, in order to strengthen affordable Internet connectivity for all and to support new and emerging digital technologies;

4. to support enabling environments in order to fully mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs that generate tremendous socio-economic benefits and enable the use of AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs, etc.;

5. to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in local populations, including by encouraging community support for entrepreneurship and locally based programmes;

6. to facilitate innovative access to finance, including through public-private partnership models;

7. to facilitate public-private investment, including by promoting closer cooperation between educational and research centres and the private sector in emerging areas such as AI and 5G;

8. to deploy development assistance in ways that support the development of an enabling policy environment for investment and catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

9. to work with diverse stakeholders to promote access to education and to improve skills at all levels, including through e-learning opportunities, particularly in rural and remote areas;

10. to work together to promote exchanges of information, sharing of best practices, and capacity building to foster an enabling policy environment for the mobilization of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

11. work with the ITU-D as a place for cooperation between Member States, the private sector, international funding agencies and other stakeholders that can foster investment in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs.

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