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DRAFT OPINION 2: Affordable and secure connectivity in mobilising new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

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

recalling

- a) Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- b) UNGA Resolution 70/125: Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);
- c) the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action, adopted in 2003, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted in 2005, all of which were endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA);
- d) Resolution 101 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on Internet Protocol-based networks;
- e) [Resolution 102 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the ITU's role with regard to international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet and the management of Internet resources, including domain names and addresses];
- f) Resolution 130 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, Strengthening the role of ITU in building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies;
- g) Resolution 137 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, on next-generation network deployment in developing countries;
- h) Resolution 200 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, on the Connect 2030 Agenda for global telecommunication/ICT;
- i) Resolution 203 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, on connectivity to broadband networks,

recognising

- a) that new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs services and technologies will underpin the digital economy of the future and enable advances in technologies and services including AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data and OTTs;
- b) that to enable such advances in technologies and services, including 5G, AI, IoT, Big Data and OTTs, in the context of a multi-stakeholder approach, it is important to increase awareness of relevant cybersecurity and other risks among individual users and other stakeholders, and to take measures to continue building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs.

- c) that governments are pursuing digital transformations by adopting new and emerging telecommunication/ICTs services and technologies to deliver services to the public, recognizing that building confidence and security in those services is crucial in that context;
- d) that encouraging the deployment of next generation networks, including 5G and other new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, especially in unserved and underserved areas, is critical for sustainable development;
- e) that the private sector has a leading role in deploying 5G and other new and emerging telecommunication/ICT networks, including non-terrestrial technologies such as satellite, and that it is exploring innovations in technology and business models alongside other stakeholders including government, academia, and civil society;
- f) that new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs services and technologies are rapidly evolving, bringing new opportunities and challenges to all stakeholders, including policymakers, such as those related to building confidence and security in the use of such technologies;
- g) that a digital divide remains between certain segments of populations who can access, afford and adopt new and emerging telecommunication/ICTs and those who cannot, and that in particular, obstacles in access to and use by women and girls affect prosperity and limit social and sustainable economic development;
- h) that policymakers can help connect the unconnected by creating an enabling policy environment that encourages and supports private sector investment and innovation;
- i) that frameworks, such as the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) framework, can encourage confidence and security in the use of telecommunication/ICTs, including through international cooperation in this regard;
- j) that as the lead facilitator for the WSIS Action Line C5, the ITU has an important role in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, through the on-going implementation of relevant ITU resolutions and the work of dedicated Study Groups and Questions,

reaffirming

- a) the importance of communication and access to means of communication for everyone;
- b) the need for greater global multi-stakeholder cooperation to bridge the digital divide and to mitigate the challenges to building confidence and security in the use of telecommunication/ICTs,

noting

the call by the UN General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet by 2030,

is of the view

- a) that all stakeholders, including governments, should endeavour to work towards building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, including through frameworks such as the GCA, and in the context of enabling advances in the use of technologies and services, including 5G, AI, IoT, Big Data and OTTs;
- b) that there is a need for global multi-stakeholder cooperation to enable advances in technologies and services including 5G, AI, IoT, Big Data and OTTs, in the context of expanding affordable connectivity and building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs;
- c) that investment in infrastructure, in particular in broadband and 5G infrastructure, plays a fundamental role in promoting affordable connectivity and in mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

- d) that all stakeholders should [endeavour to protect [personally identifiable information] [privacy] and mitigate vulnerabilities, and] work to strengthen confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs, and that particular attention should be paid to ensuring the protection of marginalised groups, vulnerable populations and persons with specific needs, including women and girls, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and indigenous people;
- e) that multi-stakeholder efforts to build confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs are essential to ensure increased connectivity solutions for sustainable development;
- f) that within its mandate, the ITU should continue to collaborate closely with other UN agencies, international organizations, and stakeholders in relevant areas concerning building confidence and security in the use of telecommunication/ICTs;
- g) that the following policies can be used to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development:
- i) streamlining the processes to facilitate deployment of wireless and wireline communications networks, including policies for access to rights-of-way and other rules that may affect next-generation network deployment;
 - ii) educating all levels of society – especially local government officials responsible for permitting wireless and wireline infrastructure – about the importance of next generation connectivity for socio-economic progress and the established safety standards for EMF emissions;
 - iii) making sufficient spectrum available for a wide array of new and emerging telecommunications/ICT and services, including 5G, in high, mid and low frequency bands;
 - iv) modernizing regulatory frameworks applicable to small cell infrastructure, which is essential to deployment of next generation services including 5G, and recognizing that not all rules applicable to the large cell towers would be appropriate for small cell deployment;
 - v) mapping the coverage of existing networks in order to identify where broadband service is currently available, where it is still needed, and using that information to guide and shape policy responses;
 - vi) ensuring that access to network connectivity, including for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, are fully incorporated into national economic and social development plans and strategies, and that it is recognized as central to a country's economic and social development,

invites Member States

1. to consider whether the adoption of the policies above would contribute to sustainable development in their own national context;
2. to continue to promote affordable connectivity, as a fundamental requirement for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;
3. to consider how the use of shared digital services can support sustainable development by lowering the cost of doing business, improving service offerings and enabling access to new markets, particularly in areas such as 5G roll-out;
4. to consider adopting policy and regulatory measures that facilitate infrastructure deployment in rural and isolated areas, including the sharing of infrastructure, interconnection and effective use of spectrum;

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

1. to reinforce the existing links between the WSIS Action Lines for which the ITU is the lead facilitator (C2, C4, C5 and C6) and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

2. to consider policies aimed at benefitting citizens, businesses, governments and other stakeholders, particularly in areas such as AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data and OTTs;
3. to increase investment in network infrastructure deployment, including 5G and next-generation technologies, with a view to achieving universal access, which will mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs;
4. to continue to share their own experiences on deploying terrestrial and non-terrestrial infrastructure for bridging the digital divide to the ongoing discussions at the ITU on promoting sustainable development;
5. to continue to work collaboratively and build confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs including in the application of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs services and technologies;
6. to promote new and potentially transformative initiatives to accelerate connectivity, such as the GIGA initiative of ITU and UNICEF, and the ITU Partner2Connect Digital Coalition;

invites the Secretary-General

to continue to facilitate and strengthen ITU efforts to promote universal, affordable, and secure connectivity for sustainable development through new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs services and technologies for sustainable development.
