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| **Council 2022 Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 2.6** | **Document C22/5-E** |
| **7 January 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| REPORT ON THE SIXTH WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION/ict POLICY FORUM (wtpf-21) | |

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| Summary  This report summarizes the preparatory process, roll-out, and outcome of the sixth ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF), which was held from 16-18 December 2021.  Action required  The Council is invited **to note** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf), [Decision 611 (Rev. Council 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en),[Report of the Chairman of WTPF-21](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0013/en) |

**1. Background**

1.1 Originally established by the 1994 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (WTPF) has been successfully convened in 1996, 1998, 2001, 2009 and 2013.

1.2 The purpose of WTPF is to provide a venue for exchanging views and information and thereby creating a shared vision among policymakers worldwide on the issues arising from the emergence of new telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, and to consider any other policy issue in telecommunications/ICTs which would benefit from a global exchange of views, in addition to the adoption of opinions reflecting common viewpoints ([Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf)). The WTPF shall not produce prescriptive regulatory outcomes; however, it shall prepare reports and adopt non- binding opinions by consensus for consideration by Member States, Sector Members, and relevant ITU meetings ([Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf)).

1.3 By [Decision 611 (Rev. Council 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en), the 2019 session of ITU Council decided that the theme for WTPF-21 is as follows:

“*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development:* The WTPF-21 would discuss how new and emerging digital technologies and trends are enablers of the global transition to the digital economy. Themes for consideration include AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs etc. In this regard, the WTPF-21 will focus on opportunities, challenges and policies to foster sustainable development.”

**2. Preparatory Process**

2.1 Further, in accordance with [Decision 611 (Rev. Council 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en), the ITU Secretary-General convened an Informal Experts Group (IEG-WTPF-21), each of whom was active in preparing for WTPF-21 in this regard. With the approval of ITU Council 2019, membership of the IEG-WTP-21 was opened to all stakeholders. The IEG-WTPF-21 met seven times under the Chairmanship of Dr Fabio Bigi (Italy) from 2019 to 2021, out of which five were virtual meetings taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In addition, the IEG-WTPF-21 conducted three online open public consultations and held numerous informal consultations.

2.2 Over 170 experts participated in the work of the IEG-WTPF-21,[[1]](#footnote-1) and more than 70 contributions were received from all stakeholders towards the various drafts of the [Report of the Secretary-General](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0003/en) (six in total) and the draft Opinions. The IEG-WTPF-21 successfully concluded its work in November 2021 and at its seventh and final meeting, agreed by consensus to transmit a set of five draft Opinions annexed to the Report of the Secretary-General for the Forum’s consideration. All documents of the WTPF-21 preparatory process are available on the [IEG-WTPF-21 website](https://www.itu.int/en/wtpf-21/Pages/ieg-wtpf-21.aspx). The regular Progress Reports delivered by the IEG-WTPF-21 Chairman to Council 2020 and 2021 are also available on the [Council website](https://www.itu.int/en/council/).

**3. The Sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21)**

3.1 The Sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21) was held fully virtually from 16-18 December 2021. It was attended by more than 400 delegates, representing 94 Member States, 42Sector Members, and close to 10 Observer entities. 30 VIPs also participated in the Forum, including Ministers and Deputy Ministers as well as several heads of regulatory agencies. The full list of participants can be found [here](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-ADM-0007/en). Her Excellency Ms Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister for Communications and Digitalisation of Ghana, was elected to chair the Forum.

3.2 The Policy Forum opened with an address from Mr Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary-General. In his speech, Mr Zhao highlighted thanked all the Regional Coordinators and all those who closely worked with the ITU secretariat in the lead up to WTPF-21 to address the challenges of hosting this event fully virtually under the difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He commended the efforts made by the IEG-WTPF-21 in preparation for the Forum and recognized the outstanding leadership of the Group’s Chairman, Dr Fabio Bigi. He encouraged the use of new and emerging technologies and ICTs in general to address future challenges and bring digital transformation to all. He also reminded the participants that WTPF-21 will help facilitate the preparation of three major ITU conferences to be held in 2022: WTSA, WTDC, and PP-22. The full speech may be found [here](https://www.itu.int/wtpf21/en/itu_policy_statements/international-telecommunication-union-2/).

3.3 Her Excellency Ms Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister for Communications and Digitalisation of Ghana, who was chairing the WTPF-21, in her address to the Forum emphasized the importance of new and emerging technologies for humanity and sustainable development. She encouraged the participants to “make history together,” calling on them “to do our utmost to better harness new and emerging technologies and ICTs to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The full statement may be found [here](https://www.itu.int/wtpf21/en/itu_policy_statements/ministry-of-communications-and-digitalisation-ghana-2/).

3.4 Six Vice-Chairmen were elected for the Forum:

* + Mr Mansour AlQurashi of Saudi Arabia for the Arab region
  + Mr Alexander Olegovich Mokryagin of Belarus for the CIS region
  + Mr Víctor Martínez Vanegas of Mexico for the Americas region
  + Ms Cristiana Flutur of Romania for the Europe region
  + Mr Ahmed Said of Egypt for the Africa region
  + Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat of Islamic Republic of Iran for the Asia Pacific region.

3.5 In accordance with [Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf), discussions at the WTPF were based on the [Report of the Secretary-General](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0003/en) (SG Report), which served as the main working document of the Forum. The contributions and comments of members of the IEG-WTPF-21 were incorporated into this SG Report. Annexed to the SG Report were five draft Opinions which were forwarded by the IEG-WTPF-21, by consensus, to WTPF-21 for further discussion.

3.6 All WTPF-21 related information including the programme, the Chairman’s Report, and the Opinions adopted by the Forum are available on the [WTPF-21 website](https://www.itu.int/wtpf21/en/).

3.7 The Deputy Secretary-General presented the SG Report, on behalf of the Secretary-General, giving a broad overview of the SG Report which is based on the theme decided by Decision 611 (Rev. Council, 2020). Following this presentation, the Chairman of the IEG-WTPF-21 also presented the five draft Opinions proposed by the IEG for the Forum’s consideration.

3.8 The presentation of the SG Report was followed by a succession of high-level statements by Member States and Sector Members on the theme of the Forum and the SG Report.[[2]](#footnote-2) It was noted that the body of the SG Report serves as an input document to the Forum and will not be revised during the Forum.

3.9 [Three Working Groups](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-ADM-0008/en) were established to discuss the five draft Opinions annexed to the SG Report and related contributions from Member States and Sector Members. The following were elected the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Working Groups:

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| **Group** | **Chairmen** | **Vice-Chairmen** |
| **Working Group 1** | Mr Roberto Mitsuake Hirayama (Brazil) | Mr Aymen I. Almogherah  (Saudi Telecom Company) |
| **Working Group 2** | Dr Lidia Stepinska-Ustasiak  (Poland) | Mr Ahmed Riad Ismail  (Huawei) |
| **Working Group 3** | Mr Jim Paterson  (South Africa) | Ms Natalia Vicente  (ESOA - EMEA Satellite Operator’s Association) |

3.10 The Working Groups worked constructively over one and a half days. The Chairmen of the three Working Groups presented the results of the work undertaken by the Working Groups to the Plenary for approval – see [Annex I of the Chairman’s Report](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0013/en).

3.11 The Chairman of the Forum presented the draft Opinions, which had been revised and endorsed by the Working Groups. She invited the Forum to adopt the following Opinions:

[**Opinion 1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0008/en): Enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development

[**Opinion 2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0009/en): Affordable and secure connectivity in mobilising new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

[**Opinion 3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0010/en): Digital literacy and skills for inclusive access

[**Opinion 4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0011/en): New and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

[**Opinion 5**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0012/en): Use of telecommunications/ICTs in COVID-19 and future pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response

3.12 The Forum adopted the Opinions as presented in [Part II of the Chairman’s Report](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-WTPF21-C-0013/en).

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1. List of members of the IEG is available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/wtpf-21/Documents/IEG-WTPF-21-nominated-experts.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.itu.int/wtpf21/en/statements-and-speeches/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)