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|  | **Revision 1 to Document IEG-WTPF-26-2/6** |
| **14 January 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Contribution by China (People’s Republic of), and Cuba | |
| DRAFT OPINIONS FOR THE WTPF 2026 | |
| **Purpose**  This contribution provides draft Opinions for the 7th WTPF in 2026.  **Action required**  The Informal Expert Group on WTPF-26 is invited to **consider** this document and take actions where appropriate.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*Second draft report by the ITU Secretary-General for WTPF-26*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-WTPF26PREP-R-0002/en%20) | |

By its Decision 641 (C24), the ITU Council decided that the theme for WTPF-26. This contribution provides draft Opinions around the following sub-themes:

– bridging digital divides, particularly on gender and age as well as skills and connectivity

– space connectivity

– strengthening ICT-centric innovation ecosystems and entrepreneurship.

The relevant draft Opinions are presented in the [Annex](#Annex).

Annex

DRAFT OPINION 1:

Bridging digital divides, particularly on gender and age as well as skills and connectivity

The seventh World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2026),

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 78/311 of on enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence;

*c)* Opinion 1 of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021) on enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development addresses that stakeholders should continue to work together to encourage and promote exchange of information, capacity building, and best practices to create an enabling environment for the mobilization of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies;

*d)* Opinion 3 of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021) on digital literacy and skills for inclusive access is of the view that digital skills in areas such as AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data and OTTs can help to leverage new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies for sustainable development;

*e)* Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on ITU strategic framework for 2024-2027 with one of the goal for universal connectivity with aim to enable and foster universal access to affordable, high-quality and secure telecommunications/ICTs;

*f)* Resolution 200 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on Connect 2030 Agenda for global telecommunication/information and communication technology, including broadband, for sustainable development;

*g)* Resolution 179 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in child online protection;

*h)* Resolution 11 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) on telecommunication/information and communication technology services in rural, isolated and poorly served areas;

*i)* WTDC Resolution 37 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) on bridging the digital divide,

recognising

*a)* that narrowing the digital divide for all countries and all people is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the Global Digital Compact (GDC), especially for women and girls, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with specific needs;

*b)* that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, and 5G/5G-Advanced providing all kinds of smart connectivity play a pivotal role in enhancing connectivity, driving innovation, and supporting inclusive growth;

*c)* that in the meantime, the rapid development of these emerging technologies is having an impact on the evolution of the digital divide. Artificial intelligence and other digital divides between and within countries continue to widen, thus stressing the need and urgency to enhance the cooperation on capacity building, especially for developing countries in the spheres of data, compute, and talent;

*d)* that age is a key factor influencing the digital divide. It is imperative to help older persons fully participate in the process of digital transformation, which stresses the need to tackle the barriers faced by older persons in accessing digital technologies, and ensure that digital products, policies and practices comply with the protection of older persons, particularly for those in rural and remote areas;

*e)* that it is also important to empower children in the use of telecommunications/ICTs in bridging digital divides, so they can develop ICT knowledge and skills to make critical and safe use of the Internet, through digital literacy,

is of the view

1 that ITU plays a critical role in bridging the digital divide on national, regional and international levels, by facilitating interoperability, interconnection and global connectivity of telecommunication networks and services;

2 that it is of urgency to bridge artificial intelligence and other digital divides between and within countries, by means such as knowledge-sharing activities and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and capacity-building assistance for developing countries in line with their national needs, policies and priorities;

3 that providing affordable, accessible and acceptable technologies for older persons is crucial. In addition to enhancing the digital literacy of older persons, integrating the preferences and needs of older persons into digital transformation has become an urgent requirement, including retaining traditional service methods that are user-friendly to older persons, promoting the adaptation of internet applications and mobile terminals, and APP applications commonly used by older persons, proactively providing barrier-free digital technology, services, and products for older persons,

invites Member States

1 to create an enabling environment for the deployment and application of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, so as to leverage their potential in bridging digital divides;

2 to enhance international cooperation on capacity building, particularly in assisting developing countries with AI and digital infrastructure, and data utilization to address the latest challenges related to digital divides;

3 to consider establishing policies, strategies and standards that protect and benefit children online, providing training courses and guidance to enhance their digital skills and literacy, and developing internet technologies, products, and services that serve children's special needs;

4 to consider developing plans and policies, implementing digital technologies and products that meet the needs of older persons, in order to create an accessible and age-friendly environment, and include older persons in the digital economy;

5 to continue implementing policies that facilitate the deployment of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs and provide incentives to promote telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services in unserved and/or underserved areas,

invites the Secretary-General

1 to continue to reinforce the ITU’s efforts, within its mandate and in partnership with states and other agencies and organizations, in collaboration with stakeholders to bridging digital divides, particularly on gender and age as well as skills and connectivity;

2 to support the relevant ITU capacity-building activities that promote education, digital literacy, training and skills development on new and emerging technologies, towards the end of bridging digital divides for all.

**DRAFT OPINION 2:**

Space Connectivity

The seventh World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2026),

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 76/3 on the “Space2030” Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development;

*c)* Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on ITU strategic framework for 2024-2027 with one of the goals for universal connectivity with aim to enable and foster universal access to affordable, high-quality and secure telecommunications/ICTs;

*d)* Resolution 140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on ITU's role in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in their follow-up and review processes;

*e)* Resolution 186 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on strengthening the role of ITU with regard to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities;

*f)* Resolution 218 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on ITU's role in the implementation of the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development, and its follow-up and review process;

*g)* Resolution 219 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on sustainability of the radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite-orbit resources used by space services;

*h)* Resolution 74 of ITU Radiocommunication Assembly (ITU-R) on activities related to the sustainable use of radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite-orbit resources used by space services,

recognising

*a)* that space telecommunication systems have a distinctive ability to provide connectivity in wide geographical areas through a minimum amount of infrastructure on the ground, which provides a low-cost and resilient solution for seamless connectivity to people in low population density areas including, inter alia, under-connected regions in LDCs;

*b)* that satellites in geostationary orbit (GSO) and non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) have been bridging digital divide worldwide and making their respective advantages. NGSO especially LEO constellation makes up a highly resilient space segment with ubiquitous coverage, while GSO satellites could provide superior services in BSS, and the access complexity with respect to NGSO is considerably lower which results in a more affordable connectivity scheme;

*c)* that space-based telecommunication technologies used for by both NGSO and GSO systems are rapidly evolving, the unification of heterogeneous space systems is one of the key challenges for providing equitable accessibility via space-based services;

*d)* that along with the rapid deployment of LEO satellites, especially the ones with inter-satellite links (ISL), the inadequacy of regulatory approaches could result in uprising information security risks and also a great challenge in the evolving of regulations;

*e)* that equitable access to space connectivity calls for inclusive participation in space activities by all member states, while different state could offer nuanced perspectives depending on their individual development of space technologies, so challenges still need to be addressed, such as space debris, space traffic coordination and space resource utilization, to ensure fulfilling the SDGs of vitalizing space communication activities,

is of the view

1 that while promoting space connectivity, it is necessary to update regulatory policies and measures in a timely manner, with a view to adapt to technology advancement and development and to effectively mitigate information security risks that may raise due to the rapid deployment of NGSO constellations;

2that a unified framework for the heterogeneity between GSO and NGSO, as well as among constellations should be established towards interoperability and compatibility amidst different systems, so as to fulfill the SDGs in ubiquitous and affordable space connectivity;

3 that it is important to enhance global partnerships and cooperation among all members of the Union, especially for promoting the increased involvement of all countries in activities pertaining to space communication, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries;

4 that by implementing a unified ecosystem in terms of network, protocol, and services, a space-terrestrial integrated network could be practicable through joint efforts from both space and terrestrial operators, with the aim of providing inclusive and sustainable connectivity for everyone, everywhere,

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

1 to enhance global partnerships and strengthened cooperation among Member States through joint efforts and by taking advantage of the practical experiences;

2 when considering space connectivity, to promote international framework in a holistic and coordinated manner, addressing challenges such as information security;

3 to facilitate the establishment of a space-terrestrial merged network with a supportive innovation ecosystem at an international level by take advantage of emerging telecommuni-cations/ICTs to achieve the SDGs,

invites the Secretary-General and Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau

to continue taking all necessary measures for ITU to fulfil its role in organizing the work on aspects of space connectivity, including providing platform for exchanges.

**DRAFT OPINION 3:**

Strengthening ICT-centric Innovation Ecosystems and Entrepreneurship

The seventh World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2026),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 79/1 of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the Pact for the Future;

*b)* UNGA Resolution 79/254 on Report of the Secretary-General Entrepreneurship for sustainable development;

*c)* Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 9 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation;

*d)* Opinion 1 of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021) on enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development addresses that the establishment of an enabling environment for investment, as well as the removal of barriers to investment and innovation are critical to mobilizing new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies;

*e)* Opinion 4 of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021) on new and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development recognises that the responsible development and use of such technologies, particularly AI, can help to empower future innovation and address related policy issues;

*f)* Resolution 205 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on ITU's role in fostering telecommunication/information and communication technology-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society;

*g)* Resolution 90 (Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on fostering telecommunication/ICT-centric entrepreneurship and digital innovation ecosystems for sustainable digital development;

*h)* that the ITU Global Innovation Forum held on 31st October, 2024 identified key ways to help close the “digital innovation gap", from multiple perspectives, such as cross-sector collaboration, South-South and triangular cooperation, capacity building within communities, local entrepreneurship, agile policy making, and entrepreneurship networking;

*i)* other international commitment to create an enabling, inclusive, open, fair and non-discriminatory digital ecosystem, and foster an inclusive digital economy for all, including the 2023 APEC Leaders’ Golden Gate Declaration;

*j)* Report of Working Group Report on Connectivity for MSMEs on Making Digital Connectivity Work for MSMEs in 2023,

recognising

*a)* that digital transformation is a general trend of the world economy, under the background of which, supporting ICT-centric innovation, as well as promoting fair competition and digital entrepreneurship, is indispensable to developing a predictable and transparent enabling environment, and ultimately advancing digital inclusion;

*b)* that ICT-centric innovation can help unleash the potential and dynamism of the communities, address the environmental challenges, and catalyze economic growth; that innovation ecosystems centered on ICT are vehicles for socio-economic development and community revitalization, driving sustainable development while increasing inclusiveness, providing economies of scale, and bridging the digital divide;

*c)* that start-up entrepreneurs and MSMEs, especially those from developing countries and under-served areas, face prominent challenges regarding ICT-centric innovation and application, including in the affordability and usability of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, finance and talents;

*d)* that ITU has been contributing to the inclusive and innovative development of the global digital economy though promoting the access to and development of telecommunications/ICT, advancing standardization of telecommunications/ICT, and fostering partnerships,

is of the view

1that in order to strengthen the ICT-centric innovation ecosystems and entrepreneurship, it is necessary to fully activate factors such as capital, technology, products, information, and talent;

2 that it is essential to take sustained efforts to improve the inclusiveness of the digital economy and build a sustainable digital economy ecosystem that is enabling, inclusive, open, fair, and non-discriminatory;

3 that ITU can further advance role in promoting inclusive and innovative development of the global digital economy within its mandate and resources;

4 that a policy environment that is conducive for ICT-centric innovation and entrepreneurship should facilitate realizing the following visions:

i) start-up entrepreneurs and enterprises adapt to digital transformation, which relies on digital transformation-related solutions and services that are affordable, useful, and profitable;

ii) MSMEs integrate into the ICT innovation ecosystems more efficiently, where they are able to collaborate with large enterprises, towards the digital transformation of the entire value chain,

invites Member States

1 to consider incorporating the principle of strengthening ICT-centric innovation ecosystems and entrepreneurship into policies and strategies, creating an open, fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory digital environment for all, and promoting MSMEs participating the digital economy and competition;

2 to leverage joint efforts of government, industry, and academia, and to create an innovation ecosystem that promotes the participation of large, medium, small, and micro enterprises;

3 to improve the public service for digital transformation, and help start-up entrepreneurs and enterprises better apply digital technologies and fit for digital future, including by increasing financial support, promoting the development of small, fast, light and accurate products, promoting artificial intelligence empowerment, and enhancing the cybersecurity level of MSMEs;

4 to support international, regional, and national efforts to create an enabling environment for digital transformation, including the development of predictable and transparent policies, legal, and regulatory frameworks, as well as the sharing of best practices,

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

1 to continue to strive fostering a policy environment based on transparency, stability, predictability, competitiveness, and non-discriminatory measures, in order to provide institutional support for promoting an innovation ecosystem centered on ICT;

2 to facilitate the integration and collaborative development of large, medium, and small enterprises, and promote the digital transformation of the entire value chain;

3 to enhance digital talent supply and financial support, such as by providing targeted digital training and innovative financial measures for MSMEs;

4 to promote communication, by proactively promoting the exchange of good solutions, product and services, and standard specifications for digital transformation for MSMEs;

5 to deepen international cooperation, to maintain a stable and resilient global supply chain for digital products and services, and to build a broad cooperation network for knowledge and capability sharing, fair and inclusive digital resources, and digital supply and demand docking,

invites the Secretary-General

to continue to leverage the role of ITU in this regard, especially in evaluation and training for enterprises, ICT innovation and relevant standardization and providing platforms.

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