Ref.:	Circular BDT/DNS/DGS/048	Geneva, 11 June 2020	

- ITU Member States
- ITU-D Sector Members and Academia

Subject: **Invitation to join two ITU webinars to launch the "New 2020 Child Online Protection Guidelines" and the "Smart Villages Blueprint"**

Date: 24 June 2020 at 14h00-15h30 CET and 25 June 2020 at 14h00-15h30 CET respectively

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have the pleasure to invite you to join two webinars on the **"Online Dialogue: 2020 COP Guidelines Launch & beyond"** which will be held on 24 June 2020 at 14h00-15h30 CET and the "**Building Smart Villages: A Blueprint**" on 25 June 2020 at 14h00-15h30 CET.

Within the framework of the [Child Online Protection Initiative](), the **"Online Dialogue: 2020 COP Guidelines Launch & beyond"** will present the revised Guidelines on Child Online Protection for policy-makers, industry, parents and educators, as well as children, first issued in 2009.

The explosion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has created unprecedented opportunities for children and young people to communicate, connect, share, learn, access information, and express their opinions on matters that affect their lives and their communities. But wider and more easily available access to the Internet and mobile technology also poses significant challenges to children's safety – both online and offline.

The new 2020 Guidelines include reflections on the special situation of children with disabilities when it comes to online risks and harms as well as issues around new technological developments such as, among others, the Internet of things and artificial intelligence.

The online dialogue aims at creating the opportunity for deep dive analysis and discussion on multi-stakeholder approaches and policies on child online protection and will focus on the actual usage and implementation of the COP Guidelines at the national and regional contexts.

The webinar on **Smart Villages Blueprint** is dedicated to the launch of a new International Telecommunication Union (ITU) joint publication with the Niger National Agency for the Information Society (ANSI) entitled: "**Building Smart Villages: A Blueprint**". The publication showcases and promotes a promising approach for bringing meaningful connectivity and initiating digital transformation to disadvantaged rural communities in low- and middle-income countries. For more information on the webinar and the Blueprint, please visit: [https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/ICT-Applications/Pages/Smart-Villages-Blueprint-launch.aspx]() .

The webinar comes at a time when gaps in rural connectivity and the lack of digital empowerment are of increasing concern. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many developmental challenges faced by vulnerable rural populations that lack access to essential ICT tools and infrastructure.

Together with its partners, ITU is promoting a comprehensive "whole-of-government" approach to digital transformation of rural and underserved areas that is based on the principles of efficiency, scalability, sustainability, and inclusiveness through the "Smart Villages" initiative. Built upon the lessons learnt from the earlier projects and a successful pilot in Niger, the approach has strong potential to significantly improve access to SDG-related digital services in rural communities that need them the most.

The webinar will provide an opportunity to learn from different initiatives around the world that are building and promoting Smart Villages and Community networks. It will provide an overview of the Smart Villages Blueprint that has been prepared to guide stakeholders in designing and creating smart villages and empowering their inhabitants with relevant ICT tools and resources. The webinar will also shed light on some of the development partners' and development banks' efforts to support such initiatives.

It will be a pleasure to count on your participation (or one of your experts) at these important events.

To register to the events, please find the link here: https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/CDS/meetings/registration/index.asp.

For more information on the two webinars, please contact respectively: Carla Licciardello at cop@itu.int for the COP Guidelines webinar and Hani Eskandar at hani.eskandar@itu.int for the Smart Villages Blueprint webinar.

Concept Notes and the Agendas are both attached to this invitation.

Finally, I am pleased to inform you that after these first global webinars, additional webinars on these two topics will be organized in the other languages of the Union.

Yours faithfully,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED]

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director

CONCEPT NOTE
Online Dialogue: 2020 COP Guidelines *Launch & beyond*
24 June 2020
14h00-15h30
Webinar

Background

The explosion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has created unprecedented opportunities for children and young people to communicate, connect, share, learn, access information, and express their opinions on matters that affect their lives and their communities. But wider and more easily available access to the Internet and mobile technology also poses significant challenges to children's safety – both online and offline. Child online protection issues range from the management of screen time, the protection of personal data and individual privacy, to cyber bullying and illegal online content such as Child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

In order to respond to these growing challenges in the face of rapid development of ICTs, the Child Online Protection (COP) Initiative, a multi-stakeholder international initiative launched by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in November 2008, aims to bring partners together from all sectors of the global community to create a safe and empowering online experience for children and young people around the world.

The 2020 Guidelines

The 2020 Guidelines on Child Online Protection (COP) are a comprehensive new set of recommendations for all relevant stakeholders on how to contribute to the development of a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people and how to live responsibly in the online world They enhance understanding of Child Online Protection and provide resources and practical tools to support children and their families in the development of digital skills and digital literacy while staying safe online. The Guidelines simultaneously support industry and government stakeholders in the development of corporate and national Child Online Protection policies and strategies.

Targeting children, parents and educators, industry, and policymakers the COP Guidelines are meant to act as a blueprint, which can be adapted and used in a consistent way in line with national or local customs and laws.

Defining key risks and harms for children online, including privacy issues, cyberbullying, grooming and sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), the new Guidelines further dedicate attention to the impact of new and emerging technologies on children, while addressing the challenges faced by children with disabilities, for whom the online world offers a particularly crucial lifeline to full – and fulfilling – social participation.

Objectives of the Webinar

The webinar, targeting policymakers, industry players and the Child Online Protection community, has the following objectives:

- Give a short overview of the request from ITU Member States to update the Guidelines, the review process, challenges and the success of a multi-stakeholder effort;

- Highlight the key components of the four co-authored sets of Guidelines;

- Share examples on the role of governments in the coordination of national entities, including children and youth, in the development of national and regional COP policies;

- Share best practises on private sector engagement including their active commitment to provide solutions and tools for child online safety.

AGENDA

14h00-14h10	**Welcoming remarks**
14h10-14h35	**KEY MESSAGES – The new 2020 COP Guidelines** • Amanda Third, Western Sydney University & Olivia Solari, Child Rights Connect • Karl Hopwood, Insafe Network • Anjan Bose, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF • David Wright, Director, UK Safer Internet Center
14h35-15h00	**CALL TO ACTION – Implementing the COP Guidelines** • Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU • Abdelaziz Alzerooni, Chair of the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection, UAE • Bocar A. Ba, CEO, SAMENA, Telecommunications Council
15h00-15h20	**Q&As and Open Discussion**
15h20-15h30	**Closing Remarks**

CONCEPT NOTE

Building Smart Villages: A Blueprint
A comprehensive Whole-of-Government approach for Rural Digital Transformation
25 June 2020
14h00-15h30
Webinar

Background

In collaboration with Niger National Agency for the Information Society (ANSI), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is releasing a new joint publication entitled *"Building Smart Villages: A Blueprint"* to promote a promising approach to bringing meaningful connectivity and initiating digital transformation to disadvantaged rural communities in low- and middle-income countries.

As the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a central role in providing essential tools to ensure that life continues as normally as possible in terms of education, health, remote work and keeping people connected. However, many remote rural communities lack the infrastructure, the means and the knowledge necessary to benefit from these services. Furthermore, the pandemic exacerbates the many developmental challenges and risks that these communities already face. As inadequate provision of healthcare and education, poverty, food insecurity, lack of sanitation and vulnerability to environmental disasters continue to burden the lives of billions of rural dwellers, the digital empowerment of disconnected villages and the deployment of SDG-related digital services is of utmost relevance.

The Smart Villages Approach

The Smart Villages initiative builds on a comprehensive, collaborative, cost-efficient, sustainable and Whole-of-Government approach to connect rural villages and improve the availability of essential social services for rural dwellers. Based on the experience from many other developmental projects, the experience so far of Niger, and the contributions from many experts and agencies, the Smart Villages approach stands as a promising solution to the barriers that have to date impeded the implementation and the scale-up of initiatives for ICT-enabled rural development. The Smart Villages Blueprint has been prepared to provide step-by-step guidance for transforming remote rural settlements into smart villages and delivering the much-needed services and tools to their populations.

Objectives of the Webinar

The objectives of the webinar are to:

- Introduce participants to the Smart Villages approach;
- Provide a platform for sharing the recommendations of the blueprint;
- Explore the possibilities to expand (additional services) and upscale (increase the number of villages and move to operation) the pilot in Niger;
- Explore the possibilities to launch smart villages projects in different areas of the world;
- Explore the possibilities to establish an « Advisory Board on Smart Village ».

Inspired from the experience of Niger, the webinar will discuss what are the key, fundamental steps to be taken to build a smart village and will provide an overview of the lessons learnt so far to implement and scale such a project and the role of different stakeholders including national entities and sectoral ministries, development partners, donors, NGOs and the private sector. For more information on the webinar and the Blueprint, please visit:

https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/ICT-Applications/Pages/Smart-Villages-Blueprint-launch.aspx.

AGENDA

14h00-14h15	**Welcoming remarks** • Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU • H.E. Mr Ibrahima Guimba Saidou, Minister, Special Advisor to the President and Director General of the National Agency for the Information Society (ANSI), Niger • Short video from Niger Smart Villages project
14h15-15h15	**Introduction by Moderator** **Interventions by Guest Speakers** • Smart Villages in Indonesia, Government of Indonesia (TBC) • Financing Smart Villages, Tara Sharafudheen, World Bank • Smart Villages to fight against poverty and Hunger, Maximo Torero, FAO • Whole-of-Government approach for digital investments, Kate Wilson, DIAL • Rural connectivity for development, Sibesh Bhattacharya, Asian Development Bank (ADB) • Connecting schools as a gateway for rural development, Sunita Grote, UNICEF • Community Networks, Mike Jensen, Association for Progressive Communications (APC) • Technologies and business models for rural connectivity, Mike Lubin, Viasat (TBC)
15h15-15h25	**Q&As and Open Discussion**
15h25-15h30	**Closing Remarks**