

**UNODC inputs to the Open Consultation of the CWG-Internet on “International internet-related public policy issues on harnessing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development”**

**1. How will new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs impact both the internet and sustainable development, including the digital economy?**

Digitalization of data results in significant efficiency in data collection, analysis and use, especially in the developing countries and still has an enormous potential for further efficiencies, in view of continuous use of paper-based processes. In addition, digitalization of data will result in value creation, as the market for digital data, services and products is growing at extremely high rates and provides better opportunities for people and countries to gain from ICTs.

Digitalization of data also provides a fertile ground for the development and evolution of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and use of big data for analysing of patterns and trends. With regard to AI, it should be noted that there are dual uses and multiple outcomes. AI will, for example, help in the rapid diagnosis of cancers, the identification of online child sexual abuse material, among others, but can also be abused to create weapons and conduct cyber-attacks. AI will be applied across industry – from food production to energy refinement, national security to education. AI can, in fact, be applicable to all the Sustainable Development Goals. The associated challenge is to make it affordable, scalable, and crucially, legal and ethical.

**2. What are the opportunities and challenges for the adoption and growth of the new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs and internet?**

UNODC is in agreement with ITU-D’s detailed analyses on this, and would only like to emphasise here that legislation, policies, strategies and regulations should be responsive to the rapidly growing and expanding transformations in telecommunications/ICTs and internet.

**3. How can governments and the other stakeholders harness the benefits of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?**

Countries must have the right mechanisms and policies including, ensuring reliable and affordable ICT, related education and internet connectivity; advocacy for ICT and facilitating an enabling environment for the engagement of youth, including girls in the telecommunications/ICT sphere. To harness the benefits of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, governments must engage more consistently with the private sector to seek advice on the best use of new technology. It is, however, incumbent upon the government, the international community, NGOs, Civil Society, academia, the tech sector and more to ensure that the risks of emerging tech do not outweigh the gains. The ease (or potential) for abuse/misuse of technology to counter fundamental freedoms, human rights, freedom of speech and individual privacy are abundantly clear. There are significant ethical questions which must be continually asked, debated and analysed in order to prevent the abuse and misuse of technology (data aggregation, mass surveillance, facial recognition abuse beyond the rule of international law etc). The need for philosophical rigour to prevent a tech-enabled dystopia is essential. Within the UN Secretariat, the Secretary-General’s Reference Group on New Technology is one of the key forums where senior leaders and stakeholders come together to debate, advise and reflect upon these matters.



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**4. What are the best practices for promoting human skills, institutional capacity, innovation and investment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?**

We must place ethics and the rule-of-law at the heart of our work. We have seen tech impacting, both positively and negatively, upon democracy, freedom, privacy, human rights, crime, terrorism and State behaviour. Policy formulation has to involve a cross-section of expertise – and it must be responsive, quick and, ideally, predictive. A core premise for developers and scientists to consider is that “Just because we can, doesn’t mean that we should”. It is essential that the implications for the misuse and abuse of tech form a core discussion within all such development. Best Practice must show a proportionate, legally-valid, accountable and necessary understanding of the dual-use of any new technology. Ultimately, we must continue to work together, to challenge each other and to have the peaceful betterment of the human race as the core premise for our work.