Ref.:   BDT/PDD/MPS/DM/207   Geneva, 21 December 2021

- To ITU D Sector Members

Subject: **Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (IAGDI-CRO) meeting – Contributing to the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, 24 February 2022, 09h00 – 10h30 (CET) and 15h00 – 16h30 (CET)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to invite you to participate in the ITU-D Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (IAGDI-CRO) meeting which will take place on **24 February 2022** virtually (in English only). Owing to the importance of this IAGDI-CRO session on ITU Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, and in order to attract as many participants as possible from all the regions, we have organized two sessions to take into account different time zones, as follows:

> ➢ 24 February (**09:00-10:00 CET**)
> ➢ 24 February (**15:00-16:30 CET**).

Each session will have its own Panelists who will discuss similar topics.

I look forward to virtually meeting you at this meeting and listening to your valuable ideas, suggestions, and concrete proposals as to how our IAGDI-CRO members could make a meaning contribution to the Round Table discussions at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in 2022. The concept note of this event is attached for ease of reference.

Registration to participate is required and it will be accessible **here** from 24 January 2022.

Yours faithfully,

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director

Annex: Concept Note

Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (IAGDI-CRO) meeting

Industry and Private Sector: Contributing to the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition

Thursday, 24 February 2022
Morning session: 09h00-10h30 CET
Afternoon session: 15h00-16h30 CET

Meeting Room: Virtual Room (Zoom)

Background

In November 2020, the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) launched the Road to Addis Digital Development Series to build momentum towards the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) to be held in 2022. The Road to Addis Digital Development Series is aimed at launching discussions focusing on connectivity for all, collecting insights on how to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity, raising awareness on connectivity, and bringing forward solutions that support this call.

Building on the outcomes of the Road to Addis Digital Development Series, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, launched the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition[1], which is a multistakeholder alliance to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation in the hardest-to-connect communities, with a focus

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[1] The Coalition, launched by the ITU on the 20th of September 2021, recognizes that progress can only be made through a multistakeholder and partnership-based approach and that the direct leadership of governments, policy makers, and the regulator community is essential to achieve meaningful and universal connectivity. The Coalition coordinates and partners with other relevant international platforms such as the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

on, but not limited to, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition will serve as a leadership level platform to engage all stakeholders with the aim of mobilizing and announcing new resources, partnerships, and commitments towards universal and meaningful connectivity. Guided by the **principles** of Inclusion, Partnership and SDG-focused digital development, the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition focuses on **four main areas**: connecting people everywhere, empowering communities, building digital ecosystems, and incentivizing investments.

Each focus area will be supported by a working group that will meet to refine the governance, pledging mechanisms, and advance the preparations for the Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable, which will take place during the upcoming WTDC.

The Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable will offer participants from member states, private sector (including philanthropic organizations), UN agencies and other international or regional organizations, civil society, academia, and youth groups an opportunity to engage in high level discussions around the challenges and opportunities related to digital development, make concrete commitments, and forge partnerships.

IAGDI-CRO Meeting Objective:

Whilst governments continue to review policy and regulatory incentives for meaningful and affordable connectivity as a pre-condition to socio-economic inclusion, it is recognized that political will is not enough. Digital transformation can only become a reality, and be sustained, when anchored in collective and concerted actions involving all stakeholders.

Industry and private sector entities have a unique opportunity to make a difference by making transformational commitments at the upcoming Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable as a tangible way to accelerate progress towards digital transformation.

This session of IAGDI-CRO seeks to engage industry and the private sector to gain insights based on their experience as to how the Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable may bring concrete results in terms of viable and bankable projects, and application of transformative financing models for connectivity. As members of the IAGDO-CRO come from industry and the private sector and play a critical role in deploying projects including those on connectivity, we look forward to receiving concrete proposals that will contribute to the objectives and outcomes of Partner2Connect Digital Coalition. In addition, individual members can also make financial and programmatic pledges aimed at closing the digital divide.

Considering that the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, we must be determined to continue engaging all stakeholders, to bring to the forefront the most pressing issues hindering connectivity and to propose innovative solutions to the challenges with a global call for action.

Format

The meeting will hear from a panel of speakers and thought leaders already engaged in Partner2Connect Coalition and those that have expressed interest and commitment, who will elaborate on the role of industry in the Partner2Connect and the benefits of joining this multistakeholder platform. They will provide what they see as examples of engagement and advocacy work and explain how each ITU-D Sector Member could

contribute to the Partner2Connect Coalition. It will be followed by open discussions focusing on concrete proposals that will be considered for inclusion into the Round Table discussions.

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the IAGDI-CRO meeting will adopt an Outcome Statement calling for action and support from ITU-D industry and private sector members in the following areas:

- **Making Commitments** through pledges to the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition which could entail transferring pledged resources to ITU or make in-kind pledges towards the Partner2Connect .
- **Participation** at the Partner2Connect session of WTDC in 2022.
- **Guidance on key success factors to partnerships** and, more specifically, to ICT4D partnerships: what works and what does not work?
- **Provide Guidance on Partnership frameworks**, including governance structure, commitments, and responsibilities: how should partnerships be structured? what should be the relationship between governments, and the private sector within countries within the context of Partner2Connect Coalition?
- Consider whether **"plug & play" concepts** work supported by e.g., model partnership agreements / Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)?
- **Proposals on approaches to monitor and track** pledges: A view from industry and Private Sector.

Why two meetings (morning and afternoon): To give all our Private Sector and Industry members an opportunity to participate, considering the differences in time-zones, we have organized two meetings. Members are free to register and participate in either of the meetings as the two sessions will focus on the same topics.

Target audience: ITU-D Sector Members, industry, and private sector entities.