



Comments submitted by the United States of America

ON THE SECOND DRAFT OUTLINE OF THE REPORT OF THE ITU SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE SIXTH WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY FORUM 2021

The United States of America welcomes the opportunity to participate in the second Informal Experts Group (IEG) for the sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (WTPF) and to discuss policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development in line with the high level theme of ITU Council Decision 611. We applaud the efforts of the first Informal Experts Group meeting, and we note with appreciation the second draft of the Secretary-General's Report.

We have reviewed the second draft of the Report, and we are pleased to submit [the attached edits and comments](#). We would like to take this opportunity to summarize our edits and comments.

As a preliminary matter, we note that the second draft of the Report presents diverging views on a number of topics. We understand that many of these topics are contentious and that further discussion will be necessary to achieve consensus. While we applaud the second draft of the Report for capturing the many views expressed during the first meeting of the IEG, we believe it is essential that the second meeting of the IEG focus on reaching consensus on these outstanding issues. This will enable the Secretary-General's Report to provide the necessary clarity and direction for the WTPF consistent with Resolution 2. This will facilitate more meaningful discussions, outcomes, and Opinions. If IEG participants continue to have difficulty reaching consensus, then the IEG should consider reframing its discussion of certain contentious issues at a higher level where consensus might be more likely.

One such example involves the terminology used throughout the Report, e.g. "new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs" vs. "new and emerging digital technologies and trends." The United States continues to believe that "new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs" is the terminology most consistent with both the high-level theme contained in Decision 611, as well as the common terminology ("telecommunications/ICTs") used throughout the ITU. In that regard, the U.S. does not support replacing "new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs" with "new and emerging digital technologies and trends" throughout the report. We encourage IEG participants to reach consensus on this terminology in a way that reflects the high-level theme of Decision 611. The United States

believes that reaching consensus on this issue will facilitate progress in several other areas of the Report.

Finally, we are concerned that the second draft of the Secretary General's report presents certain topics as having been agreed by consensus, when the discussions during the first IEG meeting actually reflected fundamentally diverging views. For example, the second draft of the Report incorrectly asserts that there was "consensus" on several questions related to AI. Nevertheless, the United States and other IEG participants suggested during the first meeting that the work of the IEG would be most productive if it addresses AI and big data through the lens of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs in line with the high level WTPF theme, rather than stand-alone sections of the report. The report also notes that some experts did not support the inclusion of the proposed cross-cutting topics on (a) mobilizing new solutions for connectivity and (b) mobilizing an enabling policy environment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, but it does not reflect that several experts also supported their inclusion. We hope that delegations can have more time to consider and discuss these proposals at the second IEG meeting.

The United States looks forward to working with all participants at the IEG meeting in February and at subsequent meetings leading up to the sixth WTPF in 2021.

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Second Draft of the Report by the ITU Secretary-General for the Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum 2021

1. Preamble

1.1 The Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum 2021 (WTPF-21)

1.1.1 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. By [Resolution 2 \(Rev. Dubai, 2018\)](#), the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU has now resolved to hold the next WTPF in 2021.

1.1.2 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 \(Rev. Dubai, 2018\)](#)).

1.1.3 By [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019), 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, 5G¹, Big Data, OTTs etc. In this regard, the WTPF-21 will focus on opportunities, challenges and policies to foster sustainable development.”

1.1.4 WTPF-21 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 \(Rev. Dubai, 2018\)](#)).

1.1.5 All information relating to WTPF-21 is posted on <https://www.itu.int/en/wtpf-21/Pages/default.aspx>.

¹ Some experts suggested using the term “IMT-2020/5G” instead of “5G” to align with the terminology that is usually adopted at ITU when discussing this subject, including at the Plenipotentiary Conference, as IMT-2020 is a name for the systems, components, and related elements that support enhanced capabilities of 5G beyond those offered by IMT-2000 (3G) and IMT-Advanced (4G) systems. Other experts stated that it should be maintained as 5G as discussions at WTPF-21 are broadly aimed at mobilizing telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development and this was the terminology adopted by [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019).

1.2 Preparatory process for the ITU Secretary-General's Report

1.2.1 Discussions at WTPF-21 shall be based solely on a single report by the ITU Secretary-General, and contributions from participants based on that report, prepared in accordance with a procedure adopted by the Council and based on the proposals of Member States and Sector Members, and on the views of Associates, Academia and stakeholders, and WTPF shall not consider drafts of any new Opinions that were not presented during the preparatory period foreseen for drawing up the Secretary-General's report prior to the Forum ([Resolution 2 \(Rev. Dubai, 2018\)](#)). This report by the Secretary-General ("Report") outlines a potential scope for discussions and presents some of the policies under consideration among different stakeholder groups for mobilizing **new** and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

1.2.2 In accordance with [Decision 611](#) of ITU Council 2019, the ITU Secretary-General has convened an Informal Experts Group (IEG), each of whom is active in preparing for WTPF-21 in this regard.

1.2.3 The preparatory process will be guided by the timetable set out as Annex 2 in [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) and in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Timetable for the elaboration of the ITU Secretary-General's Report

1 August, 2019	A First Draft outline of the report by the Secretary-General shall be posted online for comments
21 August, 2019	Deadline for receipt of comments on the First Draft Deadline for nominations for a balanced group of experts to advise the Secretary-General on further elaboration of the report and of draft opinions associated with it
1st IEG Meeting (September 2019 during the CWG cluster)	First meeting of the group of experts to discuss the First Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received
1 November, 2019	The Second Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, incorporating discussions from the 1st IEG meeting This draft will also be made available online for open public consultations
23 December, 2019	Deadline for receipt of comments on the Second Draft, and for contribution on broad outlines for possible draft opinions Deadline for inputs from the open public consultations
2nd IEG Meeting (January/February 2020 during the CWG cluster)	Second meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Second Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received, including from the open public consultation
1 April, 2020	The Third Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, incorporating discussions from the 2 nd IEG meeting and including outlines of draft Opinions

	This draft will also be made available online for open public consultations
15 June, 2020	Deadline for receipt of comments on the Third Draft, and for contribution on possible draft Opinions Deadline for inputs from the open public consultations
3rd IEG Meeting (September 2020 during the CWG cluster)	Third meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Third Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received, including from the open public consultation
1 November, 2020	The Fourth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, including the draft Opinions, and incorporating discussions from the 3rd IEG meeting
23 December, 2020	Deadline for receipt of comments on the Fourth Draft
4th IEG Meeting (February 2021 during the CWG cluster)	Fourth meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Fourth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General, including the draft Opinions, and the comments received
15 March, 2021	The final report of the Secretary-General to WTPF will be posted online, including the draft Opinions
Mid-May, 2021 (back to back with WSIS Forum 2021)	Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum

2. Themes for WTPF-21

2.1 By [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019), the 2019 session of 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.”

Some experts were of the opinion that this theme, as decided by Council 2019, comprises two components – a high-level theme (i.e. *“Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development”*) and sub-themes (i.e. the paragraph that follows the high-level theme). As a result, they stated that the high-level theme is broad enough to encompass discussions on the sub-themes and more, and therefore, the Forum should focus on the high-level theme and not delve into the various sub-themes as individual topics. Other experts expressed the opinion that Council 2019 has decided on a comprehensive theme for WTPF-21, that the text in its entirety, as set out in [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019), is meant to be the focus of discussions at the Forum, and that as a result, WTPF-21 can explore any aspect of the theme.

This divergence of opinion has implications for the terminology used in this Report as well – with some experts suggesting the use of “new and emerging digital technologies and trends”, while other experts suggest only using the term “new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs”. In this Report, the term “new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs” is being used for the time being.

2.2 New and emerging telecommunications/ICTs have the potential to accelerate implementation of the WSIS framework as the foundation through which the ITU helps contribute towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Breakthroughs in telecommunications/ICTs are impacting the global digital economy in diverse areas, including health, education, employment, transportation, agriculture, nutrition, disability, youth empowerment, social inclusion, gender equality and poverty reduction.

2.3 Mobilization of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs depends on several factors, including fostering an enabling policy environment, that promote investment and innovation through competition, transparency, flexibility and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders. Promoting innovation and investment is essential to achieving the full potential of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs and will better enable the global transition to the digital economy.

2.4 The transformative potential of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs comes with both significant opportunities and complex policy challenges in various social, economic, technical and developmental fields. Some of these opportunities and challenges are not new, and the world has previously witnessed similar transformations across society, industry and the economy that have led to new models of growth and innovation. There is a policy imperative to learn from these past experiences to better inform strategies to maximize the opportunities and address the challenges of these telecommunications/ICTs and foster innovation for sustainable development through balanced and considered policies.

2.5 It is important to recognize the particular challenges faced by developing countries in mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

2.6 Policy-making in this respect is critical for facilitating countries’ efforts, particularly in developing and least developed countries, to promote innovation and contribute toward sustainable development. Policy-making considerations include, *inter alia*, infrastructure needs, investment, regulatory environment, training and skills development, market environment, institutional cooperation, the role of development aid, etc.

Some experts stated that WTPF-21 is aimed at mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development and need not discuss issues relating to promotion of innovation as set out above. Additionally, other experts also highlighted that the term “effective” must be used in relation to policy-making efforts as set out in this paragraph as “effective policy-making” is critical to promote innovation and contribute toward sustainable development.

2.7 In this regard, some of the broad questions that could be addressed while considering policies to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development are set out below.

Some experts suggested that the Report should focus primarily on the issue of policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs, which, being broader in scope, encompasses any related issues of opportunities and challenges. It was further recommended that this Report should avoid being overly prescriptive.

2.7.1 Looking ahead, what are the new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs that ITU membership considers to be key enablers of the global transition to the digital economy? Given the inter-connections or -dependencies in the use and deployment of such telecommunications/ICTs, what is the role that policy-makers and other stakeholders can play in fostering an enabling

environment that creates an agile ecosystem to enable sustainable use of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?

2.7.2 How does ITU membership envision the role of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs in contributing to sustainable development, keeping in mind the current and future needs of both developing and developed countries as well as all segments of the population? What are the trends and best practices in developing whole-of-government, multi-stakeholder collaborative policy approaches that are forward-looking, flexible and evidence-based that can contribute to this goal?

2.7.3 What are the key opportunities and challenges facing the mobilization of such new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development? What are the issues for their development and deployment?

2.7.4 How can policy-makers and other stakeholders foster an environment that safeguards users, especially the most vulnerable populations, when using new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?

2.7.5 How can the benefits of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs be made more accessible to all? Along with the challenge of connecting the unconnected through infrastructure, what can be done to promote affordable access for everyone, particularly women and girls, to build the skills necessary to leverage a changing environment where people can learn, share, and engage; to foster incentives for continued innovation and an environment of trust and inclusion? How can better international cooperation by all stakeholders contribute to these efforts?

Some experts expressed the view that the focus of this question should be on inclusion, consumer trust, digital literacy and specifically finding innovative ways to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development, as these are the key aspects to be considered given the theme of the Forum. Other experts were of the opinion that maintaining focus on the broader issues of trust and innovation would be better. In particular on the issue of “trust”, these experts stressed that building trust in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs will be key to promoting wider engagement with these technologies, and that the concept of “trust” is wider than just consumer trust and digital literacy.

2.7.6 What policies are needed to promote education, skills and training to develop a skilled workforce? How can policy-makers and other stakeholders help to identify, retain and develop the necessary skills base?

2.7.7 How can policy-makers build an enabling environment for investment? What policies can help ensure that the regulatory and market environments help mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development?

2.7.8 How can the global community continue building local and inclusive innovation ecosystems that enhance consumer trust and enable the deployment and use of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development?

Some experts suggested that this question should instead consider the building of trust more broadly.

2.7.9 What measures can be taken to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration in order to enable developing countries to access the benefits generated by a digital economy?

2.7.10 What are the ways in which stakeholders can work together to drive progress to facilitate greater access to new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs ?

In addition, some experts proposed that another question be added to this section to explore the issue of how best development aid can support the mobilization of new and emerging technologies for sustainable development, and what policies are needed to promote effective development partnerships (for details, please see [Comment C-002](#)²). Other experts were of the view that this may be included for consideration under paragraph 2.6 of this Report.

Some experts also proposed that a question be added in this section on the role of international fora, including ITU, in supporting developing countries in the use of ICTs to achieve the SDGs (for details, please see [Comment C-012](#)³). Other experts were of the view that this Report should not seek to outline the role of international organizations.

2.8 Some themes for consideration

[Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) lists some themes for consideration⁴ as indicated below.

Some experts noted that the following sub-themes should be addressed in the Secretary-General's Report through the lens of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs. They recommended against including standalone sections on these sub-themes to align more closely with the WTPF-21 theme and the ITU's mandate. Other experts were of the view that [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) recognized the following themes explicitly and therefore, recommended that each of them should be discussed separately and incorporated as standalone sections in the Report.

2.8.1.1 AI solutions and technologies have the potential to transform areas as diverse and critical as education, healthcare, finance, mobility, agriculture, energy, accessibility and connectivity. They bring with them opportunities, challenges and risks.

2.8.1.2 Some examples of AI-related policy questions that could be considered include:

- a. How can AI solutions and technologies promote sustainable development? What are the key policy imperatives driving decision-makers to explore and harness the potential of AI-based solutions and technologies to enable sustainable development, including the transition to a digital economy?
- b. How can AI help the developing countries to better benefit from the use of advanced data-driven technologies? How can they benefit from AI?
- c. What are the challenges facing the deployment and use of AI technologies?
- d. How can stakeholders promote the development and use of AI technologies to support sustainable development?

² [Comment C-002](#):

Proposed new question: *How best can development aid support the mobilization of new and emerging technologies for sustainable development? What policies are needed to promote effective development partnerships?*

³ [Comment C-012](#)

Proposed new question: *What is the role of international fora, including the ITU, in supporting developing countries in the use of ICTs to achieve the SDGs?*

⁴ Some experts suggested considering other themes such as Virtual Reality, however, some other experts stated that Virtual Reality is not a priority issue or technology for consideration by the Forum given that the focus is on mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

The text above was supported by some experts, as a result of the discussions that are reflected below:

Experts recognized that the opportunities and challenges posed by AI are significant. Some experts were of the view that the best way to implement [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) was to address AI in the Report through the lens of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs. Therefore, they recommended against including a standalone section on AI in the Report and recommended to incorporate AI into other sections, focusing on policies to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs to enable AI applications for sustainable development, aligning closely with the WTPF-21 theme and ITU's mandate. Other experts were of the view that [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) recognized AI explicitly among the topics for discussion in the theme for WTPF-21 and therefore, they recommended that AI should be discussed more broadly and incorporated as a standalone section in the Report.

Some experts noted that if there is a distinct section on AI, it should focus on broader questions relating to identification of opportunities and challenges for the purpose of mobilizing AI for sustainable development. Some other experts were of the view that it is important to address the specific opportunities, risks and challenges posed by such technologies.

2.8.2 Internet of Things (IoT)

2.8.2.1 The IoT and connected sensors are driving improvements to economic growth and human wellbeing in a range of areas such as healthcare, water, agriculture, natural resource management, environment and energy. However, policy-makers and other stakeholders may need to address several challenges if they are to capture its full potential.

2.8.2.2 Some examples of IoT-related policy questions that could be considered include:

- a. How can the development and deployment of IoT promote sustainable development? What are the key challenges and opportunities that policy-makers and other stakeholders face in developing ecosystems that best support the cross-sectoral, public and private nature of such applications?
- b. What steps can be taken by all stakeholders to safeguard users and promote affordability, accessibility, and inclusive access of IoT systems across countries and populations?

The text above was agreed by consensus as a result of the discussions that are reflected below:

Some experts were of the view that deliberations on IoT should be carried out with a focus on mobilizing the technology for sustainable development rather than referencing specific aspects such as development, deployment, affordability, public confidence or trust. Some other experts stated that it is necessary to consider all of these aspects in relation to IoT as they are important to understand the potential benefits posed by this technology.

Some experts noted that the consensus text above does not explicitly address concerns related to factors such as security or trust. Some other experts stated that security, in particular, is a key aspect for all countries and entities, and is a crosscutting priority across all the technologies dealt with in this Report, without being specific to the topic of IoT.

2.8.3 5G

2.8.3.1 5G has the potential to be one of the key technologies enabling tomorrow's digital economy, linking everything from smartphones to wireless sensors and industrial robots to self-driving cars. 5G could play a key role in transforming cities and rural communities into smart cities/communities - allowing citizens and communities to realize and participate in the benefits delivered by an advanced

digital economy. Fostering the potential of 5G's capabilities will require addressing several elements relating to its deployment including, inter alia, costs and infrastructure.

2.8.3.2 In this respect, some essential questions include:

- a. How can 5G promote sustainable development? What are some of the key uses/application of 5G technologies that can drive adoption? What are the main challenges relating to deployment of such technologies?
- b. What can policy-makers and other stakeholders do to promote policies and strategies to support the implementation of telecommunications/ICTs such as 5G to provide benefit and access to all?
- c. What steps can all stakeholders take to foster a 5G innovation ecosystem and new business models to maximize the benefits for all while minimizing associated costs, financial and otherwise?
- d. What policies can help mobilize 5G technologies towards enabling applications of big data and AI for sustainable development.

In addition to the questions above, some experts were of the view that a cross-cutting question should also be included in order to draw focus towards the policies that can help mobilize 5G technologies towards enabling applications of Big Data and AI for sustainable development (for details, please see [Comment C-009](#)⁵). Some other experts expressed the view that as separate sections have been devoted to each of these technologies, and since the primary objective of WTPF-21 is to deliberate upon policies for mobilizing these technologies for sustainable development, it is not necessary to include a specific question for this purpose.

2.8.4.1 Experts recognized that the opportunities and challenges posed by Big Data are significant. Some experts were of the view that the best way to implement [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) was to address Big Data in the Report through the lens of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs. Therefore, they recommended against including a standalone section on Big Data in the Report and recommended to incorporate Big Data into other sections, focusing on policies to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs to enable Big Data applications for sustainable development, aligning closely with the WTPF-21 theme and ITU's mandate. Other experts were of the view that [Decision 611](#) (Council 2019) recognized Big Data explicitly among the topics for discussion in the theme for WTPF-21 and therefore, they recommended that Big Data should be discussed more broadly and incorporated as a standalone section in the Report.

2.8.4.2 Big Data has the potential to create significant value for the world economy and consumers everywhere - enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the private and public sector globally. However, policy-makers and other stakeholders may need to address several challenges if they are to capture its full potential.

2.8.4.3 In this respect, some of the key questions to be considered include:

- a. How can Big Data promote sustainable development? In this regard, what tools, technologies and techniques can stakeholders apply to fully harness the potential of Big Data?
- b. What are the key steps that policymakers and other stakeholders could consider to ensure that the use and application of Big Data benefits all?

⁵ [Comment C-009](#):

Proposed new question: *What policies can help mobilize 5G technologies towards enabling applications of big data and AI for sustainable development?*

c. How can the challenges associated with big data be addressed? What can be done to ensure that Big Data applications also respond to those left furthest behind?

Some members expressed the view that this question should focus specifically on leveraging Big Data for driving sustainable development.

d. How can stakeholders collaborate to develop a win-win approach for harnessing the potential benefits of Big Data?

In addition to the questions set out above, some experts proposed a few other questions for consideration (for details, please see [Comments C-012](#)⁶). These questions were considered by the IEG during the informal discussions that were conducted to determine the text for this section as a whole.

2.8.5 OTTs

2.8.5.1 The emergence of OTTs has been driving growth, connecting people, and advancing innovation in the global economy. OTTs are reshaping and expanding the entire communications ecosystem, while also providing social and economic benefits to consumers worldwide and the global economy.

2.8.5.2 At the same time, the economic impact on the traditional model of the telecommunications industry and on telecom operators is being increasingly analyzed, including inter alia, the competitive environment, the level of regulatory exposure, the level of substitutability between OTTs and traditional telecom services and the interconnection between OTTs and public networks.

Some experts were of the view that, among the other factors mentioned above, OTTs are also strengthening ubiquitous connectivity and providing social and economic benefits to consumers worldwide in the global economy. Some experts also wanted to highlight that Resolution 206 of the 2018 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference and ITU-T Recommendation D.262 represent the consensus of the ITU membership and collectively provides a comprehensive policy framework for the consideration of OTTs, including issues relating to consumer benefits, competition and innovation. They noted the foundation of these recognizes that the mutual cooperation between OTTs and telecommunication operators can be an element to foster innovative, sustainable, viable business models and their positive roles in fostering socio-economic benefits. They also highlighted that the Resolution encourages collaboration among Member States, Sector Members, international telecommunications service providers and OTTs in order to fully realize those benefits. Furthermore, it was noted that the topic of OTTs is presently being studied in several ITU Study Groups⁷. Other experts were of the view that while OTTs are impacting the communications ecosystem, they are not leading to ubiquitous connectivity.

⁶ [Comments C-012](#): Proposed new questions:

- How to guarantee the protection of the privacy of individuals?
- How is the management of personal data and their storage?
- How to deal with the unauthorized use of data in the areas of e-commerce and AI?

⁷ Activities at ITU Study Groups on OTTs include ITU-T SG 3 which has approved a new Recommendation, *ITU-T D.262 on Collaborative Framework for OTT*, and is also advancing work items *D.OTT Consumer on Customer redress mechanism and consumer protection*. ITU-T SG 17 identified OTTs as one of the new actors in the ecosystem that impacts Security as part of its transformation of security studies. Under ITU-D SG 1, new Q3/1 will work on “*Emerging technologies, including cloud computing, m-services and OTTs: Challenges and opportunities, economic and policy impact for developing countries*” (merging former Q1/1 and Q3/1). ITU-T SG 2 have agreed two new work items on OTTs. For more details, please see the [Report by the Secretary-General: ITU Internet Activities: Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206](#).

2.8.5.3 In this regard, some examples of OTT-related policy questions that could be considered include:

- a. What are some of the key policy opportunities and challenges associated with OTTs?
- b. How can stakeholders promote greater consumer trust in connection with OTTs?

Some experts were of the view that focus should be maintained on “consumer trust” specifically as that is the most important aspect to consider for policy-making on mobilizing OTTs for sustainable development. Some other experts suggested that the concept of “trust”, as it relates to policy imperatives for OTTs, is broader than “consumer trust” and it is important to focus on all three aspects – security, safety and trust.

- c. What approaches might be considered regarding OTTs to help foster an environment that promotes competition and improves the range of all services to businesses, consumers, academic institutions, etc.?
- d. How can OTT players and telecom operators best engage with one another at a local and international level?

Some experts were of the view that this should explore what model partnership agreements could be developed. Other experts were of the opinion that the WTPF-21 should avoid delving into discussions that are too prescriptive, as may be the case with this question.

- e. How can OTTs contribute to economic development?

In addition to the questions set out above, some experts proposed a few other questions for consideration (for details, please see [Comments C-008](#)⁹ and [Comments C-012](#)¹⁰). These questions were considered by the IEG during the informal discussions that were conducted to determine the text for this section as a whole. However, some experts were of the opinion that these questions should not be included in the Report.

2.8.6 Mobilizing New Solutions for Connectivity

2.8.6.1 Mobile telecommunications/ICTs have the power to transform lives, offering life-enhancing financial, health, education, and many other services, the ability to participate in the digital economy, and the means to participate in communities.

Yet millions of people in emerging markets lack access to these services, due to the limited reach of reliable, secure, and affordable communications infrastructure in many countries. In addition, low income populations with access frequently do not adopt services, because of constraints arising from limited affordability and social norms that can bar access to communications technology to certain vulnerable populations such as women and girls.

To bridge these gaps, innovations in technology and business plans are being developed and explored by providers, governments, academia, and civil society actors. These include but are not limited to: low-cost solar-powered mobile radios that can open up rural areas to new connectivity options; new, higher-capacity satellite services that can offer lower cost internet backhaul to remote locations; and business models that deliberately work to include women and broader communities in the provision of network services to bring down social barriers to technology use.

⁹ [Comments C-008](#):

Proposed new questions: *How can the Member States deal with the taxation matter for OTTs?*

¹⁰ [Comments C-012](#):

Proposed new question: *How do OTT providers manage, store and reuse the personal data of their customers?*

2.8.6.2 In this respect, some of the key questions to be considered include:

- a. What types of technologies and business models should decision-makers learn more about when determining how to address connectivity access and adoption gaps in their own unique market contexts?
- b. How can the private sector's interest in innovation be mobilized to solve unique market contexts of emerging markets?
- c. How can we more closely align funding mechanisms with the already-active community of innovators working on these solutions, particularly where those solutions require risk capital to fully explore alternative business models? What tools should be used to help mitigate those risks, and how should those tools be combined with policy solutions that advance competition and vibrant civil society participation in the ICT sector?
- d. How can we facilitate greater collaboration and knowledge sharing between the innovator and investment communities to accelerate the development of these innovations?

2.8.7 Mobilizing an Enabling Policy Environment for New and Emerging Telecommunications/ICTs

2.8.7.1 The mobilization of emerging telecommunications/ICTs depends on fostering an enabling policy environment that promotes investment and innovation through competition, transparency, flexibility and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders. Removing barriers to innovation and investment is essential for achieving the full potential of emerging telecommunications/ICTs and will enable the global transition to the digital economy.

2.8.7.2 In this regard, some examples of questions related to fostering an enabling environment include:

- a. What policy or regulatory approaches can mobilize investment and innovation related to new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?
- b. What principles should guide stakeholders in promoting an enabling policy environment for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?
- c. What roles do various stakeholders play in promoting an enabling environment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs? How can policymakers foster greater stakeholder participation in efforts to create an enabling policy environment?
- d. How can stakeholders foster skills development related to the creation of an enabling policy environment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs?
- e. How can stakeholders mobilize an environment that fosters innovation, investment and competition in new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs that could enable big data and AI technologies for sustainable development?

3. Other Topics Proposed:

In addition to the above themes for consideration, some experts suggested a few other topics: (a) mobilizing new solutions for connectivity (for more details, please see [Comments C-009](#)¹¹) and (b) mobilizing an enabling policy environment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs (for more details, please see [Comments C-009](#)¹²). Some experts supported the inclusion of these topics as important to address the theme of “policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.” Other experts were of the opinion that these are cross-cutting thematic issues that have already been covered across the Report.

4. Conclusion

This Report will be further elaborated in subsequent drafts taking into consideration the written inputs received from experts as well as discussions during the physical meetings of the IEG.

¹¹ [Comments C-009](#): Given the WTPF-21 theme of “policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development” and that large segments of the world population continue to lack access to modern telecommunications/ICTs, some experts believe it is important for the WTPF to explore policies for mobilizing new solutions for connectivity. Exploring innovations in technology and business plans will enable unserved and underserved communities around the world to benefit from new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs. For this reason, some experts proposed an additional section focused on policies to mobilize new solutions for connectivity.

¹² [Comments C-009](#): Given the WTPF theme of “policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development,” some experts proposed a stand-alone section focused on best practices for mobilizing an enabling environment for new and emerging telecommunications/ICT to enable the WTPF to identify best practices that can support new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs broadly.