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| **Council 2021Virtual consultation of councillors, 8-18 June 2021** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 2.9** | **Document C21/5-E** |
| **22 April 2021** |
| **Original: English** |
| Report by the Secretary-General |
| PREPARATIONS FOR WTPF-21 |

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| SummaryResolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) *resolves* to hold WTPF preferably back-to-back with the WSIS Forum 2021, taking account of the need to ensure adequate preparation by Member States. This document provides an update on the current status of the preparatory process for WTPF-21. Action requiredThe Council is invited to **note** the report.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ReferencesDocument [C13/64(Rev1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S13-CL-C-0064/en);[Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf); [Council Decision 611 (Modified 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en); [C20/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0005/en) |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF) was established by the 1994 Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference and is covered by the provisions of Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). WTPF was successfully convened in 1996, 1998, 2001, 2009, and 2013. The report on WTPF-13 is available in document [C13/64(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S13-CL-C-0064/en).

1.2 The purpose of WTPF is to provide a venue for exchanging views and information and thereby creating a shared vision among policy-makers 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.

1.3 WTPF should continue to give special attention to the interests and needs of the developing countries, where modern technologies and services can contribute significantly to telecommunication infrastructure development.

1.4 WTPF shall not produce prescriptive regulatory outcomes; however, it shall prepare reports and adopt opinions by consensus for consideration by Member States, Sector Members, and relevant ITU meetings.

1.5 WTPF shall be open to all Member States and Sector Members; however, if appropriate, by decision of a majority of the representatives of Member States, a special session may be held for Member States only.

**2. Venue, dates, and duration of WTPF-21**

2.1 In accordance with Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai 2018), the 2019 session of the Council approved Decision 611 ([C19/128](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0128/en)), which decided to convene the sixth WTPF (WTPF-21) in Geneva, Switzerland for a duration of three days.

2.2 In 2020, the second Virtual consultation of councillors further modified the decision to specify the dates of 16-18 December 2021 ([C20/81](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en)), which was approved by the Council by correspondence (consultation in [DM-20/1021](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-DM-CIR-01021/en); results in [DM-20/1022](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-DM-CIR-01022/en)).

**3. Theme for WTPF-21**

3.1 By [Decision 611 (Modified 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en), 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, 5G, Big Data, OTTs etc. In this regard, the WTPF-21 will focus on opportunities, challenges and policies to foster sustainable development.”

**4. Preparatory process for WTPF-21**

4.1 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)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-002-E.pdf)). This report by the Secretary-General (“Report”) outlines a potential scope for discussions and presents some of the policy issues under consideration among different stakeholder groups on mobilizing new and emerging digital technologies and trends for sustainable development.

4.2 In accordance with [Decision 611 (Modified 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en), the ITU Secretary-General has convened an Informal Experts Group (IEG), each of whom is active in preparing for WTPF-21 in this regard. Member States, Sector Members, Associates, and Academia of ITU, as well as the State of Palestine and Organizations which have the right to attend ITU Conferences and meetings as observers, were invited to ​nominate their experts. Council 2019 confirmed Mr Fabio Bigi, Italy, as the chair of the IEG.

4.3 The preparatory process is guided by the revised timetable set out as Annex 2 in [Decision 611 (Modified Council 2020)](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0081/en) as reflected in Table 1 below[[1]](#footnote-1).

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

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| **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 DraftDeadline 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 meetingThis 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 2nd IEG meeting and including outlines of draft OpinionsThis 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 OpinionsDeadline 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 possible draft Opinions, and incorporating discussions from the 3rd IEG meeting |
| **23 December 2020** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Fourth Draft |
| **4th IEG Virtual Meeting (January-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 possible draft Opinions, and the comments received |
| **15 March 2021**  | The Fifth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, incorporating discussions from the 4th IEG meeting, and including the text of the possible draft Opinions as an AnnexThis draft will also be made available online for open public consultations. |
| **1 May 2021** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Fifth Draft, including the possible draft OpinionsDeadline for receipt of comments from the open public consultation |
| **5th IEG Virtual Meeting (Mid-May, 2021 close to the WSIS Forum 2021 duration)** | Fifth meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Fifth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General, as well as the draft Opinions and the comments received, including from the open public consultation  |
| **1 July 2021** | The Sixth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online incorporating discussions from the 5th IEG meeting and including the draft Opinions as an Annex |
| **15 August 2021** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Sixth Draft, including the text of the draft Opinions |
| **6th IEG Meeting (September 2021 during the CWG Cluster)** | Sixth meeting of the group of experts to finalize the Draft Report by the Secretary-General, including the final text of the draft Opinions to be submitted to the sixth WTPF |
| **4 November 2021** | The final report of the Secretary-General to WTPF will be posted online, including the draft Opinions |
| **16-18 December 2021** | Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum |

4.4 The IEG has held two meetings since the Report by SG to Council 2020: on 14-16 September 2020 and 1-2 February 2021. The IEG has 169 nominated experts. The list is available at <https://www.itu.int/en/wtpf-21/Documents/IEG-WTPF-21-nominated-experts.pdf>

4.5 All documents related to the preparatory process are available on the IEG website: <https://www.itu.int/en/wtpf-21/Pages/ieg-wtpf-21.aspx>. These include the various drafts of the Secretary-General’s Report to WTPF-21, contributions received from IEG members (including possible draft Opinions) and the feedback received from the online open public consultation process. An email reflector (iegwtpf21@lists.itu.int) has also been set up to facilitate communications among the members of Group between the meetings.

**5. Organization and preparation of logistics**

5.1 An internal intersectoral team has been formed to coordinate the preparations of the sixth WTPF.

5.2 The CICG (The International Conference Centre Geneva) has been reserved for WTPF-21. The ITU secretariat is working closely with the team at CICG on the organization of logistics.

5.3 The WTPF website containing all related information will be published in due course.

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1. The portion highlighted in grey indicates the current status of the preparatory process. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)