

OPINION 4: New and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

The sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2021),

recalling

- a) Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”;
- b) UNGA Resolution 70/125 on “Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society”;
- c) relevant World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines and relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- d) Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the “Strategic Plan for the Union for 2020-2023”;
- e) Resolution 197 (Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on “Facilitating the Internet of Things and smart sustainable cities and communities”;
- f) Resolution 206 (Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on “OTTs”;
- g) Resolution 205 (Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on “ITU's role in fostering telecommunication/information and communication technology-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society”,

recognising

- a) that the continuous evolution of new and emerging technologies, such as 5G, AI, IoT, Big Data and OTTs, can facilitate the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) for sustainable development, taking into account the discussions and initiatives underway across the UN system that are exploring diverse aspects of such technologies in support of sustainable development;
- b) that telecommunications/ICTs are an enabler of many new technologies and in turn new technologies can also facilitate the development and deployment of telecommunications/ICTs;
- c) that, by facilitating the use of telecommunications/ICTs, new and emerging technologies, such as AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, and OTTs, can enable the global transition to the digital economy and

accelerate the benefits of digital transformation for different industries, thereby furthering our shared goal to advance the SDGs;

d) that while this transition will enable countries to harness the potential of such technologies to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs and advance sustainable development, as countries take advantage of this potential, developing countries¹ are at the highest risk of being left behind;

e) that the responsible development and use of such technologies, particularly AI, can help to empower future innovation and address related policy issues, and that stakeholders involved in their development and use should engage in policy discussions, including on accountability and sustainable development;

f) that it is important to promote building confidence and security in and inclusive development of these technologies as well as to foster equitable access to their benefits;

g) that enabling strategies, policies, regulations, guidelines or principles may contribute to maximizing the potential of new and emerging technologies to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

h) that ITU, as the UN specialized agency for telecommunications/ICTs, plays a leading role in the implementation of relevant WSIS action lines and their outcomes and, through them, the achievement of the SDGs;

i) that there is ongoing work in ITU, including ITU study groups, related to new and emerging technologies to facilitate the development and deployment of telecommunications/ICTs,

is of the view

1 that Member States, through cooperation with all stakeholders, should foster an enabling environment for digital innovation ecosystems for inclusive growth and development of relevant new and emerging technologies, such as 5G, AI, IoT, Big Data and OTTs, to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

2 that enabling policies to harness opportunities and address challenges related to such technologies need to be addressed at the national, regional and international levels, with the full involvement of stakeholders from countries, especially from developing countries;

3 that all stakeholders need to work closely together to harness the potential of the services and technologies referred to in *is of the view "1"* above for the benefit of all and to advance sustainable development, as well as address any common policy issues and other challenges, *inter alia*, related to confidence and security, reliability, inclusiveness, transparency and interoperability, that may arise in their use;

4 that ITU, in collaboration with other UN agencies and international organizations, and within its mandate, should continue to promote information and best practice sharing among its membership and other stakeholders in their efforts to use technologies referenced in *is of the view "1"* above to facilitate telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development;

5 that stakeholders should be encouraged to implement projects, programmes, and initiatives to enable all nations to benefit from the use of such technologies to achieve the SDGs,

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

invites Member States, Sector Members and other stakeholders to work collaboratively

- 1 to utilize the potential of technologies referred to in *is of the view "1"* above to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs to achieve the SDGs;
- 2 to promote public policies and strategies at the national, regional, and international levels to take advantage of opportunities and overcome challenges in the use and mobilization of technologies referred to in *is of the view "1"* above for sustainable development;
- 3 to encourage the participation of all stakeholders from developing countries, and in particular from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in the activities of relevant entities, organizations, institutions and initiatives that are working on the various policy matters set out in this Opinion,

invites the Secretary-General

to support the activities of ITU, within its mandate, relevant to the policy matters set out in this Opinion. This includes enabling the ITU membership to share information and best practices in order to take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges relevant to policy matters set out in this Opinion.
