|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-WSIS&SDG-40/14** |
| **25 January 2024** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |
| Contribution by the secretariat | |
| UPDATES ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ITU/UNESCO BROADBAND COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | |
| **Purpose**  Updates on the activities of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs is invited to note the information about the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, including the recently published reports.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**   * [CWG-WSIS&SDG website](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx); * The State of Broadband Report 2023: <https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2023/> * The Working Groups research and outcomes: <https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/> * 7 Advocacy Targets 2025: <https://www.broadbandcommission.org/advocacy-targets/> * The Commission at a Glance: <https://broadbandcommission.org/about-us/> | |

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development was established in 2010 by ITU and UNESCO with the aim of boosting the importance of broadband on the international policy agenda and expanding broadband access in every country as key to accelerating progress towards national and international development targets. Led by H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim Helù of Mexico, it is co-chaired by ITU’s Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. It comprises over 50 Commissioners who represent a cross-cutting group of top CEO and industry leaders, senior policymakers and government representatives, and experts from international agencies, academia and organizations concerned with development.

***The Advocacy and Thought Leadership***

The Commission leverages the strength of its membership and collective expertise to advocate for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services as a foundational element to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Since 2010, the Commission published its annual, collaborative 'State of Broadband’ report and almost 40 Working Groups on thematic areas from health, education and gender equality were established, and recommendations for reaching universal broadband connectivity were made. The Commission has also been instrumental in launching a number of global initiatives (EQUALS, Giga, etc.) and advocating with its educational campaigns (MSMEs day, SDG Digital etc.), events (WSIS, STI Forum, LDC5, UNCTAD e-week etc.) and inputs to the UN processes.

***The State of Broadband Annual Report***

Every year, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development publishes its flagship annual 'State of Broadband’ report in September providing a unique, global snapshot of global progress on reaching universal connectivity. Written through a collaborative framework and drawing on the insights of the Commission’s high-level, multistakeholder membership, the report provides input on the most pertinent issues facing broadband development; updates on the 2025 Broadband Advocacy Targets; and insights and impact stories from Commissioners.

In 2023, the Commission continued to see progress towards universal and meaningful online activity, noting that the global offline population continues to steadily decline to 2.6 billion people in 2023, a reduction from the estimated 2.7 billion people offline in 2022. The report also reviewed the progress of the seven Advocacy Targets and notes the wins that can be seen as we move towards broadband being universally available, equitable, and affordable. Yet despite the gains, market trends for consumption and supply are shifting, and may not be strong enough to guarantee that the objective of universal and meaningful connectivity will be met by 2030. The report offered five considerations for how future efforts on connectivity for digital transformation should be financed and funded: defining measurable goals; addressing barriers to Internet use where coverage is available; broadening the contributor base and implementing creative funding approaches; aligning and incentivizing funding contributors; building sustainable network infrastructure policies.

***The Broadband Commission Working Groups***

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, the Broadband Commission pursued a range of topics through its Working Groups on: Data for Learning, chaired by UNESCO, and one on Connectivity for MSMEs, chaired by ITC and the GSMA, presented findings and recommendations of their final reports during the Annual Meeting in September 2023. Both Working Group have developed a relevant framework and set core recommendations for all relevant stakeholders.

***The Broadband Commission’s recommendations in Action***

On 16 September 2023, the Commission held its Annual Fall Session held in person in the UNHQ in New York. In the backdrop of the 78th Session of the General Assembly and the UN SDG Summit, the Broadband Commission’s Fall Meeting 2023 titled: *Digital Connectivity: a transformative opportunity*, discussed broadband as a foundational element to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The meeting explored new investments models to meet targets of universal meaningful connectivity.

The Commissioners and Special Guests debated new financing instruments needed to encourage investment in broadband networks. The meeting also addressed the key regulatory and policy considerations to ensure Universal Meaningful Connectivity is achieved, and adoption and usefulness are extended.

This meeting reaffirmed the Commission’s call for digital cooperation, and collaborative effort that must ensure that people around the world are not only connected, but that they also have the skills and knowledge to use that connectivity. The Commission also called for innovative investment models to bring together private and public stakeholders to deliver meaningful access and content to those most in need, highlighting investments and policies to bring digital benefits to all by 2030.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_