|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The International Teleocmmunication Union - Connecting the World. | | **International telecommunication union**  **Telecommunication Standardization Bureau** | |  |
|  | | | Geneva, 29 October 2021 | |
| Ref: | TSB Circular 356  TSB Events/SC | | **To:**  - Administrations of Member States of the Union;  - ITU-T Sector Members;  - ITU-T Associates;  - ITU Academia | |
| Contact: | **Simao Campos** | |
| Tel: | +41 22 730 6805 | |
| Fax: | +41 22 730 5853 | |
| E-mail: | tsbevents@itu.int | | **Copy to:**  - The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of ITU-T Study Groups;  - The Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau;  - The Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau;  - The Director of the ITU regional office for the Americas | |
| **Subject**: | **ITU/WHO Workshop on "Safe listening in e-sports and video gaming: identifying use-cases and requirements” (Fully virtual, 2 December 2021)** | | | |

Dear Sir/Madam,

1 The International Telecommunication (ITU) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) are organizing a workshop on **"Safe listening in e-sports and video gaming: identifying use-cases and requirements"** taking place virtually on **2 December 2021** from 1400 to 1630 hours Geneva time.

2 Video gaming and electronic sports (*e-sports*), defined as highly organized competitive gaming, are rapidly becoming one of the largest entertainment industries worldwide with a global net worth of over 1 billion US dollars in 2021.E-sports attract millions of young players and viewers across the world, with an estimated global audience of over 380 million in 2017.

3 From a public health perspective, several studies have associated video gaming and e-sports to consequential risky health behaviours such as sedentary lifestyle, resulting in some extreme cases in an addiction that significantly impairs personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning. On the other hand, studies also reveal possible health benefits of gaming in a moderate manner, such as enhanced cognitive abilities. However, it is also known that e-sports and gaming expose adolescents and young adults to loud sounds over prolonged durations and this excessive exposure to loud sounds can lead to hearing loss that is permanent and irreversible. While e-sports and video gaming are seen predominantly as recreational activities, more recently e-sports have been recognized as a professional competitive sports activity in many parts of the world. In the 2022 Asia games in Hangzhou, e-sports will be an official competitive item. Despite their popularity and risks of hearing loss, there are currently no globally recognized standards to provide guidance on safe listening in e-sports and gaming.

4 In 2014, the WHO estimated that over 1.1 billion young people are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe exposure in recreational settings. As a result, WHO launched the *Make Listening Safe* (MLS) initiative with the aim to promote safe listening and reduce the risks of hearing loss. Among the outputs of the MLS initiative was Recommendation ITU-T H.870 *Standard for Safe Listening devices and systems*, which was developed in 2018 as an ITU and WHO collaboration in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The aim of the standard is to minimize the risk of hearing loss and to promote lasting enjoyment to users of these products while listening to music or other audio content. However, apart from smartphones, other e‑sport and gaming devices were not part of this standard. It is on this aspect of recreational sound exposure that we seek wider consultations with key stakeholders in the e-sport and gaming industry including academicians and private sector entities that are engaged in this field, to identify use cases and requirements for the application of safe listening principles in the context of e-sports and video gaming.

5 This workshop has the following objectives:

* To identify e-sports use cases where safe listening would be beneficial.
* To start a dialogue towards a common understanding on possible requirements that would enable safe listening in e-sports and video gaming.
* To understand the perspectives of stakeholders in the field.
* To determine the way forward for creating a technical standard on the application of safe listening principles in e-sports.

6 Participation in the workshop is free of charge and open to WHO and ITU members, private sector entities engaged in development of hardware and software for esports, professional associations of game developers, associations of gamers, experts in sound and acoustics of e-sports, hearing care professionals, member State representatives, civil society representatives, members of the World Hearing Forum working group on safe listening, as well as any individual from a country that is a member of ITU/WHO and who wishes to contribute to the work.

7 All pertinent information relating to this virtual workshop, including the draft programme, speakers, remote connection link and registration details, will be updated regularly on the event website at <https://itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/2021/1202> as new or modified information becomes available. Participants are requested to check periodically for new updates.

Yours faithfully,

Chaesub Lee

Director of the Telecommunication

Standardization Bureau