

# ITU GSR ONLINE 2021

## Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) 2021 **Outcome Report**

### ITU Policy and Economics Colloquium for Americas (IPEC-21)

REGIONAL REGULATORY ROUNDTABLE  
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DIALOGUE  
FOR **AMERICAS**

May 10-11 | 17:00 – 20:00 (CEST)

[www.itu.int/gsr21-ams](http://www.itu.int/gsr21-ams)

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Final report

## Table of contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. PARTICIPATION AND DOCUMENTATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. OPENING .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. CONFERENCE SESSIONS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Presentation: Toward the development of the GSR Best Practices Guidelines (BPG): Regulatory uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use .....	6
GSR Roundtable 1: Setting the Scene: Toward Collaborative 5th Generation Regulation .....	7
GSR Roundtable 2: Regulatory and Economic policies and strategies for ICT development in the Americas Region - COVID-19 implications.....	8
RED Session 1: Incentives to foster affordable ICT services by promoting investment for meaningful connectivity .....	12
RED Session 2: Economic and financial aspects in the digital ecosystem - Effective partnerships for advancing connectivity and achieving the SDGs.....	14
<b>5. CLOSING - Summary of discussion and way forward .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been produced by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). ITU would like to express their appreciation to high-level interventions of Mr Stephen Bereaux, Deputy Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union; Mr Josué Edmundo Lemus Cifuentes, Ministro de Comunicaciones, Infraestructura y Vivienda, Guatemala; Mr Rodolfo José Letona Montoya, Viceministro de Comunicaciones, Guatemala; Mr Marco Antonio Baten, Superintendente de Telecomunicaciones de Guatemala (SIT); and Ms Mercy Wanjau, GSR Chair and Acting Director-General Communications Authority of Kenya (CA Kenya).

In addition, ITU would like to express their gratitude to panel moderators: Ms Youlia Lozanova, Senior Programme Officer, ICT Policy & Regulation, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU; and Mr Rodrigo Robles, ITU Programme Officer Regional Office for The Americas, ITU; Ms Ingrid Roxanda García Santiago, Coordinadora de Asuntos Internacionales, Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones Guatemala; and Ms Carmen Prado-Wagner, Senior Officer, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, ITU/BDT.

Finally, ITU thanks all members of the Programme Committee who made this event possible: to Mr Bruno Ramos, Regional Director for Americas, Ms Sofie Maddens, Head of Regulatory and Market Environment Division, BDT, Ms Carmen Prado-Wagner, Senior Officer, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, ITU/BDT and Mr Rodrigo Robles, ITU Programme Officer Regional Office for The Americas, for coordinating the delivery of this event with the support of Ms Célia Pellet, Consultant, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, BDT, ITU; Ms Caroline Brandao, Administrative Assistant ITU Regional Office for The Americas and Ana Varela, Assistant ITU Area Office Tegucigalpa.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ITU Policy and Economics Colloquium (IPEC-21) for Latin America and the Caribbean, was held online from 10 to 11 May 2021. This year, the IPEC-21 was divided into two parts:

- The GSR Regional Regulatory Roundtable (Monday 10); and
- The Regional Economic Dialogue (RED-21) (Tuesday 11)

This Regional event was held within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative 4 for the Americas on “Accessibility and affordability for an inclusive and sustainable Americas region” adopted by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17).

It was jointly organized by the ITU Regional Office for the Americas and the Regulatory and Market Environment (RME) Division of the Telecommunication Development Bureau. The GSR Regional Regulatory Roundtable was organized within the context of the Global Symposium for Regulators 2021 on “Regulation4digitaltransformation: Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use”.

The event provided a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to actively share knowledge and experiences on regulatory and economic themes to foster effective partnerships for

advancing connectivity and achieving the SDGs, and of create an enabling environment for the realization of meaningful and inclusive connectivity.

Key topics covered by the IPEC-21 included:

- GSR Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) consultation: Regulatory uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use;
- Setting the Scene: Toward Collaborative 5th Generation Regulation;
- Regulatory and Economic policies and strategies for ICT development in the Americas Region - COVID-19 implications;
- Incentives to foster affordable ICT services by promoting investment for meaningful connectivity;
- Economic and financial aspects in the digital ecosystem - Effective partnerships for advancing connectivity and achieving the SDGs.

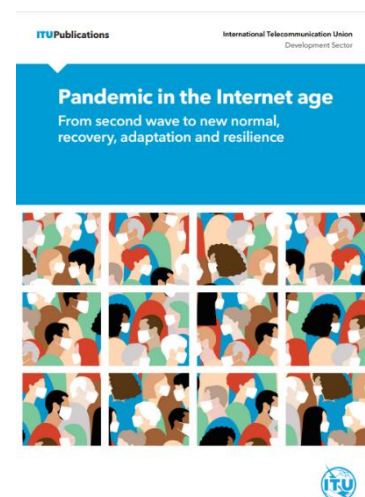
## 2. PARTICIPATION AND DOCUMENTATION

IPEC-21 was attended by over 260 participants from 24 Member States from the Americas region and 36 Member States from other regions, including representatives of ICT Administrations and National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) from ITU Member States, as well as representatives of ministries, regional regulatory bodies, private sector, regulatory associations and academia. The event was also livestreamed on Twitter and YouTube, and was posted on the SIT Guatemala institutional page.

IPEC-21 was held entirely in a virtual format. All the presentations delivered during the event are available in electronic form on the event webpage [here](#). The event was supported with English captioning and English to Spanish interpretation. Video recordings of the workshop, as well as this outcome report, are also made available on the website.

## 3. OPENING

**Mr Stephen Bereaux, Deputy Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union** remarked "As a former regulator myself, I believe that region and international cooperation should continue to be promoted in defining regulatory standards on cross border issues in order to ensure the coherence, predictability and fluidity of digital markets and infrastructure on a regional and a global scale, from fiber backbones to submarine cables through networks and satellite connectivity." He highlighted that events such as the IPEC-21 and the Global Symposium of Regulators (GSR) have great relevance, since it concentrates, experts from different parts of the world in one place to discuss relevant themes of interest for the Americas region to uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use sectors of the digital ecosystem, which are the theme of this year's GSR Best Practice Guidelines.



In the framework of ITU REG4COVID initiative, the new ITU publication [\*Pandemic in the Internet age, from second wave to new normal, recovery adaptation and resilience\*](#) was launched at IPEC-21. In addition, the new ITU report of the [\*7<sup>th</sup> ITU Economic Experts Roundtable on "The telecommunication industry in the post-COVID-19 world"\*](#)<sup>1</sup>, was also launched and presented during the event. It was written following the Economic Experts Roundtable held in February 2021 during which experts discussed new business and operating models required to connect everyone after the pandemic.

**Mr Josué Edmundo Lemus Cifuentes, Ministro de Comunicaciones, Infraestructura y Vivienda, Guatemala**, expressed his deep appreciation to ITU for inviting Guatemala to be the host country of these prestigious events. He stressed that today more than ever, confirms the importance of telecommunication/ICT which have enabled us to survive this new COVID-19 reality. In addition, ICTs have shown that there are no distances, limits or borders between us and that thanks to connectivity we are able to travel the world again virtually. He expressed his hope that this dialogue will help participants/panelists to learn, thanks to the experts speaking on the new different trends in ICTs, and focus on how we can work on improving the development for countries across the Americas.

**Mr Rodolfo José Letona Montoya, Viceministro de Comunicaciones, Guatemala**, initiated his intervention by stating how ICTs contributes to the social and economic development of countries. He informed participants about the projects that the Government of Guatemala have underway in the national territories, such as the Guate Waps program which has provided free Internet to 67 different localities in the rural areas. He also noted that the Guatemalan government is working with a company in order to ensure that the South Pacific submarine cable which crosses the Pacific Ocean to South America is connecting Guatemala, and engaging in efforts to work on other new technologies, under the auspices of the President of the Republic, to ensure that the funds allocated for ICTs are directed to online applications for schools, health centers, and learning centers. He concluded saying that "with all of these projects we're encouraging connectivity between people's countries and cultures, helping us to overcome the great challenges that the COVID 19 pandemic has caused. This is something that has put the entire world to test, in each crisis there are challenges but also opportunities for all".

**Mr Marco Antonio Baten, Superintendente de Telecomunicaciones de Guatemala (SIT)** expressed that the Superintendency of Telecommunications (SIT) is committed to ensuring compliance with the law, promoting the freedom of telecommunication market and optimizing its resources. Their vision is to work for a telecommunication services market with wide diversity of services and national coverage, offered within a framework of open and healthy competition, to encourage investments and commercial opportunities for better connectivity to reducing the digital gap, and to ensure that all economic sectors of the population are digitally included. He concluded saying that "this event is very important for to bring synergy to ensure that we are able to develop projects that impact well-being across the Americas region with the guidance of the GSR Best Practice Guidelines and by applying ITU Recommendations and Standards".

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<sup>1</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> ITU Economic Experts Roundtable was held the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021, under the theme "The telecommunications industry in the post-COVID 19 world" (results are available at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regulatory-Market/Pages/EconomicRoundTable2021.aspx>)

**Ms Mercy Wanjau, GSR Chair and Acting Director-General Communications Authority of Kenya (CA Kenya)** began her intervention by praising the participation to the GSR Regional Regulatory Roundtable and Regional Economic Dialogue for the Americas. This dialogue seeks to provoke discussion on issues that are pertinent to the region, and the overall objectives of both the GSR and the ITU community at large. She highlighted that the GSR continues to provide regulators worldwide with a platform to share experiences on best practices, which if widely adopted, can help countries to leapfrog their economies and fully benefit from the immense possibilities that ICTs present. She said: “The importance of GSR is now more than ever as we, ICT regulators, face numerous challenges in view of the pandemic response and challenge of connecting and giving access to all. That is why this year’s theme is spot on, Regulation for Digital Transformation: Accelerating Inclusive Connectivity, Access and Use. I hope that the regional events like this ITU Policy and Economics Colloquium and the core sessions of GSR-21 will provide us with an opportunity to share experiences, as well as collaborate and identify evolving regulatory tools that will help to bring affordable safe, secure and trusted connectivity to all.” Ms Wanjau also emphasized that the GSR Best Practice Guidelines remain an incredible tool for regulators to leverage globally accepted approaches. “I encourage National Regulatory Authorities and regional Regulatory Associations in the Americas region as well as the larger regulatory community to gain an interest and promptly respond to the ongoing consultation which will form part of the outcome of the 2021 regulatory best practice Guidelines,” she said.

## 4. CONFERENCE SESSIONS

### **Presentation: Toward the development of the GSR Best Practices Guidelines (BPG): Regulatory uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use**

**Speakers: Mr Rodrigo Robles**, Programme Officer, ITU Regional Offices for the Americas and **Ms Carmen Prado-Wagner**, Senior Officer, ICT Policy & Regulation, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

The GSR Best Practice Guidelines for 2021 build on the collective wisdom of the previous editions spanning over two decades to draw patterns for regulatory uplift for ubiquitous, open and resilient digital infrastructure in the turmoil of global social and economic disruption. The consultation has been opened and seeks to identify ideas, views and experiences on the main theme of GSR-21 “Regulatory uplift for financing digital infrastructure, access and use” focusing in particular on three major themes:

- Inducing new, effective and agile financing mechanisms to digital infrastructure, access and use;
- Prototyping regulatory patterns for the post-Covid digital world;
- Transformational leadership to unleash the power of emerging technologies and business models.

More information about this initiative is available on the [GSR consultation webpage](#).

## GSR Roundtable 1: Setting the Scene: Toward Collaborative 5th Generation Regulation

**Focus:** Presentation of the collaborative regulation case studies and discussion on national approaches leading towards fifth-generation (G5) regulation

**Moderator: Ms Youlia Lozanova**, Senior Programme Officer, ICT Policy & Regulation, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

**Setting the Context: Presentation: Ms Sofie Maddens**, Head of Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

**Panellists: Mr Ramiro Camacho**, Comisionado, Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones (IFT), Mexico; **Mr Carlos Lugo**, Comisionado, Comisión de Regulación de Comunicaciones (CRC) Colombia; **Mr Fabio Casotti**, Head of Wholesale Relations Division, e-Competition Superintendence, ANATEL, Brazil; **Mr Carlos A. Bello Hernández**, ITU Expert.

**Ms Lozanova** kicked off the panel by providing context around the concept of collaborative regulation, which, she highlighted, marks a change in the way that governments develop regulatory frameworks and, importantly, how they implement them. ITU, she said, has led this work while at the same time building a global community around it - by the regulatory community and for the regulatory community across regions.

In her presentation, **Ms Maddens** gave an overview of the key elements of collaborative regulatory approaches, focusing on the role of the different stakeholders. She highlighted that the combination of collaboration and informed decisions together with the social and economic impact considerations, are all conducive to fast forward digital transformation for all. Within that context, the role of regulators is to create a predictable regulatory framework and transparent consultation processes. Looking at the evolution of regulation, there has been tremendous regulatory reform and change in the past 20 years, and yet, around the world, four out of ten countries are still in the less mature generations of regulation. G5 is the next frontier, with collaboration being the defining element of digital regulation and digital transformation.

Addressing national approaches to collaborative regulation, the panel featured speakers from Colombia, Mexico and Brazil.

**Mr Carlos Lugo** informed that in Colombia, the CRC has actively worked towards achieving fifth generation collaborative regulation. Beginning in 2019, with a change in the law, Colombia looked to improve the institutional framework, focusing on independence and autonomous decision-making of CRC. This too, was the case for Mexico, **Mr Ramiro Camacho** explained that where a change in the constitution and law strengthened the mandate of IFT to enable it to address on issues relating to the digital economy.

Both CRC and IFT highlighted how collaborative and consultative mechanisms have been put in place to seek the participation in rulemaking of all stakeholders, including other sector and cross-sector regulators. CRC has also put in place an open data system which allows all those who are involved, from citizens to other institutions and other civil society associations, to access and analyze data which supports regulatory decisions.

Panellists also stressed the importance of regulatory impact analysis, which they provided, should be based on data and evidence with the participation of the different stakeholders. Regulators should also be open to innovation, and consider experimental regulation and innovative regulatory approaches such as regulatory sandboxes while listening to the proposals and inputs of all stakeholders, including civil society and citizens. IFT, for example, seeks to enhance transparency of decision-making by collaborating with a wide variety of institutions by engaging through the creation of Committees and regularly seeking the opinions of industry on technical, economic and regulatory issues.

Looking at the concrete example of Digital Financial Inclusion in Mexico, **Mr Carlos A. Bello Hernández** explained the positive outcomes of collaboration have led to the mapping of ICT infrastructure and financial infrastructure.

Data and evidence-based analysis, they agreed, enable regulators to provide better regulatory frameworks, which in turn can foster competitive markets and economic growth. Citing a recent decision in Colombia regarding tariffs on infrastructure sharing with other sectors, and in particular the electricity sector, collaboration and regulatory impact analysis led to a significant outcome, with a reduction of 74% of the costs of infrastructure deployment and the cost of competition tariffs. Importantly, the outcome has benefitted all stakeholders.

Panellists also agreed that regulators need to strengthen regulatory capacities to follow market trends and developments, and focus on the achievement of social and economic objectives. It is also necessary, **Mr Casotti** highlighted, to create a culture of innovation, to experiment, and encourage the sharing of experiences for better regulation. Panellists agreed that collaboration and sharing of information and experiences allows regulators to have access to symmetrical information. Innovation and collaboration go hand in hand in the journey towards better regulation and more collaborative regulation.

## **GSR Roundtable 2: Regulatory and Economic policies and strategies for ICT development in the Americas Region - COVID-19 implications**

**Focus:** Policies, regulations, and economic approaches for ICT development in the Americas Region for affordable access for meaningful connectivity - COVID-19 economic implications and recovery solutions

**Moderator:** **Mr Rodrigo Robles**, Programme Officer, ITU Regional Office Americas

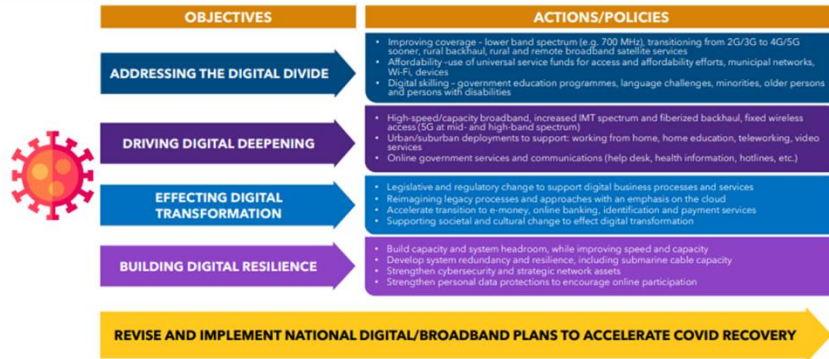
**Panellists:** **Mr Scott Minehane**, ITU Expert, Windsor Place Consulting (WPC); **Mr Raul Katz**, Director of Business Strategy Research (Columbia Institute for Tele-Information); **Mr Riaz Boodram**, Trinidad & Tobago Generation Connect - Americas Youth Group; **Mr Marco Vilchez**, Subgerente de Regulación de la Dirección de Política Regulatoria y Competencia, OSIPTEL, Perú; **Mr Selby Wilson**, Telecommunications Strategist and Regulatory Expert, Caribbean Telecommunication Union (CTU); **Ms Jane Coffin**, ISOC; and **Mr Lester Benito García**, Facebook.

**Mr Scott Minehane** presented the main results from the new [ITU Publication: Pandemic in the Internet Age: From second wave to new normal, recovery, adaptation, and resilience.](#)



The health and economic implications of COVID-19 are not just a short-term issue unfortunately. COVID-19 has been a uniquely powerful game-changer, with digital connectivity/addressing the digital divide now at the top of every nation’s agenda. This new ITU publication, launched at IPEC-21, in the framework of the [ITU REG4COVID platform](#), focuses on actions and regulatory measures aimed at addressing the digital divide; driving digital deepening; effecting digital transformation; and building digital resilience.

**Digital responses to COVID-19**



Source: ITU-WPC, March 2021

Such measures need to be taken globally, regionally and by national governments supported by national regulatory authorities and private sector stakeholders, to help transition to a post-pandemic “normal” and to ensure better preparedness and contribute to long term global connectivity.

In addressing the digital divide, the huge shift to online activity means that social groups without affordable connectivity are now more disadvantaged than before the pandemic. The ability to participate socially and economically, to obtain education, medical and other government services, to communicate and to access e-commerce services, is completely dependent on affordable connectivity. Addressing the digital divide has important consequences in terms of economic efficiency and development, but it is primarily driven by considerations of equity, that is, providing equal access to opportunities to participate in the digital economy and society.

**Mr Raul Katz** introduced the main results from the new [ITU Report on The telecommunications industry in the post-COVID 19 world](#), which is the summary results from the 7<sup>th</sup> ITU Economic Expert Roundtable held in February 2021. It is important to highlight that this Roundtable was convened in order to understand the COVID-19 pandemic situation better, and take stock of new business models and potential financing strategies to deliver universal connectivity in the post-COVID-19 world. The report is structured around three main themes: a) the extent of the digital divide, b) business and operating models, c) innovative financing models and d) risks to development of low-cost operating models to bridge the digital divide.

Innovative models to bridge the digital divide existed prior to the pandemic. The pandemic has merely reinforced the need to accelerate, scale up or expand these innovative models to more geographical contexts.

Digital divide business models require extensive cross-sector partnerships between diverse organizations and sectors which might have varied vested interests, raising the potential for coordination failures. In that context, several opportunities exist that the ICT sector can implement following verification of their compatibility with the Radiocommunication Regulatory Framework. On the regulatory side, this includes: enabling the deployment of alternative access and infrastructure providers to reduce deployment costs; reducing excise taxation on devices and digital services; promoting wholesale access regulation; and incentivizing infrastructure sharing, among others. In addition, regulatory authorities should create the necessary conditions to stimulate infrastructure sharing and promote the development of rural e-services, such as rural financing, e-commerce and media platforms, as catalysts for network deployment and usage.



**Mr Riaz Boodram** presented the challenging points in development in the Americas region. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted deep inequalities, digital divide and imperative process for a sustainable development party. It has, without a doubt, imposed significant challenges on the lives of individuals worldwide. Mr Boodram, as representative of the Generation X Americas Youth Group, explained that what really piqued his interest in these trying time is the extent of the digital divide which currently still exists throughout the world. “It is relatively safe to say we live in a Digital Age where technologies have revolutionized the way that individuals work, and conduct business and the list goes on. This digital revolution can be seen as the newest economic revolution which marks a complete shift in our society and signals a new era or many aspects of our lives”. He informed that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago adopted the need for digital transformation to be prioritized. As a result, the use of ICTs has enabled to overcome some of the challenges that COVID-19 presented, such as: during the lockdown, quality online education at all levels is now available; end-to-end digital services from both the private and public sector are available; remote work capabilities and policies design effect, among others. As a member of the Generation X Americas Youth Group, Mr Boodram explained that he has had the privilege to work with diverse individuals from across the Americas region. The lack of sustainable capacity development, digital literacy and digital inclusion programs had been identified as the major challenges in the Americas region. As a result, in order to connect the unconnected and leave no one behind it is clear that the region, with continued guidance from the ITU, needs to further promote digital inclusion by considering actions that are mainly in benefit of groups most affected by the digital divide.

**Mr Marco Vilchez** presented ICT perspectives and regulation against COVID-19 in Peru. He explained that at the beginning of the State of National Emergency (March 16, 2020), OSIPTEL implemented several measures, such as to avoid the suspension of services for non-payment, suspend face-to-face service in commercial offices, facilities the use of remote management of services (portability, migration and hiring of new services), guaranteeing the functionality of Tethering in mobile services, as well as communication campaigns for the responsible use of public telecommunications services and health information. He explained that OSIPTEL has implemented activities to follow up and monitoring the ICT market in relation to service offers and user empowerment for remote management of digital services.

**Mr Selby Wilson** explained about the Caribbean Telecommunication Union (CTU) impact and response due to the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has accelerated the urgency for Digital Transformation; both individuals and businesses became very creative to deal with the pandemic. The disparity gaps in the application of technology were glaringly identified and the need for better connectivity - bandwidth, speed and connecting underserved communities - was clearly detected. Some of the policy shift focused on the introduction of reduced staff in the office and remote working, an increase in virtual meetings and conferences, CARICOM Heads met regularly online, all educational institutions adopted Virtual Learning Classroom, and regulators made more spectrum available to meet the increased demands. She noted that connectivity concerns devices, laptops, tablets, and power in communities to allow the connection. And although the education system moved online, there were still many students who did not have reliable access to those facilities because of connectivity problems, especially in rural and remote areas. Mr Wilson concluded by saying, "I want to make two comments. One is someone asked a while ago, what are the options for Developing Countries to do digital transformation. Empirical knowledge shows that mobile broadband increases the development in Developing Countries more than it does in Developed Countries. And fixed networks work differently in Developed Countries rather than in Developing Countries".

**Ms Jane Coffin** gave an explanation of the Internet Society, which is a sector member of the Development Sector of ITU. She said "as it was already stated, COVID-19 showed us the gaps in connectivity around the planet. Whether you are civil society, technical community, a person in a local village that might be technically inclined, who hasn't even understood how connectivity works. We heard from other panelists about the importance of change and how regulators became more agile and collaborative. Collaboration is key for everyone to succeed. It is a way for ISOC to look at new business models and collaborate. We have seen new change for funds coming forward around looking at small and medium sized businesses as well. We are looking at those collaborative efforts for our partners and the hybrid models that policymakers will need". She explained that the idea of fifth generation of regulation is interesting. ISOC has been working with 26 community networks last year and is doing as much as possible to develop case studies so that others can see how best to create change and to move forward to connect people who are not connected.

**Mr Lester Benito García** presented on the initiatives that Facebook has undertaken during the COVID-19 crisis. Facebook is working in Facebook's area of actions to directly support companies through platforms. They have free information channels available through WhatsApp messaging and free information for authorities on health issues. They also worked with ICT regulatory authorities, companies and operators to reduce the bit rates of videos in order to not overload the traffic when the broadband was needed for more pressing priority issues. Mr García stressed the importance of collaboration, which is essential, and he said, "the spirit of collaboration which at the moment has been really shown by the sector operators, Internet associations and governments is to highlight the next steps which we would like to take now to craft a post-COVID Latin America".

In addition, Facebook continues to generate and attract relevant content and usage of Internet. And, of course, the question of digital accessibility is very important to give access to Internet to all. For instance, Facebook is addressing some important projects for people who are visually impaired. Together with all these activities, and supply and

demand, will allow Facebook to work collaboratively in order to bridge the digital divide and capitalize on the digital literacy across the region.

## **RED Session 1: Incentives to foster affordable ICT services by promoting investment for meaningful connectivity**

**Moderator:** **Ms Ingrid Roxanda García**, Coordinadora Asuntos Internacionales, Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones Guatemala

**Panelists:** **Mr Victor Mayorga**, ITU Expert; **Mr Juan Carlos Castro**, SIGET, El Salvador; **Mr Christian Lizcano**, ITU Expert; **Ms Maryleana Méndez**, Presidente ASIET; **Mr Ryan Johnson**, Senior Director for Global Government Affairs, Viasat; **Mr Yacine Khelladi**, Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI).

Delegates were informed that the [ITU Digital Regulation Handbook](#) is now available in Spanish for the Americas Region.

**Mr Victor Mayorga** presented the importance of costing methodologies for determining affordable ICT bundled services. He explained the reasons why the provision of packages of acceptable quality at affordable prices does not take place in the case of small remote cities or poor or marginal areas. He raised the importance of the collaboration among government and private sector to provide affordable access and good quality Internet in these remote areas. A study on how the application of costing methodologies could help to determine affordable service packages is being prepared by ITU in order to identify, through the diversity of multiservice packages offers, the basic needs of a standard user or household by identifying and quantifying those essential needs in order to be able to use the different ICT services purchased with a good quality of service. This study will also analyze the situation in other countries/regions on how they are managing the packages offers and delivering affordable adapted services to customers, especially considering the needs of persons with limited resources as well as, in rural and isolated areas.

**Mr Juan Carlos Castro** introduced the situation in El Salvador on the evolution of data and voice packages in mobile services. In El Salvador, based on the law, an analysis of ICT service packages was elaborated and published, monitoring the different mobile phone operators. 648 packages were identified, of which 12.04% (78) are prepaid, 87.35% (566) postpaid and 0.62% (4) do not indicated the type of modality.

The analysis carried out only considered postpaid subscriptions because in these types of subscriptions there is information on the characteristics of the voice and data services, as well as the social networks/applications included. Looking at this data, it is now possible for SIGET to see the changes in users' behavior in relation with the price of the packages and the services/applications included.

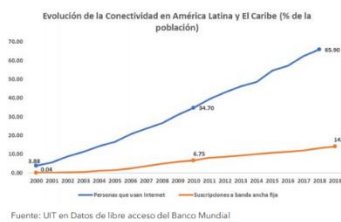
**Mr Cristhian Lizcano**, presented on connectivity obligations for spectrum assignment. His presentation focused on spectrum assignment as a public policy tool. He explained the case of Colombia, where projects to expand the quality, capacity and coverage of the service had been implemented with the objective to benefit the poor and vulnerable population or those in remote areas, as well as in public schools located in rural areas and other governmental institutions such as health centers and public libraries, as well as to provide emergencies networks. Mr Lizcano said that "it is really an important message to

convey to regulators of the region; I was the President of the Colombian ICT Regulator for four years, I really know what I'm talking here for the regulator's perspective in terms of taking decisions that are holistic but it is also important to generate more dynamism in the market. In Colombia, the funds from ICTs, over 17 years, wasn't allowed on an ICT project. What does this mean? We have to look to strike a balance between a law, which includes legal trust, but also look for resources to incentivize investment”.

**Ms Maryleana Mendez** presented the opportunities and challenges for strengthening connectivity in the Americas region: towards a viable agenda within the framework of economic recovery.

She stressed that connectivity has positively advanced in Latin America and contributes to social and economic development of the region. From the point of view of operators associations, the digitization is the base for the economic

### La conectividad ha avanzado en América Latina y contribuye al desarrollo económico y social de la región



La inversión en el despliegue y desarrollo de las redes es la base para la digitalización y los operadores móviles contribuyen de forma crucial en dicha labor: 80% de las inversiones en la materia han sido realizadas por ellos.

La Economía Móvil en América Latina 2020 (GSMA, datos de 2019):

- Aportación cercana a **USD 33.000 millones** al financiamiento del sector público a través de impuestos a clientes y operadores
- Empleo directo a **620.000 personas** y respaldo a **810.000 puestos de trabajo de manera indirecta** en otros sectores
- Tecnologías y servicios móviles generaron el **7% del PIB de América Latina**, contribución que ascendió a USD 421.000 millones de valor económico agregado

Contribución Económica Directa de los participantes en el ecosistema móvil (USD mil millones, % PIB 2019)



Fuente: GSMA. La Economía Móvil en América Latina 2020.

recovery. For this, it is suggested to apply regulatory simplification in order to avoid complexity, high costs and atomization. The approval of procedures at the municipal level is very important to foster infrastructure deployment. If possible, regulators can make more spectrum available and innovate and simplify the allocation processes. It is also necessary to rethink spectrum charging mechanisms and allocation. Finally, she recommended to fight piracy for the protection of national and regional economies, as well as for users.

**Mr Ryan Johnson** presented on affordable connectivity in the Americas using satellite technologies. The satellite industry is creating a new market for people, especially for those remote or isolated communities. Mr Johnson presented the *Wi-Fi Comunitaria Alimentado por Satélite de Banda-Ka* Project. This is a Ka-Band satellite Wi-Fi access point that can serve an entire community and can be deployed in some hours instead of several years. At present, more than 3,000 communities in rural areas representing about two million people were connected in México, Guatemala, Brazil and Nigeria with this technology. ICTs have been fundamental during this pandemic and satellites, just like all broadband technology, have been fundamental in getting people connected with a huge number of innovative projects were successfully implemented during the crisis.

**Mr Yacine Khelladi** explained the work that the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is doing on the adoption and measurement of meaningful connectivity. He presented the results from the Study on Meaningful Connectivity and a new target to raise the bar for Internet access. He said that, “unfortunately, not everyone connects to the Internet in the same way. If policymakers only rely on this broad, binary metric, their efforts to improve access for all will not succeed. Indeed, ignoring the huge differences in how people connect will only exacerbate inequalities online and offline”. Mr Khelladi briefly introduced the four indicators for affordable Internet: 1) mobile internet connection, 2) device ownership, 3) unlimited broadband connections, and 4) frequency of use – to measure and

track progress towards meaningful connectivity and how to calculate the national assessment score.

## RED Session 2: Economic and financial aspects in the digital ecosystem - Effective partnerships for advancing connectivity and achieving the SDGs

### Session organized in coordination with the ITU-D Study Group 1 Question 4/1

**Moderator: Ms Carmen Prado-Wagner**, Senior Officer, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, ITU/BDT

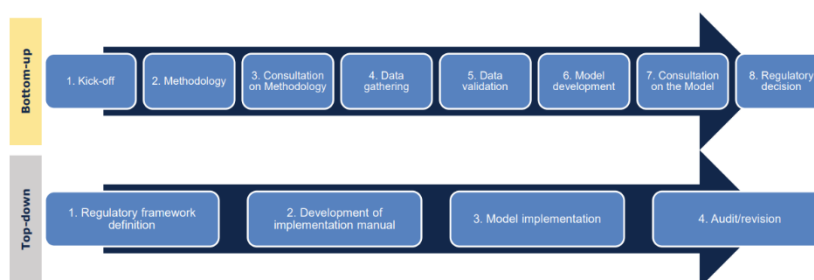
**Panelists: Mr Arseny Plossky**, Russian Federation, Rapporteur Question 4/1; **Mr Jorge Martinez**, Axon Partners Group; and **Mr Emanuele Giovannetti**, Professor of Economics, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK.

**Mr Arseny Plosski** presented the final report and works of the ITU-D Study Group 1 Question 4/1 on economic policies and methods of determining the costs of services related to national telecommunication/ICT networks. He explained that during the study period 2014-2017 the Rapporteur Group for Question 4/1 focused on various topics such as 1) new charging methods for services provided over Next Generation Networks (NGN), 2) infrastructure-sharing models including through commercially negotiated terms, 3) consumer price evolution and impact on ICT service usage, innovation, investment and operators revenues, 4) methods of determining the cost of licenses for the operation of networks and/or the provision of telecommunication services and regulatory accounting in an NGN environment, 5) trends in the development of mobile virtual network operators (MVNO) and their regulatory framework.

Several country cases were also treated, specially focusing on wholesale offer related to the modern broadband networks; on the methodology and criterion for significant market power (SMO) determination; the experience on the use of different cost models for determination of wholesale tariffs as well as on regulation of interconnection; and finally on infrastructure sharing initiatives and regulation. This report will be available very soon in the framework of the ITU-D Study Groups activities.

**Mr Jorge Martinez** provided an overview of the outcomes of the ITU-D Q4/1 work in the period 2018-2021, with regards to costing and cost modelling. He stressed on how these outcomes are expected to be useful for Member States not only for the definition of tariffs of digital services, but also to measure and take informed decisions to bridge the digital gap. When explaining about cost modelling, he said "it is not just about

The guidelines provide also advice regarding how to structure a cost modelling project



implementing models; there is also a number of different processes that are part of that, such as the policy and tariff regulation, network operators also have a lot to say on this. For

this reason it is necessary to look at how to involve them, how to provide better engagement with operators and this makes things much more interesting and fruitful for all stakeholders". Finally, he showed how partnerships are becoming a relevant tool to bridge the gap and to bring ICT services to the unconnected.

**Mr Emanuele Giovannetti** gave an explanation on the role of economic regulation in facilitating SGDs - infrastructure sharing, examples of cooperative agreements, modalities of IXP governance. Mr Giovannetti explained on the different types and models of infrastructure sharing and their implication and economic impact on prices including sharing of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs). The policy trade-off for access to essential facilities and infrastructure sharing are: 1) Essential facilities are elements provided by an operator that, cannot be replicated by other competitors, who need these facilities as an input to their retail services. b) Operators that control essential facilities enjoy more bargaining power than other operators and new entrants seeking to access these essential facilities. c) Asymmetric regulations redress the consequences of market power and needs to distinguish between infrastructure-sharing agreements and mandatory access. d) However, open access can slow down the deployment of alternative access networks, leading to inadequate capacity, lower service quality and slow deployment of new technologies in the future. In this sense, NRAs need to find the right balance based on specific national circumstances, by encouraging infrastructure sharing and access to facilities while promoting investment that enables infrastructure-based competition and deployment of new networks and services.

## 5. CLOSING - Summary of discussion and way forward

**Mr Bruno Ramos**, Director ITU Regional Office for the Americas initiated his intervention by stating that the ITU Policy and Economic Colloquium (IPEC-21) is one of the key events in the Americas region, which is principally focused on the economic and regulatory aspects of ICTs.

By way of a brief overview, on the first day was the GSR Regional Regulatory Roundtable for the Americas region, followed by two interesting sessions - the first on 5G Regulation, which provided experiences coming from different countries in the region, on different partners and collaborative work, and the second session on ICT regulatory and economic policies and the implications of COVID-19 ,which highlighted the critical role of telecommunication/ICT to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the second day was the Regional Economic Dialogue for the Americas region (RED AMS), which is an event that has been organized for more than 20 years and has been absolutely important in the context of the region. "We have learn so much from this pandemic, I do feel that the most critical lesson learned is to appreciate and really value what we all have. We may have the most advanced technology in the world, however, if this technology is not people centred, we do not have anything" Mr Ramos said.

**Mr Rodolfo José Letona Montoya**, Viceministro de Comunicaciones, Guatemala, thanked the ITU for their support to Guatemala in being the host of the IPEC-21. Additionally, he congratulated ITU for the work undertaken in the telecommunication/ICT at the global level and also highlighted the importance of the public regulation and economic policies, now and in the future.

**Mr Marco Antonio Baten**, Superintendente de Telecomunicaciones de Guatemala (SIT) expressed that today, telecommunications are not only limited to the technological aspect, but also encompassing to tools that facilitate the lives of people on a daily basis. These advances have really changed the world in areas such as education, health, safety amongst others. In such a critical, singular time, technology allows us to continue with our work and economic activities, while maintaining social distancing and communicating with loved ones and overcoming borders. Despite all this, using technology Internet, it is the very forefront of IPEC-21 in which we were able to share success stories, shared by others, other countries, during this pandemic and to look at the economic proposals in order to kick start the economy from the point of view of telecommunications to understand different communication options, in emergency communications, promoting technological recovery and to promote the ICT communications for countries.