

## Term of Reference

# Incentivising Tech Companies for Actions in Narrowing Digital Divide: Learnings and Opportunities Forward

Official Side Event of the World Summit on the Information Society forum (WSIS Forum) 2023  
Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 12.00 - 13:00 CET (online)

### Context

With the global pandemic hitting the world since 2019, we witness a fast change in social lifestyle and methods of doing business in our everyday lives. Beyond gender and ages, people have become more dependent on digital technology in performing their official duties and personal matters. For example, meetings have shifted from physical to digital, running errands have become easier with 'a single click' within Online-to-Offline (O2O) platforms, the boundaries between school classes and homework have narrowed down with learning activities could be done anywhere. With such increasing dependencies to digital tools in the past years, the global economic transformation brought by the tech sector is forecasted to enable \$5.5 trillion to \$12.6 trillion in value globally US\$ 12 trillion by 2030 globally.

While it is acknowledged that digitalisation has brought positive changes to our world, it must be noted as well that technology has made development gaps even more visible among different geographies all around the world. Challenges to key social aspect have also become apparent since the rapid penetration of the internet, such as on the applicability human rights in the online space, emerging new skills, online child protection, responsible artificial intelligence (AI), personal data protection, etc.

Acknowledging the growing domination of digital technology to our world, regulatory landscape must be responsive in catching up with opportunities provided by this sector. Across the globe, multilateral platforms have put 'digitalisation' as at core of priorities. In the run up of the world to have its first Global Digital Compact, led by the UN, other multilaterals such as The Indian G20 Presidency 2023 are calling for 'Data for development' to colour its annual thematic while the Japanese G7 Presidency is intending to put a focus on the promotion of trustworthy emerging technologies.

To champion inclusive digital transformation agenda worldwide, governments must also consider that tech companies have important role to play in enabling digital inclusion. Hence, the efforts to narrow digital divide must be done by joining hands with the corporate. It is within the purpose to this policy dialogue to explore the learnings and opportunities forward.

### Objective

The objective of this policy dialogue is to consider key learnings and opportunities of creating an enabling policy environment that incentivises the tech sector to perform actions in narrowing digital divide. This session will explore how strengthened corporate accountability in the tech sector could support the governments' efforts in universalising access to digital ecosystem to everyone. Having such policy in place would enable the tech sector to lead meaningful system change in the digital space and further to contribute

to the accomplishment of the 2030 Global Goals and feed into recommendations to the UN Global Digital Compact.

## **World Summit on the Information Society forum (WSIS Forum) 2023**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum is the world's largest annual gathering of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for development community and is co-organised by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Lines facilitators and other United Nations (UN) organisations. The Forum is a global UN multistakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development.

The WSIS Forum 2023 was held from 13 to 17 March 2023 at the ITU Headquarters premises in Geneva. This online policy dialogue is an official side event of the WSIS Forum 2023 and will contribute to WSIS Action Lines for building back better and accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **The Policy Dialogue**

The 60-minute session will feature panellists from governments, multilateral agencies, tech companies, and non-profits to explore, share planned coordinated actions and collaboration with multi-stakeholders that can effectively drive action towards commitment towards achieving digital inclusion.

#### **Moderator**

- Dio Herdiawan Tobing, Head of Public Policy, Asia at World Benchmarking Alliance

#### **Opening Remarks**

- Pauliina Murphy, Engagement and Communications Director at World Benchmarking Alliance

#### **Speakers**

- Camelia Loh, Founder and CEO of Kabel, Malaysia
- Mei Lin Fung, Chair of People Centred Internet, United States
- Daniel Child, Manager, Industry Affairs & Engagement, eSafety Commissioner Australia
- Indriyatno Banyumurti, Executive Director of ICT Watch, Indonesia

## **World Benchmarking Alliance**

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) is a non-profit organisation that assesses and ranks the world's most influential companies' performance on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We publish publicly available and free benchmarks that inform and empower business leaders and investors, as well as governments, civil society and other key stakeholders. WBA insights aim to serve as an accountability mechanism, incentivising companies to become a successful driver of change and deliver on the SDGs. Together with our Alliance, we are building a movement that enables transparent dialogue, and ultimately action towards a more inclusive, fair and sustainable world.