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>>BEATRICE PLUCHON: So good morning, good afternoon to everyone. I hope and your families are all in good health. So before we start the sixth WTPF I would like to make some announcements about how the meeting will be run and how the platform functions. So this meeting is entirely remote. Participants are kindly asked to keep their camera and microphones switched off to minimize the bandwidth. When the floor is open to participants please raise your hand to request the floor. The raise hand function is located in the bar of comments at the bottom of your screen. The Chair will recognize the speakers and will give you the floor when you turn comes.

So this meeting is interpreted in to the six official languages of the union. We have tested the interpretation channel. For the benefit of interpretation please speak slowly and clearly. It is important to keep in mind that the audio quality that you hear may be satisfactory to you, but may be insufficient for interpretation.   
 You may be asked to repeat your intervention. When taking the floor, you must either speak the language of the channel on which you are listening, or be on the floor channel which is off. It would be also appreciated if participants could make short interventions and clearly indicate when they have concluded their remarks. If you have any problems, the remote participation team is available to support you either by the public chat or by e‑mail.   
 You are requested to use the chat only for technical issues, not substantive ones. This chat is not an official record. Please do not reply to the Chair via this tool. You do not need to indicate agreement via the chat. As usual your silence will mean agreement.   
 Regarding our participant's names they appear on the platform. As different entities are allowed to participate in and attend the Forum the following prefix will be used. For Member States the country name will appear before the name of the Delegate. For sector members, the prefix SM will appear. For observers the prefix UN will appear for UN entities, Acad for academia. Requests for the floor will be given in the following priority. Member States and sector members, and then observers, that is UN academia and some IEG members. Every effort is being made to facilitate the smooth flow of this meeting.

So we thank you very much for your cooperation and I would like to welcome the ITU elected officials to the meeting, Mr. Houlin Zhao, the ITU Secretary‑General; Mr. Johnson, the ITU Deputy Secretary‑General; Mr. Mario Maniewicz director of the Radio‑ communications Bureau; Mr. Chaesub Lee, director of the Telecommunications Standardization Bureau; Madam Doreen Bogdan‑Martin, the director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau. We would like to start with a short video. And then I will pass the floor to the ITU Secretary‑General Mr. Houlin Zhao.   
 (Video).

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Mr. Houlin Zhao, you have the floor.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you very much. Madam Chair, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you all for joining us today.   
 Together with me, my Deputy Secretary‑General and three directors we warmly welcome you to the Sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum.   
 While we all wish we could have met face to face in Geneva I'm glad that the ITU family has come together in this way to discuss over the next three days the new and emerging technologies that show so much promise for all humanity.   
 My special thanks go to all the regional coordinators and all those who have closely worked with the ITU Secretariat over the last three weeks to address the challenges of hosting this event under this difficult circumstances.   
 I'm also immensely grateful for all the efforts put in by all the members of the Informal Experts Group during the preparatory process. They have provided us with a solid set of draft opinions and with almost no brackets left, I think that might be the first time under the understanding leadership of their Chairman, Mr. Fabio Bigi. These women and men representing our entire family showed constructive spirit of cooperation and consensus like no other.   
 I'm very pleased with the outputs of this group. The five draft opinions in front of us send a clear, strong and positive message to the world that the emerging technologies in general are essential to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and address some of the world's most pressing opportunities and challenges from COVID‑19 to the digital divide.   
 New data from ITU reveals strong global growth in Internet use. The largest we have seen in decades. It is a reminder that our world is more connected than ever. And yet the ability to connect remains profoundly unequal and almost 3 billion people are still offline. There is a lot more to do to get everyone connected. And to drive the development of new and emerging technologies essential to the Digital Economy. I believe this Forum and all the work that has gone in to help put us on the path to meet this huge challenge. I'm confident in your determination and ability to rise to the moment. And I'm grateful to Her Excellency, the Minister of communications and digitalization of Ghana, Mrs. Ursula Owusu‑Ekuful for accepting to lead our discussions and serve as Chair of the Forum.

Before I leave you in her capable hands I want to remind you that what we are doing here over the next three days we will help facilitate the preparation of the three major ITU conferences that are awaiting us in the new year. That's WTSA in March, WTDC in June and PP‑22 in September/October can in return bring the benefits for digital transformation to all for years to come.   
 I wish you all a very successful WTPF‑21. Thank you very much. The floor is back to.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary‑General. I think we can move on to the adoption of the agenda. And we will project the agenda of the meeting on the screen. It is available in document ADM/6.   
 Mr. Houlin Zhao, I give you the floor back.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Yes. Dear participants, the agenda for this meeting is projected on the screen and available in ADM/6. If there are no comments I would like to seek your approval of this agenda.   
 Must be no comment. So the agenda is approved. I think next is the election of the Chair of the Forum. Following consultation with the membership I would like to propose Her Excellency, Mrs. Ursula Owusu‑Ekuful, Minister of communications and digitalization of Ghana as our Chairman. I offer this candidate for your endorsement. Seeing no objection, I would therefore like to invite Her Excellency, Mrs. Ursula Owusu‑Ekuful, to say a few words at this moment.

>> URSULA OWUSU‑EKUFUL: Mr. Secretary‑General, Your Excellencies, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me begin by thanking you all for the confidence and trust you have put in me. And it is a great honor to serve as the Chair of WTPF‑21, the first we are having since the last meeting in 2013.   
 I'm truly grateful to the members of the Informal Working Group, led by the Chairman Mr. Fabio Bigi who have worked tirelessly over the past two years or so to present this Forum with visionary draft opinions.   
 I'm also mindful of the high expectations that touch new and emerging technologies at the center of our discussions. I was looking forward to seeing all of you again after all this time, as the WTPF was to be the first physical ITU meeting since the pandemic struck, but that was not to be.   
 COVID‑19 may have prevented us from coming together in person in Geneva, but you can rest assured that it won't prevent us from discussing the important topics that are on our agenda. We will do it all for the digitally excluded, women, men, young people who are still not using the Internet and the new and emerging technologies that hoped so much promise for all humanity. And we owe it also to ourselves to do our utmost to harness technologies effectively, to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Because when poverty is on the rise, when our children's education is on the line, when our planet is suffering, when young people have no hope of getting sustainable jobs, when our health is impaired with existing and new diseases, we believe that these innovative technologies can and will make a big difference in people's lives.   
 I'm looking forward to constructive deliberations, always in the spirit of consensus building and cooperation that characterizes our work in ITU.   
 And to a very successful Forum, in the service of humanity, and promoting sustainable development. Let's make history together. We do have a lot of work ahead of us. So let me turn it over to the Secretary‑General who will proceed with the next agenda item, regarding the election of the Vice‑Chairs. Mr. Secretary‑General, the floor is yours. Thank you.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to just once more express my appreciation to our Minister to accept our invitation to take the Chairmanship of this WTPF. And from the first moment when I contacted her and she immediately said we are at your disposal to do everything for the benefit of ITU. We are very grateful for your acceptance.   
 Dear Delegates, I have also consulted and the nominations for Vice‑Chairs and now I would like to propose that the Forum elect the six Vice‑Chairs with one per region as follows: Mr. Mansour AlQurashi of Saudi Arabia for the Arab region. Mr. Alexander Olegovich Mokryagin of Belarus for CIS. Mr. Victor Martinez Vanegas of Mexico for the Americas. Mrs. Cristiana Flutur of Romania for Europe. Mr. Ahmed Said of Egypt for Africa. And Dr. Ahmad Reza Sharafat of Iran for Asia‑Pacific.   
 I would like to seek your approval of this nomination of the six Vice‑Chairs. I see no comments.   
 Thank you very much for accepting my proposal. Madam Chair, now the floor is back to you for the next structure of the Forum.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. I'd like to say a few words on the structure and organization of the Forum. The WTPF was established by the 1994 Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference. Its purpose is to provide a venue on exchanging views and information and thereby create a shared vision among policymakers worldwide on the issues arising from the emergence of new telecommunication services and technologies and to consider any other policy issues in telecommunications which would benefit from a global exchange of views.   
 It is a unique event in ITU in accordance with previous decisions by the Council, the Secretary‑General convened an informal expert and Open Informal Experts Group to assist in the preparatory process which was quite extensive. The IEG was led by Mr. Fabio Bigi. The report of the Secretary‑General is the main import for our discussion. It includes the five opinions, four of which were agreed by the IEG. The remaining opinions still has square brackets, which I'm sure we will be able to resolve in our discussions.   
 Please keep in mind that the report of the Secretary‑General is intended to an input document. What is important is that the output of your work here which will be captured in my report as the Chair and which will be presented to you on Saturday for approval.   
 I will now pass the floor to the Secretary‑General to propose the structure of the Forum.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madam Chair. After having carried out consultation, I would like to propose the structure that Preetam will try to give more details. Yes, please. Muted.

>> PREETAM MALOOR: Okay. Thank you, SG. Thank you, Madam Chair. Regarding the structure, the three Working Groups are proposed as follows: Working Group 1 where we would discuss Draft Opinion 1 on enabling environment for the development and deployment of new and emerging telecom/ICT services and technologies to advance sustainable development, as well as Draft Opinion 2 on affordable and secure connectivity in mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development.

Working Group 2 where we would discuss Draft Opinion 3 on digital literacy and skills for inclusive access as well as Draft Opinion 4 on new and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecom/ICTs for sustainable development.

And Working Group 3, where we would discuss Draft Opinion 5 on the use of telecom/ICTs in COVID‑19 and future pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response. This division of work has also been presented to the IEG, Informal Experts Group.

The contributions mentioned by the Chair have been allocated to the Working Groups and the draft agendas of the Working Groups have been published as documents ADM/2, ADM/3 and ADM/4. As is usual practice the Secretariat has prepared a consolidated document DL/1 which includes proposals received in the corresponding areas of the draft opinions. DL1 will serve as the basis of the work for the working document for the Working Groups. Thank you Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Are there any comments? No. Then I thank you for your support.   
 I would now like to pass the floor again to the Secretary‑General who will propose the Chairs and Vice‑Chairs of the Working Groups.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. After having carried out consultations, I would like to propose the following Chairs and Vice‑Chairs for the Working Groups of the Plenary.   
 Let me remind you that the practice in ITU has been to have a Chair from Member States and a Vice‑Chair from a sector member. Based on this practice I would like to propose for Working Group 1 Chair, Mr. Roberto Hirayama of Brazil. Vice‑Chair is Mr. Aymen Almogherah of Saudi Telecom Company.   
 For Working Group 2, the Chair is Ms. Lidia Stepinska‑Ustasiak of Poland. And Vice‑Chair is Mr. Ahmed Riad Ismail of Huawei.   
 For Working Group 3, Chair is Mr. Jim Paterson of South Africa. Vice‑Chair is Ms. Natalia Vicente of ESOA, EMEA Satellite Operator's Association. I present this kindly for your approval. Thank you.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: There are no comments, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Before we move to the next agenda item, the presentation of the Secretary‑General's report, I would like to give the floor to the secretary of the Plenary, Mr. Preetam Maloor to say a few words on the organizational arrangements.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Sorry, Beatrice. Beatrice Pluchon.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you. Let's continue ‑‑ so the Working Group of the Forum will be from 12 to 4 Geneva time today and from 12 to 3 on Friday and Saturday. So the full program can be found on the WTPF website. I would like to invite participants as well to download the WTPF background that you can see here behind me on the WTPF website. It is posted under useful information.   
 So the whole meeting will be interpreted in the six official languages of the union and captioned in English. The Webcast is also available. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Beatrice. I'd now like to invite the Deputy Secretary‑General, Mr. Malcolm Johnson, to present the Secretary‑General's report. Welcome, Malcolm.

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I was just waiting to be unmuted. So good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Let me add my welcome to WTPF‑21. And allow me firstly to add my thanks and appreciation to the informal experts group, the Chairman and the participants for successfully concluding their work, despite having to meet virtually for most of the last two years.   
 We're very grateful for the spirit of compromise in the group, which has led to consensus on some delicate issues. So slide 2, it has been a long road to this point. Starting with the mandate to hold this, the sixth WTPF at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Dubai in 2018.   
 Resolution 2 of the Plenipotentiary Conference resolved that as is usual the WTPF discussions will be based on a single Secretary‑General's report together with contributions from participants. Also based on the Secretary‑General's report.   
 Then at the Council in 2019 Decision 611 was adopted which asked the Secretary‑General to convene a balanced, informal group of experts to help prepare the Secretary‑General's report.   
 Slide 3, Decision 611 also decided on the theme of this Forum, which you can see in this slide, quite a lengthy theme but basically it is to consider how new and emerging technologies can aid sustainable development.   
 Slide 4, moving to the preparatory process itself, the Informal Experts Group comprised over 170 representatives from the ITU membership, including Governments, regulators, private sector, academia, and Civil Society. And as we have heard the group was chaired by Mr. Fabio Bigi from Italy, who I would like to again thank for the outstanding leadership.   
 The informal group followed the procedure and schedule for the preparation as was set out in annex 2 of Decision 611. In total the group convened seven meetings between September 2019 and November 2021 with only the first two of these meetings being in person before the start of the COVID‑19 pandemic.   
 The Informal Experts Group received more than 70 written contributions. Next slide, slide 5. So the Secretary‑General's report is the result of a lengthy, open and inclusive preparatory process, including three public open consultations. In addition to the formal meetings experts met informally on many occasions to resolve some difficult issues. There has been a tremendous effort to reach consensus, which was only achieved at the last meeting of the group last month, thanks to some final compromises on the text, with the exception of a few square brackets and one decision.   
 So I'd like to emphasize that this is a delicate, balanced text. And we hope it can be approved at the Forum without any amendments that might disturb this consensus reached in the group other than resolving the few square brackets.   
 Slide 6, as the document forms a basis of discussion, the Secretary‑General's report aims to comprehensively explore the different aspects of the theme and highlight some of the key policy issues under consideration among different stakeholder groups.   
 A report begins with an introductory section, setting out the preparatory process. Then it addresses the overall theme before diving deeper in to six specific aspects of the theme; namely AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs, and mobilizing new solutions for connectivity.   
 Recognizing the complexities of the current digital ecosystem and keeping in mind the opportunities, challenges, and policy considerations faced by different stakeholder groups, the report identifies some key public policy questions to provide a framework for discussion at the Forum.   
 Next slide. And here are some of the policy questions that have been raised in the report. The report is meant to provoke thought and seek policy solutions, that can address these questions. While keeping pace with the rapid advancements in new and emerging telecommunications ICT services and technologies. Next slide, please.   
 To address these questions, the Informal Group of Experts has developed five draft opinions over the course of their two‑year long preparatory process. The Chairman, Mr. Fabio Bigi, will elaborate further on these documents in just a moment. It is these draft nonprescriptive opinions that are found in the annex of the report which are presented to the Forum for consideration and adoption by consensus as the formal output of the Forum.   
 Slide 9. So thank you for your attention. We look forward to fruitful discussions on how to build a digital future. A future where no one is left behind. And where opportunities have no boundaries. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. I would now like to invite the Chair of the Informal Experts Group of the WTPF, Mr. Fabio Bigi to say a few words. Mr. Fabio Bigi, you have the floor.

>> FABIO BIGI: Many thanks, Madam Chair. Your Excellencies, Secretary‑General, elected officials, dear colleague experts, is ‑‑ Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to join you all today for the sixth WTPF ICT Policy Forum. As the Secretary‑General, my friend Malcolm Johnson has said it has been a long road to this WTPF. Since September '19 I have chaired the Informal Group of Experts of IEG, the multi‑stakeholder group with over/under 70 experts from around the world, convened by the Secretary‑General and tasked with the preparation for the WTPF that you are chairing, and also to the Decision 611.   
 Over more than two years, Secretary‑General said seven formal meetings, five virtual, three publication consultations and many formal discussions and despite the strain posed by the pandemic, IEG has consistently come together to discuss the Secretary‑General's report and based on the policy questions raised there, to develop a draft opinion for the Forum's consideration.   
 I commend the commitment of all the experts who have devoted so much time and effort in the process as well as the spirit of consensus and collaboration showed by them in the real normal aim of ITU.   
 It is due to the extensive work and cooperation of the group that you have before you the Secretary‑General report that contained a set of five draft opinions for your consideration. Of course, along the way we have faced some sticky issues, and for the Secretary‑General report, it is worth particularly around the issues of terminology. To help you facilitate agreement on these aspects, I call upon my good friend, who is also present, Dr. Ahmad Reza Sharafat to assist me and discuss with the experts on a possible compromise. I'm very grateful to him for all his extensive work on this matter, and for helping us reach the text that you now see in the Secretary‑General's report.   
 For the draft opinion, my friend, again Mr. Roberto Hirayama has worked extensively with the members on the group to arrive at the consensus on the subject, title and text opinion that are now presented to you.   
 Among these set of that opinion, you will notice that that Opinion 2, Draft Opinion 2 still show two pending items that did not reach agreement at the final formal expert meeting in November in brackets. However, over the past few weeks through informal discussion among the experts coordinated by my friend Roberto an agreement was also reached in respect of this pending. This has been communicated through the latest contribution submitted by Brazil. Thank you again, Roberto for all your efforts.   
 Given the long and intensive process that we have followed, it is my hope that when you all review and consider these draft opinion, you will take in to account all the discussion preparations that have preceded this Forum. I am confident that the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum will adopt consensus opinion that will help drive sustainable development to all.   
 Thank you for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Fabio Bigi. And we appreciate the work that you have put in over the past two years with your move to get us to this point. Really appreciate it.   
 We will now move on to point 9 on our agenda. Presentation of statements on the report by membership. Therefore, I would like to invite the high level speakers to deliver their statements. I will read out the list and request that with the reminder to keep interventions to three minutes. We will be extremely grateful if you would restrict your interventions to three minutes because of the time constraints that we have.

>> Sorry to interrupt you, I think there is an echo from your side. Maybe there is another PC is open with the sound. Can you please check? Dear Ms. Ursula Owusu‑Ekuful, do you hear me?

>> CHAIR: Just a second. I will be with you shortly.

>> Thank you.

>> CHAIR: I would like to invite the Minister of Transport and Telecommunications of Bahrain to give his remarks.

>> BAHRAIN: Thank you very much. Excellency, Mr. Secretary‑General, Excellencies, heads of Delegations, dear Delegates, members of Delegations, welcome to you all. I'm very pleased and honored to be with you today in this meeting and WTPF in order to discuss with you the orientations in order to mobilize new technologies. And this is among our priorities and the priorities of all countries of the world.   
 The meetings of decision takers proves the importance of the digital transformation in order to achieve development, the preparation of the new technologies in order to develop our economy is a real infrastructure that will help to reinforce our capacities in order to use the new technologies and in order to protect consumers from any cyber attacks.   
 And as the possibility of using new technologies has reached high levels, we will have to work very hard. And this is why we have to mobilize our resources to use new technologies. And we have to use Artificial Intelligence in order to develop human resources. In Bahrain, we are among the vanguard in order to reach a total coverage for the perfect generation.   
 We have technologies that reach the highest. Participation for the wide range have reached high level. We have covered 80% of families and are working very hard in order to reach 95% of coverage for all families.   
 This powerful infrastructure is available for everybody in the country of Bahrain. And we hope this is suitable for all companies, locally, regionally and internationally so that we can provide the best services to everybody. While going forward in order to reach the highest levels in order to respond in a positive manner, because we believe that maturity and literacy needs cooperation of everyone in order to get rid of any, any differences in the Digital Economy.   
 I would like to insist that the country of Bahrain is ready to exchange experts and experience with all countries in order to achieve transformation. In conclusion I would like to thank you all. And I wish you all success at this conference, in WTPF. Thank you very much. The best to you all.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you Excellency. Madam Chair, you have the floor.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Excellency. And I would now like to invite Mr. Deepak Balgobin of Mauritius to take the floor. Mauritius, you have an intervention to make. So can you take this opportunity to make that intervention?

>> MAURITIUS: Thank you very much. Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon, good evening, and good morning to those on the other side of the globe. It is with great enthusiasm that I wish to share my perspectives on this subject matter of the most importance for the future of our global economy. As we all recall in this year of high uncertainty, world economies are looking for sustainable solutions to socioeconomic challenges through adoption of technologies throughout all spheres. Mauritius has endeavored to embrace the latest technologies and their applications to the local contexts through diverse initiatives over the past decades. These accomplishments have put our country on the world map of global innovation and technology and has made us a reference and a leading player in the world.   
 With this in mind we are constantly investing in new strategies to take that in the sector to new heights. We are, in fact, setting a design where we need the most creative out of the box figures, the most inventive agents for change. People with ambition with regard to help us disrupt, transform and solve big challenges of our time. A good connectivity at both the local and international level.   
 Operations of submarine cables, fiber, that works together with policymakers, hold the potential to collaborate, to bring in affordable services and leave no region unserved.   
 In addition, fiber across the island, fiber to the home has been deployed to every doorstep since 2017. And we have already reached 100% fiber coverage. As connectivity, the figure for COVID stands at almost 100%.   
 Ladies and Gentlemen, in this connection the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council has been passed as a law in Mauritius in June. This legislation will be here as a main function to address shortcomings in the legislation and to determine the role in the field of capacity building.   
 Ladies and Gentlemen, today's Forum organized by ITU is the right platform. Where we can join forces to address issues that come across our way in adoption of new and emerging technologies. Mauritius is fully committed to the activities of ITU aiming for betterment of living conditions through and coordinated initiatives.   
 So to conclude, this motivated our Government to bid for the membership of the ITU Council for the term 2023‑2026. And we shall rely on your support of the funding countries. I would like to thank the organizers for giving us this opportunity to bring all of us together and make the most of it. Thank you very much.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you very much, Excellency. Madam Chair, you have the floor. Madam Chairman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mauritius, for your intervention. It is now my privilege to call on Gambia to make their own intervention as well. Ministry for Information and Communication Infrastructure of the Gambia. If he is not available, I will call on Namibia to make your intervention as well.

>> NAMIBIA: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Excellencies. We are congregating here today and this congregation sends a unique opportunity for us deliver and influence policy requirements that shape the ICT sector in adapting the emerging technologies telecommunications by ICTs.   
 Technological advancements in terms of availability, adoption, and usage. Nations should heavily invest in broadband development and deployment in order to bridge the digital divide in urban and rural areas, especially of Developing Countries.   
 The COVID‑19 pandemic has proven the importance and criticality of ICT to achieve sustainable development. We are witnessing how many of our citizens, especially the young population to depend on telecommunications and ICTs. Our main focus should aim at ensuring that our citizens are safe and their privacy is protected while online.   
 We have seen how the traditional communication has potentially worked in recent years. It is gathering a testimony of citizens. We need to embrace moving forward. We therefore need to redouble our efforts and collaborate to continuous harness skills development of all our citizens to the technological development, which will eventually ‑‑ between Developed and Developing Countries.   
 Namibia is grateful for their role that the international telecommunications plays in creating platforms such as this for helping Member States develop responsive policy frameworks in this ever changing technological evolution. We should therefore, open hurriedly ‑‑ we should therefore open and wholeheartedly embrace that this is available for the betterment of the globe. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Namibia. I now call on Dominica to make their statement.

If he is not available, I will give the floor to Suriname. Mr. Albert Jubithana. Colombia then if you are ready, please take the floor. Colombia. Let's go to Japan then. Japan, you have the floor. Colombia is ready. Colombia, please take the floor. Kindly unmute your microphones.

>> COLOMBIA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. A very good morning from Colombia. I would like to extend warm greetings to Mr. Houlin Zhao and all Ministers and representatives from the states and representatives from the United Nations agencies, from the private sector and from academia and from Civil Society.   
 This Forum gives us a space to craft policies which allows us to reap the benefits and capitalize on opportunities and tackling challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.   
 Digital transformation will continue to innovate and create new consumption production and business models. Furthermore, boosting productivity and fostering social well‑being of its users these changes will also accelerate the achievement towards sustainable development goals as well as boostering economic growth, employment, inclusion and environmental sustainability.   
 Digital transformation throughout the world will be the result of setting out new business strategies, public policies, and joint work between nations to steer digitalization towards development which is based on principles of equality, sustainability and upholding Human Rights and preserving the environment. Recently the President of Colombia introduced the concept of sys tech mobility, sets out sustainability as a proposal using technology as its main ally.

In this vain Colombia with a view to boosting digital transformation and the economic recovery post‑pandemic we will promote the generation of new business models through technology adoption programs for NSMEs. Capacity building for the fourth industrial revolution inter alia. This will allow us to optimize the use of resources and cutting CO2 emissions in the country.   
 Thus, we have implemented a series of strategies to bolster the adoption and digital empowerment for all. We have programs to generate content to allow the involvement of women in digital adoption measures focused on children, adolescents and Persons with Disabilities to train them in the areas of data science, programming, and science, technology, engineering, mathematics programs.

In terms of connectivity, the country has a very ambitious agenda to bridge the digital divide across all four corners of the national territory, especially in suburban and rural areas to achieve social inclusion through technology, adoption and uptake. In Columbia we are committed to facilitate the interaction and public entities to optimize the work of the state through strengthening and implementation of tools of a digital Government which will guarantee the efficiency of all processes. We will continue to work tirelessly to build a more connected country which is based upon the principles of equity and opportunities for all.   
 To close we would like to strengthen our commitment with the work under the framework of ITU that will develop policies which allows us to implement ICT emerging new policies which allows us to bridge the digital divide throughout Member States and to guarantee sustainable development throughout the world. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much, Colombia, for the excellent work you are doing. And if Suriname is available now, I would like to give the floor. If not, Japan kindly take the floor.

>> JAPAN: Thank you. Madam Chair, Excellencies, and Vice‑Chairs, Secretary‑General, Deputy Secretary‑General and directors of the Bureau of ITU, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm honored to attend the WTPF‑21. And would like to express my sincere appreciation to the distinguished experts who helped prepare this Forum.   
 The establishment of the WTPF was agreed upon at the Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference in 1994. And the topics it has covered for discussion has already been relevant and timely. The theme of this Forum for sustainable development is again very timely and important.   
 We agree with the notion that use of ICTs including emerging technologies is essential for achieving the SDGs. Japan considered the following three points to be particularly important. The first is connectivity. Under the COVID‑19 pandemic, the importance of connectivity has been reaffirmed. In order to support the needs of the Developing Countries, and that are emerging from COVID. In Japan in combination with ITU launched a connect to recover project in October last year to strengthen the digital infrastructure in those countries.   
 The second point is inclusive access. In the spirit of leaving no one behind and in order to ensure that emerging technologies don't promote fragmentation but benefit everyone. Japan is actively contributing to the standardization of such technologies and to related ITU activities.   
 The last point is capacity building. We need to focus on improving people's skills. Japan is currently considering organizing policy and technical policies for high level Government officials to support the early deployment of emerging technologies in other countries. Japan would like to continue our contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.   
 We are also required to working together in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration to successfully complete work of the Forum. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much, Japan. I would now like to give the floor to Gambia, Mr. Ebrima Sillah if you are ready.

While he is getting ready, let me invite the Vice Minister for Lithuania to also make her statement.

>> LITHUANIA: Dear Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues, it is my pleasure to meet you all at the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum 2021. Despite regretfully we can only meet virtually this Forum is an excellent opportunity for the ITU community to exchange ideas on how new and emerging technologies and trends can enable the global transition in the Digital Economy. As recognized in the draft report from the ITU Secretary‑General we must also significantly increase our efforts in mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICT services and technologies for sustainable development.   
 COVID‑19 has been a stark reminder on how crucial it is to enable everyone wherever they live to be part of the digital world. We commend the ITU for taking rapid action to support Member States in the face of the pandemic, including through REG4COVID resiliency platform. We welcome WTPF Opinion 5 that stressed the importance of telecommunications/ICTs in the pandemic and the pandemic preparedness and response.   
 Specifically we believe that this in the face of this crisis it is important to take concrete actions in the spirit of global solidarity to strengthen resilience of all countries. We are proud to join Japan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in supporting ITU's connect recovery period. It plays a rightful role in overcoming another crisis, possibly an existential one. A study produced in the context of the campaign for the candidacy of Tomas Lamanauskas for Deputy Secretary‑General of ITU revealed that while our industry recognizes the importance of sustainability practices we need to raise a level of ambition in terms of measurable targets and concrete actions. We all as the ITU family need to step up in helping the industry to achieve net zero and to help others to do the same.   
 Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we in Lithuania have witnessed firsthand the power of digital technologies to transform the economy and society. Therefore, we believe in the importance to harness the power of new and emerging technologies to fuel the sustainable development everywhere. And the ITU's crucial role in achieving that. As we all know decisions next year on the future strategic direction and vision for the ITU as well as the leadership that will guide ITU in executing that vision, we will establish the foundation for this. Lithuania is a responsible member of the ITU community, data mine, to work hand in hand with all of you to enter the ITU, is fit for the times to face the challenges as well as leverage the opportunities in front of us.   
 Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Lithuania. I would now like to give the floor to Indonesia if you are ready.

>> INDONESIA: Thank you. Excellencies, Ministers, Secretary‑General of ITU, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, greetings from Indonesia. Allow me to express my sincere congratulations to the ITU for the successful convening of WTPF. The theme of this year's Forum is indeed crucial as the COVID‑19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation in an unprecedented way creating unlimited potentials for emerging technologies, such as 5G, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and many others to go. During the pandemic, AI and Big Data technologies have contributed greatly to the COVID‑19 handling efforts. For example, in facing infection risk, predicting evolution of the virus as well as tracking and traces of the diseases.   
 Excellencies, while it is true that emerging technologies pose many opportunities for improving people's lives and generating economic values, it is important to note that technology disruption has never been neutral. It creates winners and losers. On this note, we must be cautious of the challenges that could rise from a digital paradox, especially in some parts of the world where digital divide remains existing. Without a wholistic approach and deliberate efforts, rapid digital innovation could worsen the existing gaps and inequalities within society.   
 Due to issues related to the lack of access to connectivity, affordable Internet services, or digital skills as outlined in the ITU Secretary‑General's report, having acknowledged these challenges, the Government of Indonesia believes that digital transformation must be inclusive and empowering. The further lies the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals of leaving no one behind. In increasing the roles and innovation of emerging technologies while bridging the digital divide, the Ministry of Communications of Informatics of the Republic of Indonesia has initiated several policies and programs such as forming and reforming the 5G network, neutral policy which is flexible for telecommunication providers to allocate radio spectrum, to implement 3G, 4G or 5G technology and terrestrial television system and facilitating spectrum and telecommunication infrastructure sharing to optimize the utilization of resources.   
 Concurrently we believe that the development of emerging technologies requires collaborative effort of all stakeholders. In this regard Indonesia implements blended financing approach through the universal surface obligation as well as public/private partnership to support massive and accelerative infrastructure development including in the remote areas.   
 In this connection I'm also pleased to announce Indonesia's intention to run for re‑election of ITU Council and to nominate Dr. Mettis as a ITU radio regulation board member. Indonesia would be honored to receive support from the ITU states for our candidacy in the forthcoming ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022.

I would like to highlight as an incoming Chair of G20 Digital Economy Working Group, the Indonesia Ministry of Communications and Informatics will also discuss the opportunities and challenges those emerging technologies brought to the digital landscape. Through our three priority issues, as well as cross‑border data and low data free flow of trust. I would like to congratulate the ITU once again for the successful Forum and wish all the Delegates a fruitful session.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. It is my pleasure to invite the Republic of Azerbaijan to make a statement. Azerbaijan, you have the floor.

>> AZERBAIJAN: Thank you very much. Dear Secretary‑General, dear Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, guests, it is a great pleasure for me to attend this Forum. I would like to thank all the organizers for kindly inviting us. First of all, taking this opportunity I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Secretary‑General for their hard work.   
 As you all know, the COVID‑19 pandemic accelerated the case of digitalization worldwide. In the means of the COVID‑19 pandemic the strategic importance of emerging technologies for Governments around the world is more evident than ever before. Therefore the opinion to the national report that covers affordable and secure connectivity in realizing new and emerging telecommunications, ICTs for sustainable development is considered as an enabler of development of the sector. We believe that affordability accelerates. Almost 95% of the country's population use Internet. Broadband subscriptions is 20. However, on the downside roughly 70% of the connected households, which brings the connection down. But they continue to invest in broadband infrastructure. And it is the main national broadband project.   
 Our aim is to increase the percentage of fixed broadband subscriptions using the fiber to the home networks and achieve full home broadband Internet coverage by 2024, with a minimum speed of 25 megabit per second. Another option for affordability is the mobile Internet. In Azerbaijan the entire population is covered by mobile cellular. It is widespread. Active mobile broadband subscriptions for inhabitancies is 73.

Regarding Opinion 3 which covers digital literacy, I agree that the lack of digital skills is a strong barrier to the effective use of the ICTs. In order to address the digital gap and foster this empowerment as a ministry we organized and stimulated trainings in digital skills, and actively involving marginalized including women and girls and children and youth to expand the application of ICT in daily lives and business.

As for Opinion 4, new and emerging technologies, services, facilitate the use of telecommunications, ICTs for sustainable development, I would like to join your call of emerging technologies such as 5G, Artificial Intelligence, IoT, Big Data can foster sustainable development.

I would like to inform you of strategies. 2030 national strategy, Smart City and smart village concept, digital transformation, all these concepts, of course, cover application of new technologies, like 5G and, et cetera.   
 One of the main factors in the application of 5G is location radiofrequencies. In using this opportunity, I would like to invite the countries of the region for cooperating this matter and ITU so closely involved in resolving this for other frequency issues within this contents. Thank you Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Azerbaijan, for the comprehensive statement you have made. I would like to invite the Deputy Minister of the Russian Federation to make her statement, Bella Cherkesova.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Kindly unmute your microphone.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Secretary‑General, Deputy Secretary‑General, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the modern context, especially against the backdrop of the continuing pandemic, discussion of issues linked to the use of new and emerging technologies for the interest of the development has acquired unprecedented importance. A potential of such technologies as Artificial Intelligence, 5G, Internet of things, OTT, Big Data is going on on a daily basis. This trend is becoming the object of attention and arguments. I think that WTPF is an important platform for preparing a basis for our discussions.   
 Report and draft opinions that were prepared during extensive and complicated work prior to the Forum. Despite the many approaches and views of the interested parties we see that the report shows agreement of experts in terms of the fact that the potential of new and emerging technologies and safe services in finances, medicine, and educational spheres. I'd like to also point out that such topics as developing environment for the development and connectivity which is accessible and say digital literacy and skills, use of ICTs in combatting COVID‑19 have formed a basis for developing draft decisions. One of the important issues that I think is ensuring confidence and security in using ICTs and telecommunications which is a prerequisite.   
 And it is the ITU experts as the coordinators of WTPF and of WSIS action line C5, confidence and use of ICTs, these experts must make a contribution to this important area. Despite the numerous negative consequences the pandemic nonetheless became a driver of digital technology around the world. The pandemic has made it possible to speed up the many factors of technological development and digitalization and the use of new technologies in the Russian Federation as well.

Russia is using actively new technologies. For example, in state management, remote education and is using Artificial Intelligence inter alia in medicine. We see and understand that ICTs are playing an increasing role in developing economy and society. New and emerging technologies are creating conditions for a global transformation to technology. I'm convinced that ITU plays and must play a vital role in developing ICTs for the benefit of all countries, giving particular attention to the Developing Countries.

The ITU is the most important international organization called upon to promote the implementation of digital technologies and trends. Russia is one of the founders of the union and fields great responsibility in the interest of all inhabitants of earth. For this reason we would like to assure you that Mr. Rashid is the candidate for the post of ITU for 2022 and will make it possible to lead ITU to new horizons and at the same time respond to new challenges of the ITU faces.   
 I am also convinced that the participation of Russia and the work of ITU and the radio regulations board will help further strengthen the positions of ITU and strengthen the role of the ITU in many areas as well as promote its role overall.

In conclusion I would like to inform you that the Russian Federation has put forward the candidacy of the city of Moscow to host the World Exhibition Expo '23. It is to strengthen the role of ‑‑ the role of the ITU in strengthening the world where the well‑being of human beings is linked to harmony within the environment. I would like to thank you and wish you every success and tangible results in holding WTPF. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Russia. It is now the time of Mr. K. Rajaraman of the Ministry of Communications of India.

>> INDIA: Thank you. I would like to thank the Secretary‑General, His Excellency Mr. Houlin Zhao for presenting a well analyzed and informative policy for the sixth WTPF Forum. And more importantly, during the challenging COVID‑19 pandemic.

Excellencies, Madam Chair, telecommunications and ICTs are crucial tools for enabling inclusive goals and stimulation of national economies. Telecommunications and ICTs are crucial tools for enabling inclusive growth and stimulation of national economies. India is home to over 1.2 billion telecom subscribers with one of the lowest mobile internet tariffs. The Government of India is implementing Bharatnet – one of the world’s largest rural optic fiber networks, aiming to connect nearly 600,000 villages with broadband, facilitating digital inclusion and empowerment.

India’s National Unique Identification System – Aadhaar has enrolled 1.3 billion persons. This coupled with 1.2 billion mobile phones and opening of bank accounts for 440 million unbanked persons has given a big boost for India’s financial agenda. Our Universal Payment Interface has enabled 4186.48 million transactions amounting Rs.7684.4 million during last month. India is also home of a very strong startup and innovator community, and we are closely working with them to solve technological challenges to attain SDGs.

WTPF provides a good platform for deliberation of new and innovative ideas and building a broad consensus on policies. Draft opinions generated by the Informal Experts Group complement the efforts for sustainable development as envisaged by WSIS. Draft opinions on AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs, et cetera, are very relevant needing due consideration from all. These technologies should address societal challenges faced by citizens in finance, agriculture, health and education, delivering excellent social and economic returns. India believes that new technologies must address digital inclusion effectively, which is crucial for financial and economic inclusion of the poor and vulnerable.

The report placed by Secretary General will help all nations in formulating enabling policies and appropriate adoption of the new and emerging technologies to attain SDGs. India assures ITU of its support and looks forward to constructive deliberations during the coming three days. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. K. Rajaraman. It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Moreno, Chile, to take the floor.

>> CHILE: Thank you very much. Secretary‑General, Houlin Zhao, Deputy Secretary‑General Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Member States, I congratulate the ITU for hosting this Forum. The Chilean Government has a clear purpose of expanding the deployment of telecommunication infrastructure as a pillar of digital transformation to improve people's quality of life. Our main efforts are centered on extending the digital backbone to the entire territory transforming Chile in to a digital hub for South America deploying 5G technology and connecting all schools with high speed networks. The fiber optic backbone have been doubled from 18,000 to 36,000 kilometers through subsidies for private investment to 202 municipalities in the digital highway. As a result of these advances in infrastructure, all nonisland municipalities will have access to fiber optic networks. Following the digital hub vision we are promoting the humbled submarine cable which will connect South America with Asia increasing the transformation capacity available in our region and diversifying backup routes for communications between these two regions.   
 But on the other hand we haven't started the deployment of 5G, increasing the available spectrum by 42% in the sub‑6 gigahertz bands and adding 1200 megahertz in metered bands. 5G networks with allow coverage in terms of coverage and capacity and quality of service connecting hundreds of millions of devices which will enhance productive services and add value added services.   
 The introduction of 5G in Chile is expected to be a productive and digital inclusion engine for the country. By 2023 all public schools with more than five students which total 10,086 will have high speed access.   
 Four years ago only 48% of Chilean homes have fixed high speed Internet access. A service to all the new public/private digital infrastructure projects during the Government or President and the greater demand resulting in the pandemic, currently 67% of households have high speed Internet and this indicator is projected to reach 80% in the three next years.   
 Regarding mobile Internet, Chile has reached a penetration of 113 accesses per 100 inhabitants being the seventh country for highest per capita consumption of mobile data on the OECD region. With these advances in digital infrastructure Chile is firmly on the way to becoming a digital hub for the region. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Chile. Appreciate your statement. It is now my pleasure to call on Sri Lanka, Mr. Oshada Senanayake, the Director‑General of the telecommunications regulatory commission.

>> SRI LANKA: Thank you. I consider it honor to make the statement. I would want to focus on the key aspect of mobilizing new solutions for connectivity which is key in unlocking the 2030 Agenda goals. And realization of the need for universal connectivity is the most critical infrastructure in enabling the public with ICT solutions has been reaffirmed. Has initiated only service of universal fund to connect Sri Lanka with 100% broadband connectivity across the country, inclusive of all rural and remote villages and connecting all state schools by 2023. Depleting of the fund would require a new discussion.

In terms of prioritizing inclusivity, affordability is yet another significant aspect that needs long‑term focus. And policy considerations were in tandem for improvement of connectivity; for connectivity infrastructure development, affordable broadband services should be encouraged that will enable to get to the existing digital divide that's having a negative impact on many demographics and affordable Internet restricting education.

Sri Lanka has made a paradigm step by making accessibility free of charge for all platforms of state schools and Universities and achieving ranking of top 20 most affordable broadband services. With a new normal created through the pandemic, rapid Digital Economies are moving ahead to a traditional approach affecting the quality of lives. Sri Lanka based on key aspects of enablement and empowerment technology, nontech industries and capacity building which would be critically dependent on how well we succeed in enabling universal connectivity.   
 Today accessibility to mobile devices has become yet another impediment that must be taken in to purview along connectivity, in terms of creating future Digital Economies, the device enablement would be a key adoption of ICT in tandem which focuses on enhancing digital literacy. And then we can create a tool that's inclusive. It is also time for ‑‑ in terms of political considerations consider new paradigms of technology, can ‑‑ accelerating the future of connectivity. Key aspects of future regulatory landscape changes, requiring for ‑‑ would have to be prioritized ensuring a long‑term equitable environment by new challenges.   
 In conclusion, I believe that a whole of Government approach has to be set in place in achieving digital inclusivity as well as accessibility to connectivity which would ensure that the current digital divide affects us globally will be improved to acceptable levels ensuring the adoption of ICT services on an equitable note. And reduction of policy frameworks will be a catalyst to ensure that we achieve the Connect 2030 ITU agenda goals across all countries. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much, Sri Lanka. It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Simiyu, Director‑General of the Communications Authority of Kenya to take the floor.

>> KENYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for this opportunity for me to be able to speak on behalf of my country. Madam Chair, on behalf of my Delegation and the people of the Republic of Kenya, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam Chair on your election as Chair of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum and for your able stewardship you have demonstrated so far. I would like to commend ITU for managing the global ICT networks and services and the coordination of this session. The Republic of Kenya is proud to participate in this Forum that provides Member States to share experiences on ongoing policy approaches to foster the development of ICTs and the realization of Sustainable Development Goals.   
 This Forum could not have come at a better time, Madam Chair, as the world tries to break loose from the close of the COVID‑19 pandemic. Most importantly, it is a moment of introspection over the place of ICTs in alleviating pressing global challenges as well as witnessed during this trying period.   
 Kenya's impressed about the Secretary‑General's draft report for this Forum which we see dovetailing in to our broader digital transformation agenda. As a Fourth Industrial Revolution beckons, it is a sense of urgency for us all who have gathered here to ensure that we do all we can.   
 But to be able to do so, we must ensure that we have the necessary access to diverse services, skills and know‑how to manipulate ICTs for their own goals. Kenya continues to deliberate with states to ensure its citizens the right value from ICTs so that we lead meaningful lives while solving everyday challenges. We encourage diverse investments in ICT infrastructure in generating the low cost devices, strengthening all our payment and logistics infrastructure as well as growth and adoption of local e‑commerce platforms with a global (inaudible). Other priorities for us include solutions to ‑‑ for all electronic communication and transactions. Leaving no one behind by encouraging gender equality and access to Persons with Disabilities within the ICT space.   
 Therefore, Madam Chair as we embrace new frontiers such as the 5G, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and OTTs, these will not mean anything if we don't empower other skills and capabilities to leverage the immense transformative potential. If we remain united in practice and work together, we can create a truly integrated global ICT ecosystem that will drive economies and enrich lives and close digital gaps in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.   
 Finally, Madam Chair, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to take this opportunity to inform you that the Government of The Republic of Kenya offers kindly her re‑election to ITU Council. And therefore seeks the favorable support of Member States during the upcoming ITU Plenipotentiary Conference scheduled to take place from 26 September to 14 of October 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. Let me take this opportunity to wish this Forum successful deliberations. Thank you very much for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Kenya, for those inspiring words. It is my pleasure to invite Mr. Iulian Popescu, State Secretary of Romania to make your statement.

Romania, you have the floor.

>> ROMANIA: Thank you. Hello. I did do the introduction. Madam Chair?

>> CHAIR: Romania.

>> ROMANIA: Hello. Can you hear me?

>> CHAIR: Yes, we can hear you. Please speak.

>> ROMANIA: Thank you very much. And Mr. General Secretary, Mr. Deputy Secretary‑General, Your Excellencies, director of the Bureau, members of the Secretariat, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, I'm honored to represent the Romanian Government in the ‑‑ in this important Forum and to make my address to such a distinguished audience.   
 My name is Iulian Popescu. And I'm a Secretary of State of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization of Romania. Over the last 20 years, Romania developed one of the best mobile and fixed data infrastructures. Romania INTC sector has expanded continuous growing over the last decade with high performance in connectivity, cybersecurity, digital involvement and with many companies, specialized in software development. Therefore, the terms of the Forum, WTPF‑21, is one of the greatest interest to us.   
 Arising the issue of policies to mobile, to mobilize new and emergency telecoms and ICTs for sustainable development. The last two years have been extremely relevant in this regard with the COVID‑19 pandemic, sweeping through the planet, highlighting the importance of digitalization and the need for connectivity. We may not realize that we held this conversation, we cannot function in a modern world.

The five draft opinions will form the basis of the WTPF‑21 discussions on the same topic that we consider very important. If not, we call for the future of the digital field, developing and deploying emerging technologies for sustainable development, affordable and secure connectivity, digital literacy skills. The WTPF does give us a unique opportunity to come together, to best reflect and to debate the emerging issues in telecom and ICT and the ‑‑ the significance for us all.   
 Most important, it allows us to look at how we can connect and unconnect which is the heart what of the ITU does. The timing of the year, this year, WTPF is particularly appropriate as we stand as two points between a digital situation which may not and the things that we need over the future.   
 As the host country of PP‑22 we will strive to make the event a success story and as a representative of the Romanian Government I assure you that I will do my utmost to encourage constructive discussions, teamwork, consensus and a common approach.   
 We are committed to making this conference a Forum for collaboration on all the key issues that will shape the future architecture of ITU. Distinguished Delegates, thank you for the approach to address such a special audience today.   
 Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Romania, for your statement. I now like to give the floor to Mohammed Kah, Gambia.

>> GAMBIA: Thank you. Honorable Cabinet Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Madam Chair (cutting out). On behalf of the Honorable Delegate of Gambia who is (cutting out). Thank you for organizing ‑‑ (no audio).

>> CHAIR: Gambia, we are having some challenges with your audio. Could you reposition yourself? I think we've lost Gambia. I would like to give the floor to Malaysia, Mr. Mentek, the Secretary‑General of Malaysia. Please take the floor.

>> MALAYSIA: Thank you. Distinguished Head of Delegation, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, a very good afternoon to you all. I would like to express my appreciation to the ITU for allowing Malaysia to address the sixth WTPF today. The COVID‑19 pandemic has upended the global economy and brought to the forefront the vital role. Even as many remembers ‑‑ many Member States look towards transitioning from a pandemic to an epidemic face, the events will have fundamentally changed the way we work and play. Telecommunications and ICT services will be the leading driver in every Member States' national agenda. We welcome the sixth WTPF theme and discussions on policies for modernizing ICTs for sustainable development. While Malaysia was ‑‑ it has served as a catalyst for the acceleration of our nation's digitalization agenda.

The economy blueprint or MyDigital was introduced in February of this year to position Malaysia as a leader. It is a ten‑year blueprint that includes action plans that adopt a whole of nation approach to take Malaysia to the next stage of growth and development.   
 As a start the Government will adopt a digital native and strategies to accelerate digital transformation in the public sector. As early as 2022 this transformation will see up to 80% usage of storage in the Government. It is envisioned that cloud technology will bring about the use of Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and other emerging technologies to better manage the delivery of Government and public services to our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen, For this to happen, ubiquitous and high quality digital connectivity will be required. The Jalinan Digital Negara, JENDELA initiative was launched to accelerate Malaysia’s digital connectivity, narrow the digital divide and provide quality and inclusive telecommunication services to our citizens, whilst preparing the country for 5G. JENDELA is a comprehensive 5‑year plan with two distinct phases. In Phase 1 from 2020‑2022, it seeks to achieve the following: Increase 4G coverage from 91.8% to 96.9% in populated areas. Increase mobile broadband speed from 25 megabytes to 35 megabytes. To achieve 7.5 million premises nationwide with access to gigabit speed fixed broadband. Sunset 3G by end 2021. 5G planning and implementation for commercial services in phases starting end 2021.

Phase 2 which covers 2023 and beyond, and we say just the use of fixed wireless access and fit for purpose technologies to address remaining gaps in the digital divide.   
 Madam Chair, in preparing for Digital Economy, Malaysia will also improve its interconnection ecosystem infrastructure and national backbone to attract the setting up of data centers, international exchange points and international connectivity. This policy direction will increase Malaysia's competitiveness in the region through improved international data connectivity as well as investments in hyper skill data centers and exchange points throughout the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Malaysia takes this opportunity to renew our support for the initiatives and efforts of the ITU. And we look forward to serving the membership to foster growth achieving the objectives and targets outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Goals 2030 through the use of telecommunications and ICT and technologies. We wish everyone a meaningful and fruitful discussion. Thank you and stay safe.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much, Malaysia, for those impressive achievements that you have strived to make in the era of ICTs.   
 I believe it will be fair to now try to see if Gambia can now present their statement. And so I'm inviting Your Excellency, Mr. Kah, representative of Gambia to take the floor.

>> GAMBIA: Yeah. Thank you. My video is off. My video is unable to start. I'm having technical difficulties but can you hear me?

>> CHAIR: Yes, we can hear you.

>> GAMBIA: Madam Chair, Secretary‑General of the ITU and Cabinet Ministers and heads of Delegations, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols duly observed, I'm delivering this statement on behalf of the Honorable Minister Ebrima Sillah (cutting out).

>> CHAIR: I think we lost Gambia again. So we will move on. And I will invite Ms. Jessica Rosenworcel, U.S.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you. Esteemed Excellencies, Secretary‑General and Directors and Colleagues on behalf of the United States it is an honor and pleasure to be with you. We've come together today because we all understand that new and emerging technologies can empower people to realize economic opportunity and sustainable development in the 21st Century. ITU data shows that 37% of the world's population is not connected to the Internet. Put simply we cannot allow more than one in three people to be left behind in the digital darkness.

Now discussions like this one can help bridge this global connectivity gap because when we work together we multiply our strength across the globe. As the draft opinions we are considering at this this Forum layout we have a path forward for our collective efforts to spur technological innovation and bring the benefits of broadband connectivity to everyone everywhere.   
 This path is built on a set of core building blocks and guiding principles. Let me discuss them briefly. First, Government should promote competitive markets that encourage private investment and enable innovative business models. Second, in places where it doesn't make economic sense for private companies to build networks, it is appropriate for governments to help fill the gaps, targeted policies like public/private partnerships are an effective way to spur investment. Technology should be accessible. We should invest in greater education and training to build digital literacy and reduce digital divides including the gender digital divide. Fourth, network security must be a forethought, not an afterthought.

Strong cooperation across all stakeholders is critical in mitigating security challenges and building confidence and security in the use of telecommunication ICTs. Now building on that point, the fifth building block or guiding principle is that we can't seize the opportunities of new and emerging technologies if we don't address the challenges. That's true not just for connectivity, but also for issues like inequality and skills.   
 Sixth and finally, we can learn from our experiences and let the lessons of the past guide us in the future. The COVID‑19 pandemic is a really great example of what I'm talking about because this pandemic has taught us nothing before that broadband is no longer nice to have, it is a need to have for everyone everywhere. This harsh reality is also a moment to seize. The attention of the world's policymakers has never been so focused on the power of new and emerging technologies to connect us to one another. And the ITU is well positioned as an organization to support the global community as we face these opportunities and challenges.   
 The work of BDT Director Doreen Bogdan‑Martin is a great example of what I'm talking about. She has marshalled technical expertise and expanded public/private partnerships and mobilized resources towards closing connectivity divides and promoting digital transformation for all. Under her leadership we look forward to the development conference and the Partner to Connect Initiative as an opportunity to show the world what's possible when we leverage new and emerging technologies to further economic growth, sustainable development and human progress. Doreen's leadership and vision is why the United States is excited to nominate her as the next ITU Secretary‑General.

Now in closing I would want to thank the Chairwoman, all of the members of the WTPF Informal Experts Group, Mr. Fabio Bigi as well as Secretary‑General Houlin Zhao and the ITU staff for all the critical work they have undertaken to get us where we are today.   
 I'm sure it's not always been easy. But by working together we are indeed able to achieve great things. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, United States, for those inspiring words.   
 It is now my pleasure to invite the Minister of Transport, Communications and Tourism of Suriname to take the floor, Mr. Albert Jubithana. If not, we will move to Mr. Lotte Knudsen, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the EU in Geneva.

>> EUROPEAN UNION: Thank you. We would like to thank the ITU for forming this Policy Forum. The COVID‑19 pandemic has amplified the role of the telecommunication technologies in our lives. But also exposed the vulnerabilities of our societies as well as the digital divide. As set out in the draft report from the ITU Secretary‑General, we must all redouble our efforts to address the particular challenges faced by Developing Countries in mobilizing new and emerging ICT technologies for sustainable development. In this regard the EU supports the ITU's central role in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs by providing assistance to reduce the digital divide, including the gender digital divide by increasing universal and affordable connectivity and by supporting digital literacy.

We also reiterate the need to adopt the Human Rights Based Approach throughout all these efforts in order to achieve a meaningful, inclusive and sustainable connectivity, which promotes Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to privacy and freedom of expression and which allows the right to privacy and freedom of expression and enables us all to access innovative security, a stable, open and free Internet. It is particularly important to uphold a multi‑stakeholder cooperation model.   
 Similar considerations are of central importance, also in the development of ITU standards, which need to promote not only security, but also Human Rights. And to achieve this in an environment where technological evolution outpaces the legislative and policy making process we reiterate a need for a consensus based approach and involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including non‑Governmental and private actors, who are driving much of the innovation.   
 The EU also encourages the ITU to promote standards that allow for climate bundling and energy from the ICT technologies to lower the carbon footprint. At the European Union level we have put citizens at the heart of our digital discussions. The 2030 digital compass and digital decade seeks to ensure full respect for fundamental rights and potentials in the digital space. Protection of personal data and privacy, as well as the protection of intellectual creation in the online space.   
 As the largest donor to the ITU development activities, the EU also closely cooperates with the ITU and the African Union on various objectives in Africa. We launched in December 2020 a digital for development hub which is a multi‑stakeholder coordination mechanism for sharing digital expertise within the four regions. And the first project in Africa is already operational while the similar hubs in Latin America and the Caribbean was launched this Tuesday. In the framework of the new global gateway strategy the European Union is looking forward to working with partner countries to deploy and invest in new digital infrastructures in order to achieve financially and environmentally sustainable connectivity.   
 Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, European Union, for those inspiring words. It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Nigel Jefferies who is the Chairman of the Wireless World Research Forum to make his statement.

>> NIGEL JEFFERIES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for his kind invitation to address this Forum. The Wireless World Research Forum is grateful for this opportunity to provide our comments on his report.

The Forum is a global member‑based organization, industry, academia and regulators, dedicated to mapping out the research roadmap towards the next generation of mobile communications. To do this, we need to carefully analyze current mobile systems, and the degree to which they meet the current and future needs of users, in particular those in the developing markets that will play an important role in our industry in the future.

WWRF has been extensively engaged with ITU in the evaluation of IMT‑2020 systems, and has also been analyzing the future technology trends that will enable these systems. In 2022, through the WWRF Huddle and other events and workshops, we will be working closely with our colleagues across the ITU sectors to develop a clear vision of what next generation systems will be able to achieve.

For Global Inclusion to be achieved, cost efficiency is required. Some of the functionality required in more developed countries may be expensive and not required in the initial stages of deployment in Developing Countries. So, for instance, technologies that may be considered for 2030 must be flexible enough to be upgradable through software updates. Some countries are just about to go from 3G to 4G, based on the need for a return on investments on 3G to be achieved before going onto 4G. This is an essential ingredient for businesses to succeed. Many developing countries are not currently thinking about the next generation. So it is essential that the technologies selected can be upgraded by software to Connect the Unconnected and are affordable by countries migrating from 4G to beyond IMT‑2020, either directly or via IMT‑2020.

One important area that needs policy attention is that air interface and network specifications need to support enhanced security in devices. A combination of air interface and networked infrastructure with built‑in security functionalities and increase user confidence and trust. Future systems will need to provide robust and secure solutions to address threats brought by new radio technologies and new services and new deployment cases.   
 In 2030 and beyond, sensing an advanced AI, as we said in the theme of our recent meeting will be moving from connecting things to connecting intelligence, connected intelligence. In its turn context awareness can drive the quality of experience by us users to enable the adaptation of security controls. These are pertinent for wireless systems such as the Internet of Things and those systems where ultralow latencies are required. We are encouraged to see increasing cooperation integration between terrestrial and nonterrestrial networks.   
 Telecommunications policy needs to adapt and grow. We are committed to working with ITU to achieve this. We welcome working with you all in these efforts. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Nigel Jefferies, for your statement. It is my pleasure to invite Mr. Andrew Sullivan, President and CEO, of the Internet Society to make his statement.

>> INTERNET SOCIETY: Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Internet Society, you have the floor.

>> INTERNET SOCIETY: Good day, Mr. Secretary‑General, Excellencies, Honorable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm Andrew Sullivan, President and CEO of the Internet Society. Thank you to the ITU for this Forum and for the opportunity to share our views.   
 We especially appreciated the multi‑stakeholder preparatory process leading to today's discussion. And we commend you, Mr. Secretary‑General, for a concise report on the WTPF‑21.   
 We are glad to see the report emphasize the critical role of an enabling policy environment in developing effective infrastructure investment policies. At the Internet Society, we believe that the Internet is not only a global technical infrastructure, but also a resource to enrich people's lives and a force for good in the society. We think the Internet is for everyone. While we are encouraged by the growth of connectivity according to the latest ITU figures we recognize it is no time to grow complacent. Promoting inclusive and open and collaborative and participatory processes are the most effective way to ensure connectivity because they allow stakeholders to tailor infrastructure needs to local or regional reality. We believe there is opportunity to enhance this point in the report by taking in to account inclusive processes for effective policy making.   
 Our contribution to the draft opinions expands on this observation, to close the connectivity gap we must go beyond the status quo and consider innovative approaches. This includes integrating and highlighting the term complementary access solutions in these opinions as well as adding examples such as community networks. Thus can we offer the diverse global connectivity ecosystem the opportunity to scale and thrive. To be effective, such opinions should consider regulatory frameworks that enable access to spectrum in rural, remote, unserved and underserved areas, that facilitate the acquisition of licenses.   
 Given humanity's collective experience during the global COVID‑19 pandemic we cannot help recognizing the importance of the Internet to people. Let us not tire to expand infrastructure and enable complementary forms of connectivity. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. It is now my pleasure to invite the CEO of SAMENA Communications, Council, Mr. Bocar Ba to take the floor.

>> BOCAR BA: Dear Madam Chair, Secretary‑General, Excellencies, industry colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening, from Dubai. It is a real privilege for me to offer some views on the issues arising from the emergence of new telecommunication and ICT service and technologies for which we require future policies and evidence‑based regulatory regimes. In the current times we need impactful outcomes which should be as equally connected to the success of Governments as well as the success and sustainability of the private sector. There are many opportunities that scale on broadband networks and which drive digital transformation that can be leveraged to contribute to addressing some of the most oppressing challenges across many sectors and society.   
 First and foremost, 3.6 billion people of the world remain offline and need to be connected. This requires tremendous collective efforts for all ecosystem stakeholders, including investment, resources, new methods and mechanisms and most importantly, a multilaterally driven collaborative mindset that must prevail across the board. Policymakers and regulators facing the challenging task, adopting new and innovative regulatory frameworks and sustainable financial approaches to providing universal digital access, better cross‑border data policies and many more set against the backdrop of a changing world where old frameworks policy and models no longer hold or fail to address what they were created for.   
 Given the global nature of the Digital Economy and its strengths, it is imperative that there be global level responses to the connectivity gap and to data governance to ensure that no one is left behind, requiring an objective realignment of shared priorities and responsibilities.   
 In this regard, Madam Chair, I would like to stress two particularly important aspects for future policy making and governance. This relates to the need for, No. 1, firstly, innovative and sustainable funding, standing and investment models that are broader and include contributors. And predictable and sustainable contribution from all those that benefit from the investment.

Here it gives me immense pleasure to share with you that the UN Broadband Commission has released a new report which points to some important recommendations that may help overcome the shortage of required information and knowledge to deal with prevailing connectivity provision and funding issues. And secondly, globally harmonize middle ground approaches to cross‑border data flow and better governance as the expansion of data flows, matter for a more equitable and sustainable way of digital transformation and achievement of many of the SDGs.

As we approach 2022 it is time to reflect and focus your efforts on building better communication services that are inclusive, providing enhanced digital experiences, increasing business and fostering sustainable investment. It is almost inevitable that we should focus on the need for reducing taxation and increasing incentives in investment, adopting future from allocation and approaches and ratification of spectrum interference issues and supporting innovation in the creation, adoption and championing by the Government of New digital services.

With this I conclude my note and wish to extend in advance a very happy new year to you all with best wishes for your health and well‑being. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Ba, for those enumerating contributions. It is now my pleasure to invite Dr. Thomas Zielke, director of the Office of National and International Standardization Policy of Germany to take the floor. Germany, you have the floor. Kindly unmute your microphone. You are still muted.

>> GERMANY: Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Okay. I will start my contribution. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Again sorry for the delay. Dear Secretary‑General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all, I would like to thank the ITU for organizing and running the WTPF. Many thanks also go to the Informal Experts Group headed by Italy, Mr. Fabio Bigi, which developed the draft opinions as the basis and for the Forum's content.   
 Since time is short I would like to refer only to one of the draft opinions, namely Opinion 5, the use of telecommunications/ICT in COVID‑19 and future pandemic's preparedness and response, explicitly refers to the necessity to take an active role in developing and disseminating standards and Guidelines and best practices. Thereby in cooperation with other stakeholders. We very much welcome the effort, certainly the ITU has to take an active role here.   
 However what doesn't mean taking an active role? I would suggest the meaning should be two‑fold. First, of course, content wise and I think this is self‑understanding. Second as in cooperation with other organizations, which also means supporting solutions and developing them further.   
 Since the topic at hand is of overwhelming global relevance, so my Delegation recommends to jointly work with WHO and other UN organizations and stakeholders, sectors related to telecommunications and, of course, with the private sector. In this case represented by other international standards setting institutions but also with relevant companies in the forefront in the fight against the pandemics. In order to achieve the best and multi‑focused set of standards and Guidelines, in order to help mitigate the effects of COVID‑19 and future pandemics.

The ITU has an excellent technical reputation which qualifies to show leadership. No other international body of states and Governments with audits, contributors from the private sector and signs the ITU can advance the international standardization of communication technologies. Let us consider how we put, also include small and medium size companies in their innovative strength in this process. Germany has presented our own candidate for the ITU's director position in 2022 and does apply for the Council. We are looking to extend our contribution to ITU's work. Looking forward to seeing you on the occasion of the first onsite event in 2022. Thank you to all you.

>> CHAIR: Indeed, looking forward to meeting each other at the next in‑person event of the ITU, some time in 2022.   
 Thank you, Dr. Thomas Zielke. And now I invite Dr. Zhong Luo, vice‑president of Huawei to take the floor. Huawei, you have the floor.

>> HUAWEI: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is Zhong Luo from Huawei. I'm based in Switzerland. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, we are proud to take part in the Forum. It fosters achievement in Sustainable Development Goals and leads the way for fruitful collaboration to develop policies that provide digital, safe and affordable technology to everyone.   
 Huawei's mission is to bring digital to every person's home and organization, fully digitally connected in the entire world. This WTPF comes first as a great opportunity to contribute and get involved in the process of developing relevant telecommunications, industry policies, leveraging the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies. The ITU is a global convening platform for this leading the way to build infrastructure and the policy models to connect the unconnected and drive the development of emerging technologies from a Digital Economy while accelerating the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.   
 There is no doubt that the world now is facing a very crucial stage of financial growth, the use of digital technology and services. This can only be official to humanity if the appropriate and effective policy and regulations are in place.   
 The current five opinions that will be discussed in the WTPF are good examples of the collaboration and the crucialization of the inputs from around the world. Together we will discuss how to best harness these emerging technologies to echo the most changes, including the COVID‑19 pandemic and accelerate the achievements of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Those five opinions of WTPF‑21 addressing emerging technologies such as 5G, Big Data and OTT will be further discussed and developed and enriched.   
 Among the three Working Groups in the coming days, digital connectivity and infrastructure are essential building blocks in the digital ecosystem. And we believe that IPv6 justifies some special attention since it is crucial for broadband connectivity, multimedia and other digital services.

Since IPv6 adoption today is highly ‑‑ this is at a global collaboration. It is essential and indispensable to take action to implement a global IPv6 development. And more important, to avoid the global IPv6 network being reduced in a series of IPv6 islands. Once again thank you very much for all the senior officials around the world, Distinguished Guests, and Secretary‑General, Mr. Houlin Zhao and other members of ITU leadership, other ITU staff members, and all the participants today, it is your joint effort that makes this meeting happen.   
 So we are looking forward to a very successful and productive three‑day meeting. So I would also Huawei and our experts will take active part in the following discussion. Once again, thank you very much all and Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Zhong Luo, for those kind words.   
 Now my pleasure to invite Ms. Stacie Hoffmann of the United Kingdom, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to take the floor.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you very much, Chairwoman, for the opportunity to make a short statement. We appreciate very much the work for the Secretary‑General in preparing his report and the ITU Secretariat in convening this Forum at such an unprecedented time. As a Global Forum for exchanges, views and information we look forward to discussion this week for sustainable development. I would also like to take the opportunity to commend the Informal Experts Group for all its hard work and dedication, working within the constraints of our virtual meetings. We are grateful to Mr. Fabio Bigi for chairing the IEG and his continued support. It was an honor to work alongside such a wide variety of policy experts from around the world as the UK Government's representative in the IEG. The group has done great work to enable this Forum to consider five significant texts. We hope that in due course the Forum will adopt then. We are doubtlessly all only too aware that virtual works, methods add an extra level of complexity. However it is also important to acknowledge that virtual working has offered an opportunity for many Member States and other stakeholders to participate more meaningfully in the process. And that the WTPF IEG meetings would likely have been less accessible in another format. This gives strength to the work we have done.

The range of topics that these opinions and the report reflect a variety of discussions going on within the ITU and international organizations and other fora. The opinions put forward by the IEG reflect many hours of collaboration and effort to understand the opportunities and challenges before us.   
 It is up to Governments as policymakers to ensure we do our best to create an enabling policy environment, while also working to include other stakeholders in that process so that we have a better chance at achieving our goals. To ensure the benefits of sustainable development are inclusive and affordable. Connectivity is crucial, especially as it encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. Education, skills and training are critically important in order to mobilize new and emerging telecommunications and ICTs. And we can work together to share best practices and promote the availability of materials to bridge that divide.   
 I will close by saying that we cannot achieve this on our own. And there is great value in bringing together Governments, Intergovernmental organizations, and other experts to work towards a common goal of mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ ICTs for sustainable development. We thank the ITU for providing us the opportunity to discuss these issues and more at the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum. Thank you, Chairwoman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, United Kingdom, for those wonderful works and the work you did alongside the IEG group.   
 It is now my pleasure to invite Ms. Keer Zhu, Deputy Director General of the Republic of China to take the floor.

>> CHINA: Thank you, Chair. Distinguished Delegates, Honorable Director‑General, Mr. Houlin Zhao, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning, good evening, and good night. First, we would like to thank ITU for organizing this Forum. We believe that this is of huge importance to promote the theme of mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications and ICTs for sustainable development. China has always adhered to people‑centered development philosophy. And we have focused on our efforts in addressing inequality and inefficient development. Currently, China has realized the same network and same speed for rural areas and the city.   
 We would like to cooperate with multiple parties and share practices with all parties so that more people will enjoy the dividends of Digital Economy. We also attach great importance to the development of 5.G and we have been actively supporting enterprises and industrial organizations to innovate their application models, enrich their application scenarios and improve the ecosystem.   
 We believe that research institutions, industry and academia should continue to strengthen standards, research and development as well as industrial cooperation in the field of 5G and other emerging technologies. So as to promote transformative break‑throughs in emerging technologies so that can better serve sustainable development of mankind. And third we hope that we will pursue mutual benefits and bring incorporation and make joint efforts to promote global digital governance. We always take an open and cooperative attitude and is willing to strengthen cooperation with other countries in this world. We support ITU to play a greater role, build further consensus and promote the healthy coordinated and orderly development of the global ITC sector.   
 And we will also want to apply for being a Member State for the next period. And we also support the Secretary‑General, Mr. Houlin Zhao's work. And finally I hope the Forum can produce constructive results and achieve a complete success. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, China, for your statement. It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Bharat Bhatia, President of the ITU‑APT Foundation of India to take the floor. ITU‑APT Foundation, you have the floor. Kindly unmute your microphone.

>> ITU‑APT FOUNDATION: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good day to you and all distinguished participants. First, I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for his kind invitation to address the World Telecommunication ICT Policy Forum 2021. ITU‑ APT Foundation of India is a non‑profit, nonpolitical, nonpartisan foundation in the Asia‑Pacific Region based out of India. We are working for the last 18 years with the prime objective of encouraging involvement of professionals, corporates, public sector, private sector industries, India organizations and institutions, in the activities of ITU and the Asia‑Pacific Telecommunity APT. As a digital telecom organization and as a sector member of the ITU, IEFEI is an important partner of the ITU between ITU and India.   
 We are an active participant in the activities of ITU through our Delegations and contributions to a number of events and meetings.   
 IEFEI has been engaged with ITU with issues on public safety sector and 5G. We are also engaged with all the three sectors of ITU on disaster communications. Earlier this year ITU published the details specification for 2020 that will support several users not only for consumers but also for industries and enterprises. One of these technologies was submitted by India and IEFEI played a pivotal role in getting the certification. Required coordination and sectors.   
 IEFEI has proposed initial thoughts. India has been at the forefront of using wireless technologies in responding to the challenge of COVID‑19 pandemic. It is a matter of great satisfaction that India has administered over 1.3 billion COVID‑19 vaccine doses. All vaccinations are being managed through the mobile wireless network.

Before I conclude, I want to thank the ITU, in particular the Secretary‑General, Mr. Houlin Zhao; the Deputy Secretary‑General, Mr. Malcolm Johnson; the director of the Radiocommunication Bureau, Mr. Mario Maniewicz; the director of the Telecommunications Bureau, Mr. Lee and the director of the Development Bureau, Doreen Bogdan‑Martin. In conclusion we compliment the ITU for role in promoting harmonized policies and regulations as these are key to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Bharat Bhatia, for your statement. I'd now like to give the floor to Ms. Najat Mokhtar, Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

>> NAJAT MOKHTAR: Thank you. I'm honored to join you today at the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum. This is the first time that the IAEA has participated in this global meeting. As we speak, Madam Chair, we are living through a pandemic. The world is facing immense challenges, climate change, food security and the list goes on. The world can tackle these challenges only if we work together bringing new and sharing new innovative technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you may know IAEA more for its work, peaceful users of nuclear technology and our work contributes directly to 9 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. And here Artificial Intelligence has enormous potential in accelerating safe, secure and peaceful and sustainable users of nuclear technologies. This is literally the core of our mandate. This year we have held the pioneer technical meeting for Artificial Intelligence. And we are pioneering with ITU and other UN organizations and Artificial Intelligence for good.

Excellencies, Artificial Intelligence is already applied across various nuclear fields. In medicine, for example, it improves the diagnosis and treatment of cancer through improved medical imaging interpretation, more accurate treatment plan and adaptive radio therapy treatment. Artificial Intelligence will play an important role in understanding the long‑standing impacts of Zoonotic diseases like COVID‑19 and health outcomes like heart function. To help improve design performance, safety and fuel load.

It can also help manage environmental, hydrological and ecological resources by analyzing huge amounts of data, such as those stored in the Global Network of Isotopes in Precipitation database, run by the Agency and the World Meteorological Organization.

Can be used in radiation technologies including radiopharmaceutical production and radiation protection. However, the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence also comes with challenges of transparency, data privacy, trust, security, and other ethical concerns as well as regulatory challenges.   
 We can ‑‑ we can address those issues together, if we are seeking open dialogue and collaboration. We look forward to joining work with other ITU Focus Groups in establishing Artificial Intelligence for atoms, knowledge sharing platform as well as in supporting education, training, and community building in this area. I thank you for your time and wish you all a successful Forum. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much. It is now my pleasure to invite the final speaker for the afternoon, His Excellency, Mr. Mohammed Kah, the Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the Swiss Federation to give his statement on behalf of the Minister of Communications and ICT of Gambia. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: The Ambassador is not connected. So I believe you can open the floor.

>> CHAIR: I believe the Ambassador is not connected at this time. And so let me thank you all Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, for sharing your experiences, thoughts and policies on various issues with us this morning on the value of emerging technologies to empower people, affordable connectivity solutions, innovative financing, utilizing the Universal Service Fund and public/private partnership solutions amongst others, digital skills, digital literacy, Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies, infrastructure sharing, to improve connectivity. Above all you all reaffirmed your support for the ITU while also appreciating the work that has been done to enable us to have this Forum. And all the way, the means and ways the ITU has assisted the various Member States and sector members, working ‑‑ those who are working and reducing the digital divides, especially the gender digital divide spoke about those initiatives. And highlighting the need to involve all stakeholders to develop climate friendly ICT solutions, build secure networks and protection of intellectual properties amongst others. We really appreciate your contributions.   
 And it is now time to end this Plenary.   
 I think we've come to the end of all those who would like to make interventions. So this now concludes the first Plenary session. Are there any other comments now that we have given the floor to all those who have registered for speaking slots? I would open the floor for ITU or UN agencies who would like to intervene. Any other comments from the floor?

>> Algeria and Tunisia.

>> CHAIR: Algeria, you have the floor to make your intervention.

>> ALGERIA: Hello. Can you hear me?

>> CHAIR: Yes, we can hear you. Please proceed.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you very much. Madam Chair, good afternoon and congratulations on your excellent governance of this Plenary session. Distinguished Delegates, Secretary‑General of the ITU, at the outset I would like to warmly thank the Informal Experts Group for the work they have done. Without forgetting the work that has been done Fabio in drawing up the documents for the Forum on policies for the deployment of new and emerging telecommunication IT services. Fundamental principles have been established on inclusive policies to ensure development so that everyone can benefit from opportunities offered by ICTs or strengthening confidence in their use so that we can have a use of technologies allowing for better lives.

Opportunities for digital inclusivity of the UN needs to be mentioned in the report, in particular when it comes to inclusive digital development of all. In terms of the digital divide that we are still seeing in Developing Countries, including the African continent which I represent, which Algeria is part of, ICT and emerging technologies have the potential to accelerate digital transformation and allowing progress towards digital development so that the countries do not suffer even more from the digital divide.   
 Discussions on policies on emerging technologies are part of the ITU's action plan as a means to have socioeconomic development in our countries. Emerging technologies are considered as an essential tool which affects all areas of life and greatly contributes to the development of society, simplifying citizen's lives and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is an opportunity that we have today in order to allow us to achieve those SDGs. We want to have an appropriate ecosystem to ensure that these technologies can be used.   
 This includes through updating the relative legal framework, improving basic infrastructure, strengthening connectivity, reducing the digital divide between countries as well as for women, children and vulnerable populations and increasing confidence in digital security.   
 We should think about the areas of the world that are seeing the greatest economic and socioeconomic challenges in this context. We are convinced that the Forum will come to nonbinding recommendations but which will allow for Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and all emerging technologies to be used wisely with the support of our organization. I wish every success to all the participants in the Forum. Thank you very much for having given me the floor.

And I would like to state that I hope we will all be able to meet in person again for the major conferences of our union because we are very frustrated to have not been able to participate in this Forum in person. We do hope that the pandemic will soon end and we will be able to meet in person. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Algeria. We really share those sentiments and you have spoken our mind about the frustrations we are all facing having to have this meeting virtually. It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Tunisia. Tunisia, you have the floor.

>> TUNISIA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for having given me the floor. In Tunisia we would have appreciated having an in‑person meeting ‑‑

>> INTERPRETER: The sound is cut off. The speaker can no longer be heard. The speaker can no longer be heard by the interpreters.

>> CHAIR: He has muted his microphone. Tunisia, please unmute your microphone. Thank you. Yeah. Please proceed.

>> TUNISIA: Can you hear me now?

>> CHAIR: Yes, we can hear you. Please proceed.

>> TUNISIA: Okay. Can you hear me? Okay. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much. All of the ideas that have been reflected in this very important report can provide us with a roadmap allowing us in the years to come to guide our policies, the different countries will be trying to adapt these Guidelines to our national contexts. In Tunisia, we try to always actively participate in the activities organized by the ITU. You will remember that Tunisia played a very important role in the Information Society Summit which was held in 2005 in Tunisia. And we do hope that the next Plenipotentiary Conference will be able to be held in Romania next year.   
 We are aiming to participate actively in all meetings of the ITU as I said. We would like to renew the candidacy of our country to the Council of Administration of the union. We would like to ask you to support the candidacy of Bilel Jamoussi as the director of the Radiocommunications Bureau. He plays a great role in that sector. I apologize, the Bureau of Standardization.   
 That Bureau plays a very important role in the standardization of telecommunications. Of course, in conclusion, I would like to thank all of the participants in this Forum, which we consider to be of great interest. We do hope that we will be able to see you again soon at the upcoming conferences including the conference on standardization which will be held in March.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Tunisia, for your statement. Are there any more interventions from the floor? I don't see any other hands up. This now concludes the first Plenary session. And I therefore thank all of you participants and Delegates and Excellencies for making it possible to have this Plenary session.   
 And I will adjourn the meeting and pass the floor to the Chair of Working Group 1 to start the next meeting of this group. I will invite us all to take a five‑minute break. Please it is for five minutes. But kindly stay connected to the platform. Our work has just begun. Thank you, Secretary‑General, and the entire staff of the ITU for making this happen. Would have loved to have done it in person. So thank you, Excellencies. We look forward to meeting you in the next session.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Very good. Excellent.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you. Excellent.   
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