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# The regulatory wheel of change: Regulation for digital transformation

Global Symposium for Regulators,  
core sessions

1-3 September 2020



GENEVA  
2000



GENEVA  
2001



GENEVA  
2002



GENEVA  
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GENEVA  
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HAMMAMET  
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DUBAI  
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PATTAYA  
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BEIRUT  
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DAKAR  
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ARMENIA CITY  
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COLOMBO  
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WARSAW  
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MANAMA  
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LIBREVILLE  
2015



SHARM EL-SHEIKH  
2016



NASSAU  
2017



GENEVA  
2018



PORT VILA  
2019



GENEVA  
2020

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International Telecommunication Union  
Place des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland

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# The regulatory wheel of change: Regulation for digital transformation

Global Symposium for Regulators 2020,  
core sessions,  
1-3 September 2020



As GSR celebrated its 20th edition, the global community of ICT regulators celebrated 20 years of evolving regulatory frameworks. The anniversary event focused on providing concrete guidance towards achieving meaningful connectivity in the digital transformation.

In addition to the high-level panels on topical, cutting edge policy and regulatory issues, GSR-20 featured interactive sessions and trainings, brought together regulators and policy makers from around the world and provided a global platform for discussions.

GSR-20 provided ITU Members with the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge, collaborate and identify evolving regulatory tools and approaches to bring affordable, safe, secure and trusted connectivity and online access and use to people everywhere.

GSR-20 attracted 609 participants from 120 countries in the core sessions.

[www.itu.int/gsr20](http://www.itu.int/gsr20)



## Heads of Regulators Executive Roundtable



## Keynote

- Mr Ajit Pai, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), United States

## Interveners

- Mr Charles Millogo, Chairman, Autorité de Régulation des Communications électroniques et des Postes (ARCEP), Burkina Faso
- Mr Carlos Lugo, Executive Director, Comisión de Regulación de Comunicaciones (CRC) Colombia
- Mr Eng. Hossam El Gamal, Executive President, National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA), Egypt
- Professor Américo Muchanga, Chairman of the Board, INCM, Mozambique
- Mr Oleg Pekos, First Deputy Minister, Ministry for Development of Information Technologies and Communications, Uzbekistan

In his keynote, Mr Ajit Pai spoke about broadband as an indispensable lifeline. Besides the many negative effects brought about by COVID-19, the pandemic also accelerated

a positive shift in the public policy arena – it effectively ended the debate on the importance of Internet access. It is now overwhelmingly seen as critical so citizens can be part of the digital society and economy. Panelists echoed this statement comparing broadband to water and electricity utilities.

While the pandemic has had a dramatic impact in many areas and has exacerbated systemic inequalities, it also showed how important the sector of telecommunication/ICT is. The global crisis has triggered new opportunities and regulators and policy makers should proactively seek to unleash those. COVID-19 has accelerated the digitalization process and the roll-out of online services in key areas such as remote learning, e-health and e-government. The collective efforts of all stakeholders should persist to facilitate the economic and social recovery across regions.

The now-established [ITU model of generation of ICT regulations](#) has proven pivotal in assessing national regulatory capacity and providing guidance on enhancing regulatory frameworks with resilience, efficiency, and



openness towards bridging the digital divide and building back better.

The panelists shared important lessons learned from the pandemic:

- Digital is the key to resilience.
- Broadband for all is a must. Governments and the private sector should support each other's efforts in connecting all citizens to online public services and communication networks.
- There is a need to accelerate both the adoption of next-generation public policies and further regulatory reform. Regulatory agility and flexibility are the new norm. Reduced regulatory barriers create incentives to invest in next generation networks.
- Meaningful connectivity is the foundation of the digital economy and society. Every effort should be made to expand it to reach rural and remote areas, marginalized groups, communities and persons with disabilities.
- Support to start-ups is essential as often they are at the front line offering local services and applications to the community.

- More channels and fluid mechanisms for international collaboration will allow for sharing experiences and finding common solutions.

The GSR-20 Heads of Regulators' Round Table debated and adopted the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the GSR Best Practice Guidelines *"The Gold Standard for Digital Regulation"*.

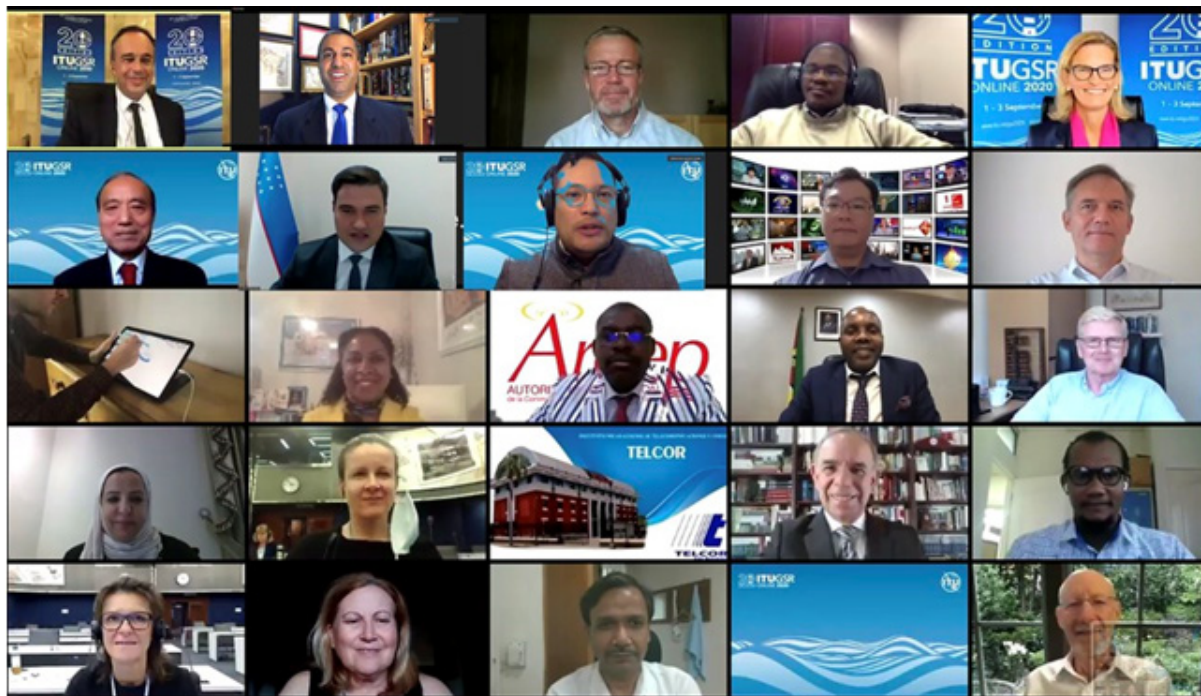
The Guidelines are available online in the six official ITU languages:

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/GSR/2020/Pages/default.aspx>

Key questions still need to be given new answers in the aftermath of the pandemic: how to make the service reliable? How to improve the quality of experience? How to make the service affordable for everyone? How can we help operators to make the service affordable for everyone? Can we make spectrum available at less price than it used to be normally?

The GSR-20 sessions continued such discussions, with panellists providing meaningful answers to those and other important questions.

# GSR-20 Opening Ceremony



## Speakers

- Mr Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union
- Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union
- Mr Dan Sjöblom, Director-General, Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS), Chair of BEREC and GSR Chairman, Sweden

The ITU Secretary-General, Mr Houlin Zhao, opened the 20th anniversary event of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) recalling the important role it has played since its creation in 2000. GSR has accompanied the global community of ICT regulators through prosperous times and through difficult times. Regulators have got an exclusive platform to share their views and experiences – some exciting, and others frustrating. GSR has carried on as it has provided valuable, practical, and mindful insights and listening support. At GSR,

regulators have crafted together best practice guidelines and debated topical issues.

Collaborative regulation has been steadily gaining momentum, reflecting a data-driven world where the line between the ICT sector and other industries has become increasingly blurry. ITU has experienced this digital transformation first-hand, with new players active in different sectors of the economy joining our organization in large numbers and becoming an integral part of our deliberations and discussions.

In her opening remarks, the BDT Director, Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, noted that the COVID crisis has thrown digital technologies sharply into the spotlight. In the wake of the crisis, with digital connectivity finally occupying its rightful place at the top of every nation's agenda, the work of regulators and policy makers has never been so critical. Getting the policy mix right to enable rapid growth in networks and services has never mattered so much. Throughout the developing world, digital technologies can serve

as the transformational catalyst that overturns chronic development roadblocks and finally puts vital services like education, health care and access to information within reach of billions.

Ms Bogdan-Martin observed that the Fifth generation collaborative ICT regulatory measures and tools are the new frontier for regulators and policy makers as they work towards maximizing the opportunity afforded by digital transformation. Employing these measures and tools will help ensure that more people in more countries can reap the benefits of the digital economy, improving people's lives at a pace and scale never seen before.

The GSR Chairman, Mr Dan Sjöblom congratulated ITU for holding successfully GSR events for 20 years, and acknowledged that GSR-20 is the celebration of two decades of

evolving regulatory frameworks and meaningful debates among ICT leaders and stakeholders. GSR will continue accompanying regulators through the current challenges and building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Chair of BEREC, Mr Sjöblom reiterated the importance of GSR as global platform for ICT regulators to shape new regulatory approaches to accelerate the inclusive growth of ICTs around the world. Mr Sjöblom endorsed the GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines, which build on contributions from regulators and other stakeholders, and the wisdom of the previous editions spanning over two decades on the way through the digital transformation. These GSR-20 Guidelines, he asserted, will help regulators and policy-makers navigate uncharted territory ahead of us in the aftermath of unprecedented disruption.

# Session 1: Fit-for-Purpose institutional frameworks for digital transformation: Demystifying the collaborative regulator in a post-COVID digital ecosystem



## Moderator

- Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union

## Panelists

- Ms Nerida O'Loughlin, Chair, Australian Communications and Media Authority, Australia
- Mr Louis-Marc Sakala, General Director, Agence de Régulation des Postes et Communications Électroniques (ARPC), Congo
- Ms Bety Aichatou Habibou Oumani, President of Council, Autorité de Régulation des Télécommunications et de la Poste, Niger
- Mr Rafael Eduardo Muentz Schwarz, Chairman of the Board of Directors,

Organismo Supervisor de Inversión Privada en Telecomunicaciones (OSIPTEL), Peru

- Ms Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo, Director General, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC),
- Mr Fabrizio Hochschild, Special Adviser on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the United Nations' 75th Anniversary, United Nations Secretariat
- Mr Kevin Martin, Vice-President for US Public Policy, Facebook
- Mr Alan Kurešević, Vice-President, Engineering, SES Techcom

The current pandemic has highlighted how critically important digital technologies are to every aspect of our lives. Our reliance on digital technologies will further increase in the coming decades. If we fail to make connectivity universal and meaningful, inequalities will

deepen further and those without access will be left even further behind.

The Secretary-General of the UN has set out an [ambitious roadmap to promote universal connectivity by 2030](#). It outlines a multistakeholder cooperation and a multistakeholder investment platform to achieve global connectivity.

Ms Bogdan-Martin noted that the seismic shifts of the past six months would bring new challenges to regulators' mandates and roles. She believes, nevertheless, that 5th generation regulation will be the 'fit-for-purpose' framework that will allow us to navigate the uncharted waters that lie ahead. She further argued that, in such uncertain times, the Best Practice Guidelines developed during GSR-20 may prove to be the most important roadmap for the digital ecosystem the global community of regulators has ever formulated.

Regulators will be the master builders of the extended digital economy.

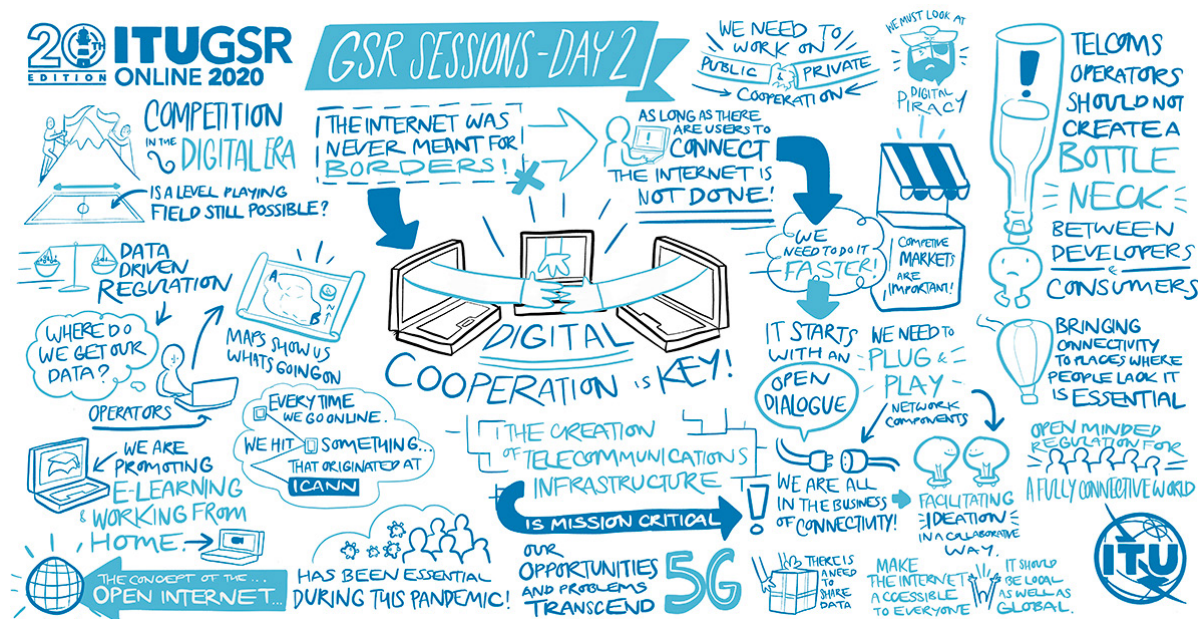
- They have a special role to play in [bridging market and social divides](#) by enabling competition to drive the prices of services down and make affordable connectivity a reality.

- The regulatory process needs to be [outcome-based, future-focused and technology-neutral](#).
- Collaboration will be key to tackle regulatory challenges – across economic sectors, national borders and degrees of regulatory maturity. Shared responsibilities and collective thinking can pave the way to turning the crisis into a myriad of opportunities.
- The regulatory capacity of developing countries needs to step up to allow leveraging on the digital transformation.
- Regulators need to be nimble and adapt to new social and economic imperatives. They need to come up with sound responses to unprecedented challenges and carry the promise of digital transformation through despite the odds.
- Regulators need to lead, listen and learn as they go in times of uncertainty and change across economic sectors and across borders.

The pandemic has not put a stop to innovation; it has spurred new ideas and opened new avenues for technology, business and regulation. An inclusive, iterative process of setting the roles and rules in the digital economy will go a long way towards achieving government priorities while providing dynamic space for private sector stakeholders to thrive. Keeping the channels for dialogue open to all stakeholders is essential in setting the tone of next-generation regulation and leveraging their strengths.



## Session 2: Competition in the digital era: a collaborative and cooperative approach



### Moderator

- Mr Amir Azeem Bajwa, Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)

### Panelists

- Mr Serge Abiteboul, Member of Board, Autorité de Régulation des Communications électroniques et des Postes (ARCEP), France
- Mr Mario Fromow, Commissioner, Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones (IFT), Mexico
- Ms Annemarie Sipkes, Telecommunications, Transport and Postal Services Director, ACM, Netherlands
- Mr Amir Al-Gibreen, VP Regulatory Affairs, STC, Saudi Arabia
- Mr Göran Marby, CEO & President, ICANN
- Mr Attilio Zani, Executive director, Telecom Infra Project (TIP)
- Mr Karim Antonio Lesina, Senior Vice President, International External and Regulatory Affairs, AT&T

### Interveners

- Ms Julie Kearney, Head of Regulatory Affairs, Loon LCC
- Ms Patricia Cooper, Vice President Satellite Government Affairs, SpaceX

Digital infrastructure proved rather resilient during the pandemic and regulators around the world need to be granted due credit for their work on extending connectivity over the past decades.

Beyond connectivity, regulatory challenges today outnumber those at the dawn of the century, exponentially. The rise of global digital platforms has been a game changer for both consumers and regulators. They have shaped the digital transformation patterns in many areas, leveraging connectivity and bringing benefits to consumers in all regions. Digital platforms have also redrawn the boundaries of digital markets and have induced new social phenomena. Market dynamics and diversity have also taken on a new spin. "To intervene or

to let go” – this has been one of the thorniest regulatory dilemmas.

Regulators have been keeping a watchful eye and an open mind through the rapid growth of digital platforms. In the process, they have faced important questions and adopted new approaches.

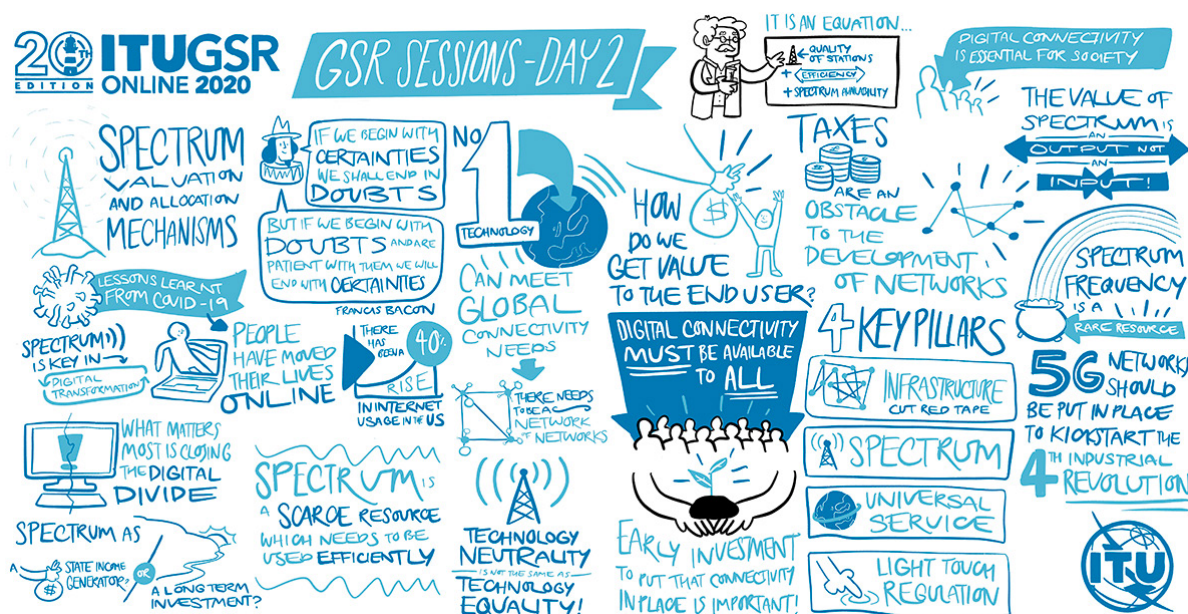
- **Competition revisited:** competition remains one of the best ways to stimulate market growth and investment. Regulatory certainty, accountability and transparency should frame competition in digital markets.
- **Regulation breaking barriers:** no market stakeholder should be in a position to prevent other market players or consumers from accessing online services, communications or content.
- **Regulation as an equalizer:** the same principles should govern the regulatory treatment of all market players – however, the concrete tools and rules need to be adapted to the nature and size of market players, taking into account the competitive advantages and disadvantages they face.
- **Data-driven regulation** has been applied in some countries as a response to the dynamic pace of the digital world. Data has two main advantages: on one hand, real-time information is more useful to consumers and empowers them to make better choices; on the other hand, regulators can thus detect problems earlier and be more reactive and agile.
- **Collaborative regulation** brings institutional brain power together to design future-

proof regulatory tracks. Thinking through different aspects of technologies, services and their use by consumers allows to create an enabling environment for investment and regulatory incentives for innovation and connectivity.

- **A balanced mix of ex-ante and ex-post regulation** can have a multiplier effect on investment in infrastructure along competition across digital markets.
- **A regulatory approach based on compliance to standards** can provide a clear and transparent framework for extending network connectivity. Such an approach will create space for new business models and stimulate competition while maintaining innovation.
- **Co-creation of regulation and partnerships** is an important way to bring access to the areas that need it most. Public-private collaboration can be a powerful drive to modernize and harmonize regulatory strategies.
- **Digital cooperation across borders** can unlock the potential of the Internet and resolve national issues. It can thus create momentum for renewed efforts to extend connectivity.
- **Proactively seeking new ways of connecting people** has become a matter of urgency. New tools and ideas need to be brought into the policy and regulatory debate to match the needs of both the connected and the unconnected, and make the most of the assets at hand.

Whatever the chosen approach, technologies and business models will continue to evolve and so should regulatory regimes and thinking.

# Session 3: Spectrum valuation and allocation mechanisms for new services (e.g. 5G) post WRC-19 and post-COVID



## Moderator

- Mr Leonardo Euler de Moraes, Chairman, Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações (ANATEL), Brazil

## Panelists

- Mr Mario Maniewicz, Director, Radiocommunication Bureau, International Telecommunication Union
- Mr Brendan Carr, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), United States
- Professor Konstantinos Masselos, President, Hellenic Telecommunications & Post Commission (EETT), Greece
- Dr Ir. Ismail, Director General, Spectrum Management and Postal and ICT Devices, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, Indonesia
- Ms Jennifer Manner, Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, Hughes Network Systems

- Ms Jayne Stancavage, Global Executive Director, Digital Infrastructure Policy, INTEL
- Mr Stephen Pentland, Head of Spectrum, Public Policy, Vodafone Group

## Intervener

- Mr Mustapha Bessi, Head of the Frequency Spectrum Management Division, Agence Nationale de Réglementation des Télécommunications (ANRT), Morocco

"Radiocommunications and the spectrum they require are at the core of the digital transformation, a solid framework is needed to ensure that the spectrum is available and is used as rationally and as efficiently as possible."

Mr Mario Maniewicz, Director, Radiocommunication Bureau, ITU

COVID-19 helped to put in evidence what matters most: closing the digital divide and boosting the resiliency of the networks.



According to panelists, new and revised spectrum regulations will converge towards four main regulatory goals in the coming years:

- Drive down the cost of infrastructure
- Facilitate market-based mechanisms for spectrum management
- Extend ICT infrastructure in areas where there is currently no business case for digital connectivity
- Stimulate investment through light touch regulation.

Several different strategies have been put to work towards those goals in the midst of the COVID-19 emergency response.

- **Update and modernize regulatory policies and rules governing infrastructure:** as an example, secondary markets for spectrum, which allows spectrum swapping and spectrum sharing, can provide rapid and efficient response in times of crisis.
- **Hold extensive public consultations** on the integration of new technologies in national spectrum markets.
- **Ensure timely availability of sufficient amounts of spectrum** to enable high quality, widespread and affordable broadband for all.
- **Prioritize mid- and long-term returns over short-term financial returns:** Spectrum valuation techniques oriented towards broader social and economic goals coupled with flexible payment schemes and longer

licence duration (15-20 years) can provide additional incentives for investment.

- **Craft new incentives for operators to cover uneconomic areas or serve marginalized groups**
- **Deliver technology neutral spectrum licences** to facilitate the rollout and deployment of new services during emergencies.
- **Leverage on multiple technologies, connectivity models and diverse network and services providers** to deliver the network of networks, because only one technology cannot bring the solution to global connectivity.
- With regards to **5G spectrum licensing**, regulators need to look at the big picture and learn from past experiences from different countries. Spectrum auctions should not distort competition in mobile markets. By mandating open access to Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs), spectrum regulators can strengthen competition and tap into innovative services and niche markets.
- **Rethink the mechanisms for allocating available funding to meet connectivity goals:** opening new channels and considering new categories of beneficiaries can spark new competitive dynamics and facilitate the achievement of regulatory goals faster.
- **Consider reviewing** taxes and duties in view of reducing barriers to the deployment of networks.

## Session 4: Digital safety and security: What next in a post-COVID world?



### Moderator

- Professor Américo Muchanga, Chairman of the Board, INCM, Mozambique

### Panelists

- Ms Hannia Vega, Board Member, Sutel, Costa Rica
- Mr Zulkarnain Mohd Yasin, Chief Compliance Officer, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Malaysia
- Mr Joe Hall, Senior VP for Strong Internet, ISOC
- Ms Natasha Jackson, Head of Public Policy and Consumer Affairs, GSMA
- Mr Derek O'Halloran, Head of Shaping the Future of Digital Economy and New Value Creation, World Economic Forum
- Mr Steve Harvey, CEO, BitSight

### Intervener

- Mr Jacques Francoeur, Chief Scientist & Founder, Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy (CIP)

Panelists concurred that the way we use technology has totally changed over the past few months, which set the discussion on cybersecurity in a new context.

Actors with malicious intentions are taking advantage of this new situation. The modus operandi of online villains is similar as before; however, we have been witnessing a dramatic increase in social engineering attacks since the beginning of the pandemic.

In order to build a secure and trusted digital ecosystem, governments and private sector stakeholders have adopted a wide range of approaches – some of them complementary and involving regulation to various degrees.

- Growing the Internet is strengthening the Internet. There is no absolute security – especially in the online space.

**All stakeholders need to make continuous efforts to create the right conditions to increase resiliency of the Internet** in the face of increased malicious activities.

- **Collaboration** among regulators and national agencies in charge of national or cybersecurity stands out as a main feature of a whole-of-government approach to ensuring digital safety and security. Collaboration should be both vertical – across hierarchies, and horizontal – across agencies, in order to provide the best outcome and protect the interests of all stakeholders in digital markets and, importantly, consumers. Despite its virtues, nevertheless some panelists warned, collaboration being human-centered and time-consuming might need to be matched with more agile, technology-based solutions to keep up with the threats of the digital world.
- More regulation will not necessarily ensure better online safety. Internet stakeholders expressed their concerns that in a rush to regulate, policymakers and regulators may break the Internet as we know it. **Regulatory measures aimed at enhancing cybersecurity should therefore be geared towards preserving the openness, interoperability and accessibility of the Internet.**
- Industry should lead the way towards **integrating safety, security and privacy by design in online products and services.** The concept is not new; however, the current global health crisis has amplified the importance of native industry solutions and their social and economic impacts. Regulatory incentives along with accountability requirements can help companies embed security solutions by design.

- In the COVID-19 context, the **radical transparency approach** has gained momentum, where companies have been fully open with their customers and partners about the challenges they face. Regulators and policy makers should support and foster this kind of openness and dialogue to favor sharing of critical information.
- Governments could set up **online vulnerability data clearing houses** to ensure public and private stakeholders are at the right level of information about online threats and incidents, in time. The asymmetry of information is one of the most debilitating issues with cybersecurity, especially in times of profound, far reaching crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. A holistic, coordinated, data-driven approach to online safety would allow governments and market players to act quickly act, address the risks and limit the negative impact of malicious attacks.
- **Should security on the Internet be a public good?** A novel approach suggests that fiduciary accountability might be the key to creating a trusted online world today and for the future.

Talking about models to address national security issues in the digital world, there is no silver bullet. Actions need to be taken by all sides, hence – again – cooperation remains key. Technology is changing fast – even in the midst of global crisis, and we need an enhanced understanding of its implications. Regulators need to be nimble and keep enhancing their technical expertise about new technology solutions and threats, and devise strategies to respond to them.

## Session 5: Sustainable and inclusive societies: Accessible ICTs to leave no one behind



### Moderator

- Mr Michel Van Bellinghen, Chairman, Institut belge des services postaux et des télécommunications (IBPT), Incoming Chair, BEREC

### Panelists

- Mr Hamidullah Sherani, Board member, Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA), Afghanistan
- Dr Ali Naser Al-Khwildi, Head of Regulatory Authority, Communications and Media Commission (CMC), Iraq
- Mr João António Cadete de Matos, Chairman, Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações (ANACOM), Portugal
- Dr Mercedes Aramendía, President, Unidad Reguladora de Servicios de Comunicaciones (URSEC), Uruguay
- Mr Lacina Koné, Director-General, Smart Africa
- Mr Toby Robinson, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Avanti Communications

- Ms KR Liu, Head of Brand Accessibility, Google

Regulators have an important role to play in ensuring sufficient investment in national market, healthy competition, wide citizen access to ICTs as well as effective consumer protection. More than ever before, we need actionable universal access policies in place to empower people, especially the most vulnerable, create new social and economic opportunities for all.

Even before the global COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges were many. Challenging geographies limit the reach of networks; affordability and accessibility issues prevent people from getting online; lack of literacy and local content serve as barriers to meaningful connectivity. Developing countries remain particularly affected by such factors hindering the digital transformation while rural and remote areas in developed countries may also experience similar dynamics.



Among the accomplishments of some of the regulators highlighted during the panel discussion were:

- **In Afghanistan**, timely legislative initiatives coupled with pro-active regulatory measures have allowed to connect most of the country through GSM, including government institutions and schools for children with disabilities. The recently adopted e-transactions law is expected to prove pivotal in facilitating the digital transformation in the country.
- **In Iraq**, the ICT regulator has deployed an action-oriented strategy towards providing all Iraqi citizens with access to modern ICT services essential for social and economic integration. Several projects, including the ITU GIGA initiative, have been implemented in remote areas to ensure ICT access for households, schools and persons with disabilities.
- **In Portugal**, terrestrial TV (TTV) was migrated to a new band in preparation for the introduction of commercial 5G services. TTV is still an important tool for social inclusion for people in rural areas that cannot afford a good Internet connection as well as for home-schooling children online during the pandemic. The Government has been working to incentivize operators to improve the coverage of public schools and create social tariffs for Internet access.

The panel discussion also highlighted some important avenues for regulatory leadership in the aftermath of the current crisis and beyond.

- **Instrumental policies and regulations should not be limited to the ICT sector and specialized government agencies**

**alone.** Broad cross-sector policies along with collaboration across sectors are suited to provide agile regulators responses to cope with the fast-changing digital landscape. Telecom-centric regulations and policies created 15-20 years ago need to evolve to support social and economic government goals.

- Multiple **barriers to innovation and growth in the ICT ecosystem need to be overcome.** The design process for new technologies should be geared towards “designing with” consumers rather than “designing for” consumers, especially with regards to persons with disabilities. Such design thinking may also be integrated in regulatory processes.
- Regulators need to continue creating an open and enabling environment for the deployment of all sorts of technologies, services and business models. Without a **multi-pronged approach**, digital markets might not succeed in achieving universal and meaningful connectivity.
- Regulators likewise need to continue investing time, effort and resources in **enhancing their institutional, technical and enforcement capacity.** Every crisis and every new technology bring about their own set of challenges and opportunities and a sound understanding of both the big-picture stakes and the specific details, regulatory decisions may not reach an optimal impact.

In a nutshell, regulators need to put their strategic vision, technical expertise and thought leadership at work now to help connecting the next 3.6 billion people on the planet to the digital world.

## Way forward and closing



### Speakers

- Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union
- Mr Dan Sjöblom, Director-General, Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS), Sweden; Chair of BEREC and GSR-20 Chairman
- Mr Michel Van Bellinghen, incoming BEREC Chairman and Chairman of the Regulatory Associations' (RA) Meeting
- Mr Bocar Ba, CEO, SAMENA Telecommunications Council, United Arab Emirates and CRO/IAGDI Chairman

In her closing remarks, Ms Bogdan-Martin stressed that GSR stakeholders across the board need to continue to advocate for global recognition of digital connectivity as the basic foundational element of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Because in the 'new normal' for the post-COVID world, leaving no one behind will mean leaving no one offline.

"Embodying gold-standard 5th generation principles, GSR-20 Guidelines stress flexible,

light-touch regulation that is collaborative and open to partnership and cooperation. Now, more than ever, outdated adversarial models that pitted regulators against private companies, and private companies against one another, need to be replaced by collaborative approaches where all stakeholders work together to create win-win strategies that will benefit government, industry, and users."

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, BDT Director on the [GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines "The gold standard for digital regulation"](#)

Mr Michel Van Bellinghen provided a brief account of [the meeting of Regional Regulatory Associations held prior to GSR-20](#). More than 220 representatives from various regions and associations had rich discussions on collaboration and identifying effective regulatory solutions together in a postCOVID-19 digital ecosystem. The task at hand includes, on one hand, a thorough assessment of the measures taken in the midst of the crisis and, on the other hand, deepening the collaboration between institutions.

Harmonization, information sharing and international cooperation will be at the top of Regulatory Associations' agendas, participants concluded. The challenges are not the same across countries and regions; however, bridging the digital divide is crucial for everyone. Among the key areas of RA action going forward, Mr Van Bellinghen singled out digital strategies, 5G spectrum allocation, quality of service, international mobile roaming and consumer protection.

Mr Bocar Ba reported on the Meeting of the [Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers \(IAGDI CRO\)](#) also held prior to GSR-20. The meeting discussed critical questions and proposed ways to address regulatory and industry challenges, including those stemming from transformational shifts catalyzed by the world's collective experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting noted that priority should continue to be given to meaningful, secure, affordable and sustainable broadband connectivity for all.

To adapt to the "new normal," better preparedness and network resilience as well as an increased focus on connectivity, infrastructure investment were highlighted as key. This calls for bold, new, and inclusive regulatory approaches that are technology neutral. Further, there is a need to take a long-term perspective that is locally rooted yet cross-border in scope and driven

by stakeholders through commitment, collaboration, and partnerships. However, such approaches should be non-prescriptive, provide the right balance between commercial and increased public sector involvement, and be supported by enabling regulation and competitive market forces.

Mr Dan Sjöblom conveyed his gratitude for being able to serve as the Chairman for the 20-year anniversary of the Global Symposium for Regulators, which was also the first virtual GSR event.

Mr Sjöblom recognized that in 20 years, GSR has come to represent one of the most valuable assets for the global community of ICT regulators. The series of high-level events since 2000 has provided a platform for constructive discussion on key topics and challenges related to evolving markets for electronic services. The annual GSR programme has enabled information sharing and building technical expertise while providing channels for support from peer regulators and nurturing new ideas and creative solutions. Each GSR has added value to the previous ones and has provided a steep learning curve for regulators from different regions. In 2020, despite the global pandemic, the community came together, dived deep into the thorny issues facing digital markets and captured their new vision in the GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines. With those, regulators will continue the work collaboratively on reshaping the digital world and leaving no one behind.

# GSR-20 key resources

- [GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines](#) in six languages
- 20th anniversary edition of the [Digital Regulation Handbook](#)
- [Global ICT Regulatory Outlook report 2020](#)
- [ITU Discussion Paper](#): How Broadband, Digitization and ICT Regulation Impact the Global Economy – Global Econometric Modelling Expert Report
- [ITU Discussion Paper](#): Report Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Digital Infrastructure – Report of an Economic Experts Roundtable
- [ITU Discussion Paper](#): Pandemic in the Internet Age: communications industry responses
- [ICT Regulatory Tracker](#) – 2019 data release
- [Spotlight on ITU: remember GSR milestones and discover key products](#)
  - Economic Experts Roundtable Outcome: the power of digital infrastructure
  - Digital Regulation Handbook
  - [REG4COVID platform](#)
  - Global ICT Regulatory Outlook and ICT Tracker
  - Looking back to the future: GSR alumni interviews (Episode 1 and 2)
  - 20 years of GSR Best Practice Guidelines
  - Worldwide insights from Regulators: GSR 2020 consultation



International  
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Union

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