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Industry Advisory Group for Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' meeting (IAGDI-CRO)

An industry perspective on development and regulatory issues

**Monday, 31 August 2020
13:00 - 16:00, CEST**

Outcome Statement

The Meeting of the Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (IAGDI-CRO), was held for the first time in the new format back-to-back with GSR 2020 on 31 August. The meeting provided a platform for the exchange of information on the role of industry and private sector in dealing with the current COVID-19 challenge, economic impact, and post COVID recovery. The meeting discussed critical questions and proposed ways to address and adapt to industry and regulatory 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. However, as this crisis has become the “new normal”, the urgency with which Universal Digital Access and Services need to be realized has increased. In this regard, the meeting stressed the need for a better enabling environment, including Regulatory Frameworks that specifically enable connectivity and increased public sector participation in non-economical areas. 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 approaches that are technology neutral. Further, there is 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, be supported by enabling regulation, and competitive market forces. This requires a rethink of current financing and funding approaches and mechanisms, as well as existing business models. A massive collaborative, public-private and cross-industry effort thus is required.



IAGDI-CRO Outcome Statement

To move forward, the meeting proposed key focus areas:

- need for availability of sufficient and flexible spectrum.
- the review and repurposing of USF funds and acceleration of USF disbursement to address gaps in connectivity and maintain and expand networks to ensure better preparedness and network resilience.
- review of industry fees and taxation, promotion of infrastructure sharing, and harmonization and standardization to enable secure and safe cross-border data movement.
- and, the need for good governance and agility in regulatory measures to address issues emerging from the use of digital technologies.

Furthermore, IAGDI-CRO re-affirmed industry and private sector commitment to support governments during the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, work with governments and regulators to prepare better for future similar crisis, to play a more active role in supporting ICT development work, to use existing networks to promote the ITU-D Sector for purposes of recruiting more private sector players, and to contribute to ongoing preparations for WTDC-21. While IAGDI-CRO expresses readiness to support government efforts, it takes this opportunity to thank ongoing support and calls for more collaboration in creating a more friendly win-win enabling environment.