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Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) 2021

Outcome Report

REGIONAL REGULATORY ROUNDTABLE
FOR **EUROPE AND AFRICA**

April 14 | 10:00 – 16:30 (CEST)

www.itu.int/gsr21-eur-afr

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Final report

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. PARTICIPATION AND DOCUMENTATION	4
3. OPENING CEREMONY	6
Opening remarks	6
Keynote Addresses	7
4. CONFERENCE SESSIONS	9
Exploring Regional Perspectives on Regulation 4 Digital Transformation: Accelerating Inclusive Connectivity, Access and Use	9
Roundtable discussion 1: Unlocking investment in connectivity	12
Roundtable discussion 2: Understanding collaborative regulation for inclusive connectivity	18
Roundtable discussion 3: Fostering interregional collaboration between Europe and Africa in the field of regulation	22
Towards the Development of GSR Best Practice Guidelines for 2021	26
5. Background Papers & Reports	27
Closing Remarks	28

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ITU GSR Regional Regulatory Forum for Europe and Africa was held online on 14th April 2021. The conference was organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

This Regional Regulatory Roundtable for Europe and Africa is held within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on “Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting, and spectrum management” and the ITU Regional Initiative for Africa on “Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa”, both adopted by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17). It is organised with the support of the Regulatory and Market Environment (RME) Division of the Telecommunication Development Bureau within

the context of the Global Symposium for Regulators 2021 on “*Regulation4digitaltransformation: Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use*”.

The event provided a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to actively exchange their approaches related to fostering regulatory cooperation between Europe and Africa, with the objective of creating an enabling environment for the realization of meaningful and inclusive connectivity. It also offered an opportunity to the delegates to present progress made so far in advancing the regulatory agenda at the national and regional levels.

The forum created a platform to reach out to other stakeholders and inspire them to undertake concrete actions on regulatory innovation, thereby contributing to social and economic development and accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key topics covered by the forum included:

- *Exploring regional perspectives on Regulation4digitaltransformation: Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use*
- *Roundtable discussion 1: Unlocking investment in connectivity*
- *Roundtable discussion 2: Understanding collaborative regulation for inclusive connectivity*
- *Roundtable discussion 3: Fostering interregional collaboration between Europe and Africa in the field of regulation*
- *Towards the Development of GSR Best Practice Guidelines for 2021*

The main outcomes of the Regional Regulatory Roundtable are outlined in this report, which structures the key points emerged during each session.

2. PARTICIPATION AND DOCUMENTATION

The Forum was viewed by over **560 participants**. Participants included representatives of administrations and National Regulatory Agencies from Member States from the ITU Europe and Africa regions, as well as representatives of regional regulatory bodies, private sector and academia. The event has also been livestreamed on [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

The total number of registered participants was over **280** from **78** countries, of which at least **44** participants from Sector Members, **4** participants from Regional Telecommunication Organizations, **5** participants from the United Nations system, **5** from ITU Academia and **24** guests.

The Regional Forum was held entirely in virtual format. Relevant documentation was made available in electronic form on the event [webpage here](#). The forum was supported with **captioning** and **English - French interpretation**, and the edited caption text was made available on the event page. **Video recordings** of the workshop, as well as this outcome report, are also made available on the website, where details about the agenda and speakers, as well as all presentations delivered, have also been made available.

21TH GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM
FOR REGULATORS

ITU GSR

ONLINE 2021

REGIONAL REGULATORY ROUNDTABLE
FOR EUROPE AND AFRICA

*Regulation for digital transformation:
Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use*

14 April | 10:00 – 16:30 GMT+2 (CEST)

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INCLUSIVE
CONNECTIVITY

INVESTMENT

COLLABORATIVE
REGULATION

EUROPE-AFRICA
COLLABORATION

GSR BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES

Figure 1 - Virtual Group Photo

3. OPENING CEREMONY

Opening remarks



Figure 2 – Photo of Opening Segment

Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU

Ms. Bogdan-Martin remarked that “with WTDC on the horizon and the global pandemic continuing to reinforce the urgency of connecting the 3.7 billion that are still unconnected, ITU decided to hold a joint roundtable for Europe and Africa not only to identify important regional trends but also to stimulate greater cross-regional collaboration in the field of digital regulation”. Ms. Bogdan-Martin reminded that “as digitalization advances across the countries that make up the Regions, there are also many common challenges” and that it is fundamental to “to work together, to share experiences, and to find common solutions”.

“In Europe, some 89 million people remain unconnected” while in Africa “the figure is almost ten times higher with a staggering 800 million people still totally offline”. The challenge of connecting the unconnected and unlock the necessary investment to bring communities online is central to the ITU, said Ms. Bogdan-Martin. According to the ITU, in fact, around 33 billion USD and 97 billion USD are needed to connect the unconnected in Europe & Central Asia and Africa, respectively, by 2030.

Ms Bogdan-Martin recognized that the “Global Symposium for Regulators has worked on helping countries to optimize strategies and move faster and more inclusive growth and connectivity” and this is testified by the fact that improvements in regulation have a direct effect the digital ecosystem development, according to ITU studies.

Finally, the Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau reiterated the strong commitment of the ITU to fostering a digital bridge between Europe and Africa, a “A win-win strategy that will drive growth, that will boost resiliency” and allow to tackle the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs. Mercy Wanjau, GSR-21 Chair and Acting Director-General, Communications Authority of Kenya

Mrs. Wanjau began her intervention by praising the participation that a virtual GSR format enables and noted that the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area on 1 January 2021 represents a momentous occasion for potential and cooperation on the African continent. "It is evident ICTs can be utilized in economic recovery through e-commerce and strong trade collaboration and the potential to create a single digital market." Mrs. Wanjau then noted the African Union's target to mobilize \$20 billion in digital investments by 2025 and to create an African digital single market.

The GSR-21 Chair emphasized the enabling power of regulation to create a conducive environment for the digital transformation and noted the immense potential for cross-regional collaboration in the field. "There is no doubt that regulatory frameworks that are fit for purpose are an important prerequisite for success for digital transformation and the experiences from Europe would definitely be of high value in this context. In the context of cooperation, Mrs. Wanjau also underlined the need to individualize approaches to across regions.

Sharing her expertise as the Acting Director-General of the Communications Authority of Kenya, Mrs. Wanjau informed participants of the Kenya's digital economy blueprint, which outlines steps toward achieving a "digitally empowered citizenry living in a digitally enabled society." She underscored that the onus of achieving a world in which every citizen, every enterprise and organization has digital access and the capability to participate and thrive in the digital economy falls upon policymakers and regulators working in unison with all stakeholders.

Mrs. Wanjau also emphasized the enabling role of ICTs in greater development schemes, with affordable Internet and devices, heightened digital skills, more innovation, and improved public service delivery central to socioeconomic development.

"With the right regulatory policies in Africa," Mrs. Wanjau concluded, "I believe that Africa will build economies of skill and attract massive infrastructure investment."

Keynote Addresses

H.E. Ambassador Thomas Wagner, Deputy Permanent Representative, EU Delegation in Geneva

His Excellency began his remarks by invoking the pledge of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen for a new comprehensive strategy for partnership between Europe and Africa. The import of such a political alliance is clear, according to His Excellency, given the "linked histories and destinies" of the two continents. A core tenet of this partnership is bridging the digital divide and promoting Africa, as affordable and inclusive connectivity can help unlock economic innovation on the African continent. His Excellency urged stakeholders to "act fast," as the COVID pandemic has illustrated the crucial role of interconnectivity and digital issues to realizing shared, cross-regional goals.

The Ambassador then welcomed the objective of the Regional Regulatory Roundtable to foster increased collaboration between Europe and Africa in the field of regulation in the digital domain, noting the EU's desire to promote the values of inclusiveness, equality, prosperity, respect of fundamental rights and sustainability on the global stage. This desire means a value-based and human-centred approach to digital affairs, in turn leading to inclusive and fair digital transformation.

His Excellency highlighted three areas of concrete cooperation between the European Union and the African continent through which such an approach is evident. The first is the PRIDA project, funded by EU since 2017 with an annual budget of 8 million EUR budget, and implemented by the ITU and AUC, which aims to foster affordable broadband and unlock future benefits of connectivity in Africa by harmonizing enabling legal and regulatory frameworks across the continent. The second is the new cooperation instrument of the EU Budget, in which digital has become a cross-cutting development priority. Third, His Excellency brought to the attention of the participants the whole of EU approach and the Digital for Development Hub (D4D), which has potential to become a multistakeholder platform with partners in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

His Excellency concluded his keynote address by expressing his deep appreciation for ITU the Global Symposium for Regulators and by reiterating his commitment to EU-AU cooperation to reap the benefits of the digital transformation in a fair and inclusive way.

Mr. Lacina Koné, Director General, Smart Africa

Mr. Koné began his keynote address by thanking the ITU for having planned the event and recognizing Ms. Doreen Bodgan-Martin, Mrs. Mercy Wanjau, and H.E. Ambassador Thomas Wagner. He then highlighted the ideal timing for such discussions on channeling regulation for the acceleration of connectivity, access, and use, given the opportunities presented in the digital space during our collective reinvention of “normalcy” in a post-COVID world.

Mr. Koné commended leaders across the African continent for utilizing regulation to catalyze sustainable digital transformation but urged stakeholders to embrace a revolutionary change of mindset in order to realize full digital transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of connecting the unconnected by 2030.

Addressing the digital gap, Mr. Koné emphasized the importance of regulatory innovation to render connectivity and associated services affordable. These innovative policies include reducing permit fees and taxes for operators deploying service in rural communities and offering operators the option not to pay in bulk.

The Director General of Smart Africa also underscored the need to take practical steps to ensure truly inclusive, accessible, and meaningful connectivity beyond the affordability and financing problem through demand-side solutions, such as the provision of relevant and relatable content in local languages and the realization of digital skills across the population. The 2020 SmartAfrica Digital Academy is one such initiative, which trains decision makers to develop 21st century skills, enabling increases in connectivity uptake, capacity increases, and wage increases.

Mr. Koné concluded his keynote address by commending the ITU and UNICEF on the GIGA project, which he described as “a practical step to ensuring true inclusivity,” and for which he pledged commitment and support on the African continent.

4. CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Exploring Regional Perspectives on Regulation 4 Digital Transformation: Accelerating Inclusive Connectivity, Access and Use

Moderator: ITU Ms. Sofie Maddens, Head of Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

Panellists: **Mr. John Omo**, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union (ATU); **Ms. Annemarie Sipkes**, BEREC Chair for 2022 and Director of the Telecommunications, Transport and Postal Services Department at the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM), Netherlands; **Mr. Alexander Zhyvotovsky**, EaPeReg Chair 2021, Eastern Partnership and Chairman of the National Commission for the State Regulation of Communications and Informatization, Ukraine; **Mr. Ali Alhadji**, Permanent Secretary, L'Assemblée des régulateurs de télécommunications de l'Afrique Centrale (ARTAC); **Dr. Ally Yahaya Simba**, Executive Secretary, East African Communications Organisation (EACO); **Mr. João Cadete de Matos**, EMERG Chair for 2021 and Chair, Autoridade Nacional de Comunicações (ANACOM), Portugal; **Ms. Lise Fuhr**, Director-General, European Telecommunication Networks Operator's Association; **Mr. Akinwale Goodluck**, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa, GSMA; **Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini**, Secretary General, EMEA Satellite Operator's Association, ESOA

Key points from Introductory Statements

- Nearly 300 million Africans live more than 50 kilometres outside any broadband connection. Regulatory Associations, therefore, come together to ensure that governments adopt policies making broadband connectivity available and accessible, in terms of affordability, reach, and quality. They also must harmonize various policies and regulatory practices to ensure that ICT service and an unimpeded flow of information across borders.
- As the regulatory association working to harmonize policies toward the achievement of a single, European telecommunications market, BEREC has strategic priorities for 2025. Those priorities are [1] promoting full connectivity, through high-capacity and predictable networks, [2] supporting sustainable and open digital markets through a harmonization of indicators and their definition, as well as data-sharing, and [3] empowering end users to leverage the power of connectivity meaningfully.
- Unprecedented times require unprecedented solutions. Through sharing standards, expertise and best practices between the six Eastern Partnership countries and the EU towards the common goal of a competitive telecommunication environment, EaPeReg seeks to catalyse the digital transformation, fostering connectivity and the deployment of new digital technologies to bring the benefits of the digital era to all segments of society.
- ARTAC, L'Assemblée des régulateurs de télécommunications de l'Afrique Centrale, has three priorities: [1] harmonizing ICT regulation across borders, [2] ensuring equitable access to telecommunication services through infrastructure development, and [3] capacity building. In order to achieve these priorities, cooperation at the sub-regional level and leveraging assistance from partners is essential.
- Developing regulatory frameworks, guidelines and standards requires the development of proficient, actionable documents by leveraging the expertise of partners, the private sector, and engaging in capacity-building. But regulatory innovation requires more than

documentation; it requires evidence-based policy. To that end, EACO has launched a regional statistical database allowing members to delve deeper into the status of the region and better plan for the future.

- At the first plenary meeting of EMERG, four main goals for 2021 and 2022 were identified, which represent a great convergence and overlap with the priorities of other subregional regulatory organisations such as ARTAC and EACO. These priorities are [1] promoting connectivity by exploring innovative regulatory conditions, [2] empowering end users by identifying good practices in consumer awareness and information transparency, [3] promoting resilience throughout electronic communications sector, and [4] reinforcing the role of EMERG the green and digital evolution.
- We need the voices of regulatory community to empower end users, and the private sector is key to that dialogue. But private sector involvement must not be superficial. Understanding the importance of inclusive connectivity and the role of the private sector in achieving the digital transition, private sector partners should be involved as early as possible in decision-making processes, through consultations and workshops, to make an impact and have robust input.
- In Europe, 5G alone can generate 113 billion in annual GDP impact and create 2.4 million by 2025. Achieving such gains requires 150 billion euros in investment to upgrade infrastructure and 150 billion euros to build full infrastructure to enable full, comprehensive, 5G vision. However, investment requires investment-friendly regulatory environments. This includes the granting of public resources in a timely manner, the allocation of spectrum, reducing the cost of deployment through horizontal cooperation like network sharing, and supporting development of global scale, efficient, enabling market structures.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, regulators are up to speed with industry standards, and have taken the vital step of seeing industry as partners as opposed to competitors. However, there remains a misalignment between the understanding of regulators and the action of policymakers. For example, regulators tout financial inclusivity, yet policymakers have begun imposing taxes on digital adoption, Internet uptake, and mobile money. Financial inclusion will be driven by mobile, which is under the purview of telecommunication regulators, which must remain firm in their advocacy for open, enabling policy environments.
- At the regional level, sharing best practices in the utilization and regulation of network technology is vital, and operators play a central role in this because of their experience and the sector expertise. But in sharing such expertise, information must flow in both directions– both national experiences being shared at regional level and regional knowledge flowing back to Member States.

Question: What are the challenges in dealing with Governments, regional, and supranational institutions across the sectors with Digital First?

John Omo:

- The main challenge is that governments are, by their own right, sovereign, with superintendence over resources within their borders. Digital transformation is

increasingly changing that issue, as data flows across borders at unprecedented rates. Thus, it is a challenge to balance the need for cross-border frameworks which seeks to foster open data flow and the inherently sovereign nature of governments.

Annemarie Sipkes:

- The challenge for regulators is that producers of digital services are transnational, and consumers are national. Similarly, bottlenecks and risks perceived in digital services are transnational by nature, but businesses are nationally based. In order to address this challenge, BEREC collects experiences and offers them to transnational legislative bodies as well as to the NRAs, keeping channels of dialogue open for sharing experience amongst a complicated field of stakeholders and identifying the appropriate level for intervention.

João Cadete de Matos

- One key avenue for improving dialogue at national level is to increase dialogue at the regional level. This ensures that recommendations and proposals to policymakers come not only from one NRA, but rather from a group of NRAs, which facilitates the leveraging of best practices from other regions.

Alexander Zhyvotovsky

- A challenge for telecommunication regulators in the area of fixed broadband is ensuring that ICT operators have access to infrastructure on par with the electricity sector and the residential segment without tariff barriers. Mobile operators, on the other hand, are interested in spectrum allocation a more efficient use of new spectrum, demonstrating the need to have international rules and standards to ensure that connectivity is in place. It is much easier for regulators to rely on a set of predetermined, international principles and on rules that are implemented broader than those confined to the national level.

Aly Alhadji

- As highlighted by Mr. Omo, governments are sovereign and feel that such sovereignty is invaluable. However, digitalisation inevitably requires harmonization. It is, therefore, the role of regulators to convince governments and regional economic communities to harmonize strategies. For example, Regulatory Associations like ARTAC play a vital role in instituting working groups, harmonizing frequencies at borders, developing spectrum roadmaps for the reorganization, and collaborating with other organizations to develop the roaming regulations adopted last year.

Ally Yahaya Simba

- As regulatory associations, we're good at beautiful documentation. The problem starts at the level of implementation. One such example is that the EACO free roaming agreement went into effect before the equivalent in Europe, yet partners are still struggling to implement free roaming across the 6 EACO countries. One way to confront the issue of lacking implementation is for regulators to start involving policy makers earlier in the process to make clear to decisionmakers the benefits of innovative regulation, rather than presenting a "finished regulatory product" that is, in turn, easier for policymakers to ignore.

Question: How do you see this cross-sectoral approach for the Digital Transformation and the prospective of collaboration between Regulatory Associations and industry?

Lise Fuhr

- Connectivity is inherently a local issue, but you need it everywhere. COVID has laid bare the importance of fast and reliable connectivity, particularly in unserved and underserved areas. One particularly important point of convergence between industry and regulatory associations is harnessing the power of the digital economy by working on upskilling and reskilling the population. We can deliver the supply, but without demand for connectivity will define how much our networks are being used—without use, they're good for nothing.

Goodluck Akinwale

- Much progress has been made regarding the participation and understanding of regulators and policymakers on the importance of stimulating the demand side of connectivity. Governments now understand the centrality of creating a conducive environment for devices by reducing import taxes and fostering the local production of devices; investing in content in local languages; and investing in digital literacy toward the empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Aarti Holla-Maini

- In Africa, competing priorities prevents governments and regulators from focusing on the most pressing issues. For example, there is oftentimes a rush to implement the latest and most expensive technological solutions for what are still emerging economies. Regulators may be sold stories of virtual reality, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet of things achievable with 5G, but those should not be the priority for connectivity provision to low-income, low-population density, rural African communities. Rather than rolling out lines of expensive base stations, connectivity can be made available through mobile broadband backhauled by satellite at a fraction of the price.
- On the supply side, enabling regulatory regimes through blanket licensing approaches or by providing regulatory certainty around license fees and spectrum access can ensure that investment continues flowing into Africa for affordable, high-capacity services.

Roundtable discussion 1: Unlocking investment in connectivity

Focus: How infrastructure sharing, co-deployment, state aid and universal service regulation unlock investment in connectivity whilst preserving competition

Moderator: Mr. Andrew Rugege, Regional Director for Africa, ITU

Panellists: **Mr. Isaías Barreto da Rosa**, Chairman of the Board, Agência Reguladora Multissetorial da Economia (ARME), Cabo Verde; **Mr. Karol Krzywicki**, Deputy President, Office of Electronic Communications (UKE), Republic of Poland; **Mr. Marc Sakala**, Agence des regulation des postes et des communications électroniques, Republic of the Congo; **Ms.**

Nataša Vidmar Kraljević, Head of Telecommunication Department, Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia (AKOS)

Introductory statements

Mr. Isaías Barreto da Rosa

- Infrastructure sharing and co-deployment is a triple win situation because (i) the infrastructure owner makes its infrastructure available at a price, (ii) the newcomer operator pays for the rights to use that infrastructure without making a huge investment, and finally, (iii) it is a win situation for the consumer because if the cost of deployment is lower for the newcomer and therefore the price will be lower for the consumer.
- In this context, state aid and Universal Service regulation play a fundamental role because they create an enabling market environment, particularly for non-urban areas. Well-regulated universal service funds are an important tool and having sub-regional level provisions, such as in the case of ECOWAS, is very helpful.

Mr. Karol Krzywicki

- The current pandemic has accelerated digitization but also the widened digital divide. In this context smart decision making, regulation and policy is key. Evidence-based decision-making increase investment in the private sector and increases the effect of the public funds.eviden
- The EU's Gigabit society strategy mandates that all households should achieve 100 Mbps by 2025. To reach this goal, UKE bases its regulatory decisions on statistical analysis and other pieces of information. A key element is the broadband mapping system, which gathers information from more than 5,000 network operators in Poland.
- The mapping system is essential to UKE not only for efficient allocation of public funding, but also to foster collaboration across sectors whilst protecting competition. The system includes backbones and distribution networks and also the type of technology used, location, colocation and so on. Investment in technology and infrastructure and modernization is high risk and so reducing cost is critical, and this has a positive effect on competition.

Mr. Marc Sakala

- In times of pandemic, there is an even greater need for data and connectivity and achieving has to be done in a transparent and open manner, to unlock those investments essential to ensure inclusive connectivity. Access is a crucial component, and the challenges of access are growing in certain areas and especially due to the pandemic.
- Being able to do so requires collaboration and best practice exchange between regulators, particularly in those areas related to infrastructure sharing, of co-deployment, state aid and universal service regulation.

Ms. Nataša Vidmar Kraljević

- Building very high-capacity networks is crucial for connectivity and this is dependent on two main factors: 1) competition, and 2) construction costs.

- With regards to competition, thanks to ex ante regulation and other efforts, AKOS has achieved good market outcomes whereby operators compete for consumers, but also compete to offer better services to consumers, by investing in infrastructure. This virtuous circle results in turn in affordable services.
- Slovenia has more than 50% of the population living in rural areas and this poses a challenge to building very high-capacity networks (VHCN) as economies of scale are not achieved and operators are not attracted. One option is state aid, which is not under the responsibility of AKOS, while the second option is lowering infrastructure costs.
- Universal service obligations of granting 4Mbps download speed has been in place since 2018 and will now be increased to 10Mbps. To support the investment required for this obligation, AKOS has established two portals: (i) the Infrastructure Investment Portal enabling operators to notify of their plans to build infrastructure online and allow interest co-investors to announce interest for co-investment; and the (ii) the geoportal, which gives users an insight on the telecom infrastructure for every address in Slovenia. This facilitates the investment decision of operators in specific areas. Slovenia has 63% coverage of households covered by a VHCN.

Question: How has an increasingly data-driven approach to regulating the telecommunication/ICT market made a difference over recent years in your country?

Mr. Karol Krzywicki

- Data driven regulation is recognized not only in Poland, but internationally, as an approach that is aligned with the rapid pace of the technological progress. It has two major objectives: (i) first, to amplify the regulators' capacity to act, particularly in a supervisory role, and (ii) second, to inform users' choices to steer the market better and ensure return on investment.
- The role of data in regulation is a fundamental aspect of digital transformation, even at the level of regulatory authorities. Currently the digital environment is characterized by rapid technological change, generating the continuous innovation in terms of business models and uses, and data driven approach supports regulators in their activities.
- UKO focuses on telecom coverage and quality issues, and the approach has been strengthening the capacity of the regulator and on data, especially on infrastructure and services, but also on the consumer's opinion on telecommunication services such as for example through surveys targeted to parents, to children, to individuals and institutional and businesses and also to teachers. This also enables to better inform the market on the status.
- To sum up, one pillar of the UKO system is being driven by data retrieved from operators and the second pillar is the monitoring of the user satisfaction level and needs.

Ms. Nataša Vidmar Kraljević

- AKOS is also collecting a large amount of data from operators and in the market. It is important for regulators to act transparently, and then feed the information back to the market. In Slovenia there are significant efforts to make public infrastructure owners,

local communities and operators aware of their obligations to announce planned construction.

- All civil works have to be notified through the AKOS portal together with the callout for co-investment. In the interest of co-investment is expressed investors must plan the network in a manner that enables electronic communication network and the series of infrastructure to be built at the same time.
- This approach has determined a significant increase in joint construction in Slovenia. According to a survey recently conducted on the rollout of fixed broadband, operators have reported that between 10% and 90% of all investment are made as co-investment

Question: from the perspective of Cabo Verde, how does regulation, in concrete terms, support the provision of universal service across the islands?

Mr. Isaías Barreto da Rosa

- Cabo Verde has 80% of Internet penetration rate while the African average is around 43%, a good indicator of how resource optimization via infrastructure sharing and universal service obligation is working.
- To achieve that, regular monitoring of coverage and of quality of service against the operators' obligations is key. Following up on the obligations set for example with operators' right to use spectrum is needed to ensure that connectivity to the remote areas.
- Having the Internet as essential or basic service in the law is also an important factor. In Cabo Verde, by law, having access to drinking water and electricity is considered an essential or basic service meaning that the government needs to ensure the appropriate provision services. The government is currently working on a draft law to achieve universal service for internet services.

Question: What are the main challenges to ensure infrastructure sharing among operators in a country like Congo, recognizing that it can have a big impact on the cost of network deployment and affordability?

Mr. Marc Sakala

- Infrastructure deployment of telecommunication networks is heavily dependent on cost, among other challenges. In Congo, tackling this issue starts from the law and the licenses where coverage obligations or the infrastructure sharing obligations are established
- Congo has a universal service fund in place to support operators in their efforts to grant universal access and bring connectivity to non-urban areas and reach even very remote areas. In 2020, for example, Congo has covered more than 60 towns and villages that

had not been connected yet. Fiscal incentives and technological neutrality provisions embedded in licenses are also another tool that the regulator is using to support operators in their efforts.

- Another important aspect is to ensure that citizens have access to devices to actually make use of connectivity. In this regard, Congo has lowered the tax burden on all access devices to facilitate consumption by citizens.
- Finally, another tool used in Congo has been to establish a national roaming system so there would be only one operator to cover a particular city, but the signals would be available to other operators, thereby facilitating active infrastructure sharing.

Question: How has the backbone infrastructure of the country reacted to Covid-19? Have there been any challenges? How were operators able to deal with the increase in traffic? How have backbone networks been strengthened and monitored at the country level?

Mr. Karol Krzywicki

- Lockdowns related to the COVID 19 pandemic and sharp increase in the network load generated a stress test for operators and all telecommunication infrastructure. In this context, UKE has cooperated actively with the operators to guarantee service continuity and prevent or remove the network congestion.
- In Poland, In the peak periods in March and April, the number of voice calls increased by 90% and the data transmission over the fixed line Internet increased by 140%. As many as one third of companies have faced increased demand for telecom services, especially in the field of voice calls, and 63% of surveyed companies using e-learning or video conferencing applications and programs have increased connectivity consumption due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- The COVID 19 pandemic further stressed the need for network investments, especially in fibre as optical fibre allows users to send say on average of 30% more data than any other technologies, without congestion issues.

Ms. Nataša Vidmar Kraljević

- In Slovenia, due to increase in traffic due to work from home and home schooling, it also translated in higher capacity needs. Operators in Slovenia showed a high degree of independence and increased both interconnection and base station capacity.
- Operators solved the issue rather rapidly and AKOS did not have any additional remedies to place to ensure quality of service during COVID 19. This was confirmed by the absence of any disputes, despite the rise in traffic.

Mr. Marc Sakala

- In Congo there was excellent cooperation and collaboration between operators, regulators and consumer associations. But despite the positive impulse on investments, there also have been some issues on the supply side with multiplication of investments (e.g. fibre or undersea cables) potentially resulting in redundancy.

- Congo addressed this issue by establishing work Committees and Working Groups, with the telecom industry and consumer groups in order to identify best practices and ensure a good rate of information flow, particularly where there has been a substantial rise in traffic
- The stress has become a permanent activity in Congo and it will facilitate the Infrastructure changes needed to ensure that the country will be able to face future risks and traffic.

Mr. Isaías Barreto da Rosa

- In Cabo Verde, there was tremendous increase in the traffic, such as for example, a 57% increase in 4G traffic, 29% on 3G and 20% for GSM. This generated and increase in international backbone capacity by 50%, exactly to give the right response to this increasing demand during this COVID 19 pandemic.
- Spectrum was made available free of charge for a certain period of time, and especially during peak hours in order to make sure people at home would be able to work and students could follow classes.
- To ensure a coordinated response, regularly monitoring of the evolution of the traffic was made and reporting from operators was mandated so that the regulator could take and the necessary action based on evidence.

Question: What policy and regulatory tools can be leveraged to trigger a multiple effect on investment in digital infrastructure and services?

Ms. Nataša Vidmar Kraljević

- Competition on the market is the most important element. The regulator has to establish an environment whereby operators can compete efficiently in the market. For unattractive areas, state aid projects are a complementary tool to address that issue lack of investment.

Mr. Marc Sakala

- Ensuring a coordinated action, monitoring market developments to support decision making and reducing the tax burden are three important elements that will unlock investment in digital infrastructure and services.

Mr. Isaías Barreto da Rosa

- There is need to ensure a level playing field for everyone, and then promote infrastructure sharing and universal service. The most important tool, however, would be to elevate the Internet as a basic or essential service as this would allow to make significant progress for the sector.

Roundtable discussion 2: Understanding collaborative regulation for inclusive connectivity

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

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

Setting the Context: [Presentation:](#) Ms. Sofie Maddens, Head of Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

Panellists: **Ms. Cristiana Flutur**, Head of International Affairs Unit, ANCOM, Romania; Co-President of CEPT and Chairman of Com-ITU; **Dr. Emmanuel C. Manasseh**, Director, Industry Affairs, Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), Tanzania; **Mr. Fiacre Mushimire**, Senior Manager, Technology Innovation, Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA), Rwanda; **Mr. Dumitru Griciuc**, Head of the Management, Policy and Strategic Analysis Department (DMPAS), ANRCETI, Moldova

Setting the Context Presentation

- The past 20 years of regulatory reform have been substantial, in line with market developments and “digital” passing from being a luxury to being an intrinsic part of our life, particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Traditionally, regulation has either resisted or struggled to catch up with markets, market developments or societal developments. Today, regulation is expected to lead markets and ensure long term resilience and growth.
- Regulation has evolved from obligation-based to incentive-based, and decision-making processes have become more inclusive and user-centric. In this context, governments configured the legal and institutional frameworks for the digital transformation through a regulatory ladder spanning from simple market openness focusing on telecommunications only to embedding economic and social considerations into ICT regulatory practices.
- But the fifth generation (G5) of “[collaborative regulation](#)” marks a major shift from sector specific to holistic cross sector policies and regulations. A silo approach is no longer an option for navigating the digital transformation, especially as the digital transformation underpins all sectors of the economy.
- ITU research found that collaboration is the defining element of digital regulation and a core asset of fifth-generation regulation for which a benchmark has been developed. Currently ITU is now conducting a series of case studies in all regions against that benchmark to identify the dynamics, governance mechanisms, and challenges.
- As digitization impacts and becomes an integral component of other sectors, inter-agency collaboration becomes crucial. Creating regulatory certainty and continuity in that environment is therefore important.
- It is important to mention that there is no silver bullet for collaboration to work and to deliver that positive outcome and each country has its own specificities. For example, formal collaboration is more stable, but can still provide rigid under certain circumstances. Furthermore, existing legal instruments are only effective when they are consistently implemented, and formal collaboration also needs to be implemented.

Introductory Statements

Ms. Cristiana Flutur

- Collaborative regulation might be the only response that we see for the paradigm shift in regulation of the telecommunications sector as the boundary between traditional telecom services and digital services is getting thinner and thinner.
- The European Union has put forward new proposals regulating big platforms to the benefit of end users. For society to take advantage of the digital world, there is need for more security and trust, and more level playing field in the digital world with the end users considered at the centre.
- Policy offers structure and predictability. However, repeated change in policy also results in lack of predictability that can be quite harmful. The stability of the instruments already set in place is a key factor that can help us with the implementation of the new regulations.
- As the fields of competition, privacy, data protection, cybersecurity may overlap, the real challenge is making the different competent authorities work together. So an inclusive approach in setting the objectives and actions required is the prerequisite for collaboration
- International or Regional institutions, such as the ITU and BEREC, for example, provide very useful instruments for collaboration and exchange of experiences between administrations.

Dr. Emmanuel C. Manasseh

- Without collaboration, it is very difficult to achieve the goals of digitalization, or digital transformation. The ICT sector is an enabler of various sectors as it transforms and increases the efficiency of other sectors and overall economic activity.
- An example of much needed collaboration is when the ICT regulator works with the Central Bank in enabling implementation of mobile money, which in Tanzania is one of the most relevant and efficient services. This generates the necessity for collaboration between the institutions which can be informal and formal, as in the case of Tanzania, where a specific MoU has been established to achieve defined goals.
- This kind of collaboration must happen at all levels, across government, between government and regulators, and with private sector. Another important example can be made about infrastructure development: rolling out fibre necessarily involves the land regulator and the municipality with regards to right of way and this relationship can determine if the regulatory environment is enabling deployment or constraining.

Mr. Fiacre Mushimire

- Within the new emerging business models, the communication companies come up with new products, not only voice, data and calls. The example of mobile money makes it very hard because it blurs the line between communication regulation and financial regulation. In case there is no regulatory intervention a regulatory gap is created and the consumer will suffer from those.

- There is a need to foster this cross institutional collaboration. The MoU with the central bank currently in place in Rwanda has been framed on the model of the ITU's work on focus group on financial services.
- This particular challenge is faced in other sectors, such as healthcare, medical services online and similar models may be implemented with other sectors.

Mr Dumitru Griciuc

- The development of ICT sector accelerated the development of some new services offered by businesses and even by governments to the population. This period of time has created many new challenges and agencies and responsible institutions from other fields had to collaborate to solve these issues.
- It is important to formalize the cooperation to set tangible results. Collaboration also depends on institutions' openness to engage with the other agencies to solve common problems. Recently, a few working groups have been established in Moldova for this exact purpose.
- For institutions which are closer in mandate and scope it is easier to collaborate whereas for other which have separate mandates it is more complicated as the institutions have to primarily respond to their own objectives. An example in Moldova is the collaboration between ANRCETI and the National Radio Frequency Management Authority.

Question: In upgrading and refining your country's policy and regulatory frameworks for the ICT sector and the digital transformation, what has been the single most difficult challenge you have faced and how did you overcome that?

Mr Dumitru Griciuc

- There have been challenges in the collaboration between the national ICT regulator and the Audiovisual Media Council for example, related to the difference in mandate and the inconsistencies between the audiovisual media law and the electronic communications law to which the respective institutions have to respond, ultimately.
- If the Ministry and Parliament drafting the provisions of the laws involve all parties during the process, the legal difficulties could easily be overcome, as grounds for collaboration is created.
- Collaboration at the first stages of the law drafting or amendment is the most important challenge because problems which come subsequently are the result of not having all stakeholders at the table.

Mr Cristiana Flutur

- It is important to start collaborating from the beginning of a regulatory process to try and have a coherent and coordinated approach. There is a need for adequate legal instruments to tackle the digital transformation.
- It is not easy to put everyone at the table but having established procedures based on the national specificities is the solution. In the case of Romania, there are mechanisms at the EU level, but these need to be adapted to the specific national context. Moreover,

this process needs to happen at all levels, from the expert level to the management level.

Mr. Fiacre Mushimire

- One of the biggest challenges is the issue of two authorities with competing demands such as for example financial inclusion but the measures adopted in that realm affect Quality of Service and Quality of Experience for consumers.
- The risk, in this case, is to undermine the other competent authority. A solution in Rwanda was to establish a national steering committee to solve the issue, which agreed on the boundaries for the regulatory activity of each authority.
- It is important to establish key focal points across agencies to foster the dialogue and start the discussions early in a structured and outcome-oriented way.

Question: How important is collaboration and collaborative regulation when it comes to translating regulatory actions into outcomes, for markets, for consumers, and accelerating connectivity? And what is really the key to fostering that dialogue between all the government stakeholders?

Dr. Emmanuel C. Manasseh

- One solution may be to combine the efforts across all government agencies and coordinate their initiatives because, ultimately, the services that are being regulated are affecting consumers.
- Adopting a consumer-centric approach is critical when there are efforts in place to revisit the regulatory framework, to assess what works and what doesn't work, where to regulate and what to deregulate, and where to have the flexibilities that allow services to be taken on board without introducing excessive regulations.
- Another solution could be to expand the advocacy towards the other sectors, such as agriculture or health, when it comes to digital regulation. Establishing a dialogue with the other sectors is key to ensuring the digital transformation is fit for purpose.

Ms. Cristiana Flutur

- Regulators have to face important challenges so they need the right level of motivation and proactiveness to bring everyone to the table for collaboration and coordination. This is a common challenge to all countries around the world.

Mr Fiacre Mushimire

- Expanding the dialogue and showing concrete progress to ICT non-experts from other sectors is a viable solution. If accomplished, it has the potential to engage the counterpart side in greater coordination and collaboration.

Question: What is your regulatory authority planning on doing in the next days or weeks in order to really cover that extra mile in getting closer to collaborative regulation?

Ms. Cristiana Flutur

- A good example is how Romania is currently tackling the challenges of the transposition of the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act. All institutions have a seat at the table and committees have been established to decide the next steps.

Dr. Emmanuel C. Manasseh

- Tanzania is in the midst of creating the Digital Economy Strategy. The ICT regulator sees the importance of involving all sectors together to make sure that all aspects are considered and to make sure that ICT work for all other sectors of the economy with increased efficiency, creating jobs, and ensuring the digital transformation is enabled for all sectors.

Mr Fiacre Mushimire

- Collaborative efforts in Rwanda will be on the regional side as many issues currently are regional since there is certain lack of standardization and harmonization in the provision of new services, and every market is going in a different direction.
- It would be optimal to learn from European experiences and implement something similar in the context of the African Union for example.

Roundtable discussion 3: Fostering interregional collaboration between Europe and Africa in the field of regulation

Focus: Strategies, policies and experiences as well as challenges in sharing regulatory best practices between Europe and Africa

Moderation: Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, Head of the ITU Office for Europe

Panellists: **Mr. Michel Van Bellinghen**, BEREC Chair for 2021 and Chairman of the Belgian Institute for Postal services and Telecommunications (IBPT), Belgium; **Ms. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo**, Acting Executive Director and Director of Engineering and Communications Infrastructure, Uganda Communications Commission, Uganda; **Ms. Souhila Amazouz**, PRIDA Project Manager, Senior ICT Policy Officer, Infrastructure and Energy Department, African Union Commission (AUC); **Mr. Ulf Larsson**, Programme Manager "ICT Regulation - Policy and Practice" at SPIDER, Stockholm University; **Ms. Eleanor Sarpong**, Deputy Director and Policy Lead, Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), World Wide Web Foundation

Key points from Introductory Remarks

- Taking a cooperative, cross-regional approach is central to addressing regulatory challenges, since a globalized world implies common challenges, technological trends, and business-model evolution. Along these lines, BEREC's international activities are integral parts of the policies of the European Union, and cooperation with Africa is growing, particularly as electronic communications and mobile markets in Africa. Telecommunications play a vital role in the economies and societies of both Europe and Africa, and regulators must promote connectivity and build confidence in ICT services.
- Collaboration is not a one-way street. It is vital to reconceptualize capacity-building not as an imposition of viewpoints and best practices upon other stakeholders, but rather as a multidirectional exchange of ideas. The SPIDER project is one such example, as it

addressed information asymmetry by first encouraging regulators to identify their own challenges and goals in the regulatory space, then working with the experiences of academia, private sector partners, and other regulatory authorities to help develop solutions to address local challenges.

- Digital transformation is on the top of the agenda between the cooperation between the European Union and the African Union. One of the ways in which this cooperation is materialized is including the PRIDA, which has focused on the harmonization of licensing and authorization regimes, of data protection and of regulatory frameworks.
- One goal of the African Union Commission is to move towards more continental regulatory cooperation and create a space where regulators can discuss common issues and provide technical assistance to national regulatory authorities, namely in developing corrective measures to enable them to align national frameworks to the continental ones. The creation of these frameworks is underway, with the 2018 Digital Economy Transformation Task Force, the 2020 Digital for Development Initiative (D4D), and the Africa Digital Single Market.
- Since 2016, the PTS and SPIDER-hosted “ICT Regulation Policy and Practice” initiative, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), has stood as an example of interregional collaboration and mutual learning between European and African regulators. By supporting the implementation of key strategic projects at national regulatory authorities in the EAC region, ECOWAS, and in Southern Africa, PTS, SPIDER and other Swedish actors learn through discussions and exchanges of experiences with African colleagues, exemplifying multi-layered collaboration between Swedish actors, national and regional bodies across the continents.
- The development of best practices is an important facet of collaboration. However, development partners cannot just take a good practice and transpose it in another context. For example, replicating the playbook of Estonia, a posterchild of e-Governance in Europe, and planting it in Ghana would not be effective work. Instead, strategies must be localized. Governments must originate the gaps they see, and then development partners can leverage research by convening consultants, academia, CSO, and the private sector to shape the reforms national leaders have identified for policy and regulation.
- Collaboration cannot be a one-sided affair, but rather must be an open marketplace of ideas. As an early adopter of many technologies in the telecommunication space, Europe can contribute to idea-sharing with Africa, just as African regulators can share lessons learned from advancement in areas like in mobile money, helping to leverage progress in other geographic areas.
- Significant gaps exist in connectivity access in both Europe and Africa. For example, 78% of rural areas in Europe are covered by broadband, and that figure stands at only 6% on the African continent. Regarding the gender digital divide, there remains an 85% digital usage gap in Africa as a whole, and in Europe, women make up 60% of workforce but only 17% of those working in ICTs. Thus, both continents must mainstream gender into policy, employing a whole-of-government approach.

Question: Considering the example of PRIDA, what could be an additional way to formalize cross-regional cooperation between Europe and Africa on digital regulatory matters?

Michel van Bellinghen:

- Collaboration requires expertise. BEREC's core business is developing expertise, and that informs BEREC's three strategic priorities: achieving full connectivity, enabling open and sustainable digital markets, empowering end users. Collaboration between regulatory authorities in charge of telecommunications on traditional matters like access and pricing of physical infrastructure is vital, but must also consider recent trends like co-investment schemes and criteria to build a new generation broadband network, infrastructure sharing mechanisms, and the monitoring of the mobile coverage.

Souhila Amazouz

- Regulation is an evolving landscape marked by the convergence of services and technologies. The role of the African Union Commission is to coordinate between member states and NRAs and facilitate this work in order to respond to African needs and contexts. Regarding the institutionalization of cooperation between Africa and Europe, work still needs to be done at the technical level to shape ways and means to establish this collaborative framework. The AUC is consulting with regional associations of regulators to take stock of the status of such cooperation, and we look forward to creating joint working groups between the African and European regulators to create a space for African regulators to exchange and learn from other regions.

Question: What are the main challenges encountered by your organizations like yours in implementing those initiatives? Do you see anything from the obstacles or some items which you should be addressed?

Ulf Larsson

- One key aspect of Spider is that all change initiatives need to be strategic projects identified and spearheaded by each NRA. Thus, the *timing* of long, ongoing, and essential dialogue between Spider, NRAs, and PTS is a challenge. Timing—both ensuring sufficient time for NRAs and PTS to have a good dialogue, and aligning program rounds with different budget years of regulators—is an aspect that must be worked into the development of the Spider program. After all, invitations for partnership must come in sufficient time for inclusion in NRAs' budgeting processes.

Eleanor Sarpong

- Collaboration involves expertise, which inevitably involves cost. For example, effective broadband policy planning, from the initial planning phase to implementation, took three years in Ghana and Nigeria. Conducting research to support evidence-based policy reforms, as well as maintaining partnerships throughout the whole implementation process, necessitates funding. A4AI thus requires partnerships for funding and for reach, in order to maximize its impact.

Question: What more is needed from Europe to foster a fruitful exchange of expertise and resources on ICT regulatory matters?

Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo

- Partnerships must be approached not as a one-way knowledge transfer based upon what one party may think the other must do, but rather with a focus on the applicability of solutions. By listening to the challenges faced by your partners and paying attention to the usability of outputs, information can be passed on for a transformative effect. Information must be acted upon.

Ulf Larrson

- Our partners have identified three places for improved collaboration: [1] support for new or emerging regulatory authorities through institutional capacity building, in order to support the increased independence of such authorities, [2] workshops for key ministries governing the work of the regional regulatory authorities to help them build capacity by understanding the status of the modern regulatory environment, and [3] leveraging the broader network of regulatory authorities, organizations, and other groups working to implement regulation for wider inclusion toward the benefit of all citizens.

Eleanor Sarpong:

- Civil Society organizations are too left excluded, yet they provide an incomparable reflection of the public. For example, incorporating women's groups in the national broadband rollout plan in Benin allowed a gender perspective on the existing digital gap.
- Another area for potential collaboration is in the fiscal space, where we must allow governments freedom to gather revenue, but also protect end users from consumer-facing taxation. Finally, a whole of government approach must be levied through policy regulation and the involvement of all ministries involved in the digital economy to share economic prosperity amongst sectors.

Question: How do you perceive of collaboration in the context of COVID-19? What do you see as the potential actions between both regions which could appear from this perspective?

Michel van Bellinghen

- Many initiatives have been taken by ministries, NRAs, and operators to ensure that connectivity was delivered during the spike in uptake witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the resilience of networks needs to be preserved in order to make systems future-proof and resilient in the face of future challenges.

Souhila Amazouz

- We expect to move toward more digital services and content in the future, but the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the urgent need to think about unconnected rural or

remote areas. Being unconnected in the times of COVID means being excluded, without access to information or access to services. COVID thus serves as an urgent call for us to work together with policies and regulations to bridge the digital gap.

Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo

- In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and NRAs did not have the luxury of conducting full regulatory impact assessments, or even the time to evaluate strategic information. The pandemic thus underscored the importance of information repositories. The digitized world of remote engagement has also opened the door for facilitated collaboration through information exchange, therefore providing the opportunity to leapfrog the development cycles of regulatory solutions.

Ulf Larsson

- Stakeholders must collaboratively discern what capacity building activities require in-person interaction, and which can be done just as effectively in the digital space.

Eleanor Sarpong

- The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated and amplified the need to have better policies capable connecting all meaningful connectivity. The new digital tools provided by COVID-19 have also opened doors for greater inclusivity in decision-making processes, such as through crowd-sourcing information.

Towards the Development of GSR Best Practice Guidelines for 2021

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

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

More information about the initiative is available on the consultation [webpage](#). The deadline for contribution is the 14th May 2021.

Panellists: [Presentation:](#) **Ms. Sofie Maddens**, Head of Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU; **Mrs. Mercy Wanjau**, GSR-21 Chair and Acting Director-General, Communications Authority of Kenya

Key points

- One of the tasks of the GSR Chairmanship is coordinating the Best Practice guidelines, which will be adopted by the Heads of Regulators’ Executive Roundtable. The Best Practice Guidelines serve as a guiding light for regulators by regulators.

- For the 2020 Best Practice Guidelines, the ITU received 17 individual NRA contributions, 3 contributions from regulatory associations, and contributions industry and civil society from over 60 countries. GSR-21 seeks to expand the reach to listening the wider regulatory community across the regions complementing the perspectives of regulators with different perspectives from other stakeholders.
- This year's guidelines are articulated around ideas, views, and experiences around three main areas. (i) Inducing new effective and agile financing mechanisms to digital infrastructure, access and use. (ii) Prototyping regulatory patterns for the post COVID 19 digital world, and (iii) transformational leadership to unleash the power of emerging technologies and business models.
- Some of the questions to be explored for what concerns the financing mechanisms pertain to the persistent issues, the best solutions or what specific regulatory measures can mostly support the rollout of the ubiquitous connectivity and improve affordability. Other questions may regard the regulatory incentives needed to for new financing models to arise and what may the role of policymakers and regulators be in bridging financing gaps, eventually through new partnerships.
- With regards to prototyping regulatory patterns for the post COVID digital world, there is a need the market and societal changes of the countries to move policy and regulations forward with new approaches and toolboxes. Questions may touch on the possibility for new regulatory practices, tools, or initiatives that regulators may introduce to solve investment conundrums or to specifically unlock the power of new technologies. Another aspect is the creation of regulatory sandboxes to answer to the high complexity of the new digital technologies and services, reducing the time to market and helping secure funding for broad rollout.
- With regards to transformational leadership and leadership of emerging technologies in business models questions focus on whether traditional regulatory action will be increasingly matched with new co- and self-regulation channels or what mechanisms for collaborative governance are best suited to provide a holistic, agile interface for the digital transformation, such as by adopting the fifth generation collaborative regulation, G5, standard

5. Background Papers & Reports

As mentioned in Roundtable Discussion 2 of this event, ITU is conducting a series of case studies on *Collaborative Regulation* focusing on regulatory and institutional frameworks and collaborative governance in selected countries from different regions. This initiative is held in line with the longstanding work done by the ITU in developing the [G5 Benchmark](#), the 'gold standard' for collaboration among regulators and policy-makers.

The objective of the case studies is to highlight diverse experiences and different policy and regulatory patterns in order to explore the challenges, new ideas and lessons learnt by regulators on the path towards collaborative regulation. The case studies will also focus on developing a better understanding of the role and impact of collaboration and collaborative governance, and the use of new tools for regulating ICT markets.

Countries from Europe and Africa under the scope of this activity are Congo, Moldova, Romania, and Tanzania. These case studies, which remain under development will be presented to

national stakeholders of the countries involved over the coming weeks. All case studies developed across the regions will then be presented during a special session at the [ITU Global Symposium for Regulators 2021](#), to be held on 23 – 25 June 2021.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Andrew Rugege, Regional Director for Africa, ITU, and co-Chair of the event thanked all participants for excellent sessions, noting that the strong will of Africans and Europeans coming together and bringing ideas to the table enabled participants to do justice and earnest to the complicated but vital topic of accelerating inclusive connectivity, access, and use.

Mr. Rugege highlighted Africa's vision of an inclusive digital society and economy, with the overall objective to promote Africa's integration, generate inclusive economic growth, stimulate job creation, erase the digital divide and eradicate poverty by channeling the benefits of the digital revolution for social and economic development. To achieve this, Mr. Rugege noted, enabling environments underpinned by regulatory frameworks are essential. This is confirmed by the [Impact on policies, regulation and institutions on ICT sector performance](#) report, which concludes that regulatory institutional frameworks including NRAs, regulatory mandate, regime, and competition models are linked to positive and significant increases in communication investment.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Rugege commended the strong cross-regional African and European partnership, with specific reference to projects such as DETF, D4D, Team Europe, the Horn of Africa Initiative, the Africa Continental Free Area, Smart Africa, "African Girls can Code," HIPSSA and PRIDA, which have proven to be gamechangers in the African regulatory environment. He noted the role of the ITU as an earnest broker bringing together stakeholders for digital transformation, and concluded by encouraging a further strengthening of the two-way Europe-Africa collaboration, stating, "Europe, our digital journey together is underway and gaining momentum."

Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, Head of Regional Office for Europe, ITU, and co-Chair of the event, thanked participants and panellists and briefly summarized the content emerged through the various sessions.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Ponder echoed the discussions of the day by reaffirming the importance of creating the digital bridge between Europe and Africa, recognizing the work that the European Union and the African Union are undertaking in this direction. He emphasized the importance of continuing the discussion in other meetings taking place in Europe and Africa over the year as well as the Global Symposium for Regulators to be held in June 2021.

Finally, Mr. Ponder thanked all colleagues involved in the organisation of the ITU GSR-21 Regional Regulatory Roundtable for Europe and Africa.