Geneva, 18 July 2019

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| Ref.: | **CL-19/34** | | **Member States, Sector Members, Associates, and Academia of ITU** |
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Subject: **Planning schedule for the sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (WTPF-21) and call for nomination of experts**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Plenipotentiary Conference, in Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) *(attached)*, decided to maintain the World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (WTPF) as a venue for discussing and exchanging views and information on telecommunication/ICT policy and regulatory matters, especially on global and cross sectoral issues, with non-binding outcomes.

The 2019 ordinary session of Council, by Decision 611 *(attached)*, decided to convene the sixth WTPF (WTPF-21) in Geneva, Switzerland, for a duration of three days, preferably back to back with the WSIS Forum 2021. It further decided that that the theme for WTPF-21 is as follows:

"*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development:*

*The WTPF-21 would discuss how new and emerging digital technologies and trends are enablers of the global transition to the digital economy. Themes for consideration include AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs etc. In this regard, the WTPF will focus on opportunities, challenges and policies to foster sustainable development*". The draft agenda is annexed to Decision 611.

The preparatory process for WTPF-21 shall be in accordance with Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

The report of the Secretary-General that serves as a basis for the discussion during WTPF-21 shall be developed in the following manner:

    i.    the Secretary-General shall convene a balanced, informal group of experts, each of whom is active in preparing for WTPF-21 in his/her own country, to assist in this process;

    ii.    preparation of the WTPF-21 report by the Secretary-General shall be in accordance with Annex 2 to this Decision;

    iii.    WTPF-21 meetings should be conducted in line with the Rules of Procedure used at the previous two Fora;

iv.    the final report of the Secretary-General shall be circulated at least six weeks before the opening of WTPF-21.

The procedure and schedule for the preparation of the report is detailed in annex 2 of Decision 611, attached.

In view of the first meeting for the Informal group of experts (IEG WTPF-21) to be held on 23rd and 24th of September 2019 at ITU Headquarters, Geneva, I would therefore like to invite you to:

1.    Nominate expert(s) in the relevant topics to be addressed by the WTPF-21 and send the name, and bio and email address of your selected expert(s) to wtpf2021@itu.int by 21st August 2019.  Please note that in order to facilitate requests for visas to participate in the first meeting, nomination should be sent as soon as possible.

2.    Send comments on the first draft outline of the report (to be published on the WTPF-21 website on 1st August) by 21st August to wtpf2021@itu.int.

The meeting will be conducted in English only. Registration as well as remote participation for this meeting will be made available for all nominated experts only.

Finally, I should like to appeal to the Union's membership to make voluntary contributions towards a Trust Fund that will be established to assist, in particular, delegates from developing countries, which include least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to participate in WTPF-21.

Yours sincerely,


*(Signed)*


Houlin Zhao
Secretary-General




**Attachments:**

**Attachment 1:** PP Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018),
**Attachment 2:** Decision 611 (Council 2019)

# ATTACHMENT 1

## RESOLUTION 2 (REV. DUBAI, 2018)

## World telecommunication/information and communication technology policy forum

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Dubai, 2018),

*considering*

*a)*      relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA);

*b)*      the WSIS+10 statement on the implementation of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes and vision for WSIS beyond 2015, which were adopted at the ITU coordinated WSIS+10 High-Level Event (Geneva, 2014), based on the Multistakeholder Preparatory Platform (MPP) process, together with other United Nations agencies and inclusive of all WSIS Stakeholders, were endorsed by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014) and were submitted to the UNGA overall review;

*c)*      Resolution 77 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference;

*d)*      that the telecommunication environment has undergone considerable changes under the combined influence of advances in technology, the globalization of markets and growing user demand for integrated cross-border services increasingly adapted to their needs;

*e)*      that restructuring of the telecommunication sector, especially the separation of regulatory and operating functions, the liberalization of services and the continuing appearance of new regulatory players, is possible in the majority of ITU Member States;

*f)*      that new and rapidly developing and emerging telecommunication/information and communication technologies (ICTs) and services hold incredible promise for the advancement of human welfare;

*g)*      that there remains a pressing need for a global framework to exchange information on telecommunication and ICT strategies and policies;

*h)*      that national telecommunication/ICT policies and regulations have to be recognized and understood, so as to allow the development of global markets which can support the harmonious development of telecommunication services;

*i)*      the important contributions provided by Member States and Sector Members to previous world telecommunication/ICT policy forums (WTPF), and the results achieved by those forums,

*conscious*

*a)*      that the purposes of the Union are, *inter alia*, to promote, at international level, the adoption of a broader approach to the issues of telecommunications/ICTs in the global information economy and society, to promote the extension of the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world's inhabitants and to harmonize the actions of Member States and Sector Members in the attainment of those ends (cf. the WSIS outcomes);

*b)*      that ITU remains uniquely positioned and is the single forum for the coordination of, exchange of information on, discussion of and harmonization of national, regional and international telecommunication/ICT strategies and policies;

*c)*      that WTPF, which was established by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) and successfully convened in 1996, 1998, 2001, 2009 and 2013, has provided a venue for discussion of global and cross-sectoral issues by high-level participants, thus contributing to the advance of world telecommunications, as well as to the establishment of procedures for the conduct of the forum itself;

*d)*      that WTPF-13 held in Geneva, Switzerland, was a successful edition of these forums, attended by 126 ITU Member States and no fewer than 900 delegates,

*emphasizing*

*a)*      that Member States and Sector Members, realizing the need for constant review of their own telecommunication/ICT policies and legislation, and for coordination in the rapidly changing telecommunication/ICT environment, adopted WTPF as a mechanism for discussing strategies and policies;

*b)*      that it is necessary for the Union, as an international organization playing a leading and unique role in the field of telecommunications/ICTs, to continue organizing WTPF to facilitate the exchange of information by high-level participants on telecommunication/ICT policies;

*c)*      that the purpose of WTPF is to provide a venue for exchanging views and information and thereby creating a shared vision among policy-makers worldwide on the issues arising from the emergence of new telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, and to consider any other policy issue in telecommunications/ICTs which would benefit from a global exchange of views, in addition to the adoption of opinions reflecting common viewpoints;

*d)*      that WTPF should continue to give special attention to the interests and needs of the developing countries[1], where modern technologies and services can contribute significantly to telecommunication infrastructure development;

*e)*      the continuing need for allowing adequate preparation time for WTPF;

*f)*      the importance of regional preparation and consultation prior to convening WTPF;

*g)*      that the discussion of issues relating to emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies benefits from the participation of all interested stakeholders, in their respective roles,

*resolves*

1      to hold WTPF preferably back to back with the WSIS Forum 2021, taking account of the need to ensure adequate preparation by Member States;

2      that WTPF, as established by Resolution 2 (Kyoto, 1994) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, shall be maintained, in order to continue discussing and exchanging views and information on telecommunication/ICT policy and regulatory matters, especially on global and cross-sectoral issues;

3      that WTPF shall not produce prescriptive regulatory outcomes; however, it shall prepare reports and adopt opinions by consensus for consideration by Member States, Sector Members and relevant ITU meetings;

4      that WTPF shall be open to all Member States and Sector Members; however, if appropriate, by decision of a majority of the representatives of Member States, a special session may be held for Member States only;

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[1]   These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

5        that WTPF shall be convened on an ad hoc basis to respond quickly to emerging policy issues arising from the changing telecommunication/ICT environment, taking into account the past practices followed and experience acquired by ITU in the holding of previous WTPFs;

6        that WTPF should be convened within existing budgetary resources and, as far as possible, in conjunction with one of the meetings or forums of the Union in order to minimize the impact on the budget of the Union;

7        that the ITU Council shall continue to decide on the duration and the date, allowing ample time for preparations, and on the venue, the agenda and the themes of WTPF;

8        that the agenda and themes shall continue to be based on a report by the Secretary-General, including input from any conference, assembly or meeting of the Union, and on contributions from Member States and Sector Members, taking into account the past practices followed and experience acquired by ITU, including in respect of the preparatory process, in the holding of previous WTPFs;

9        that, in order to ensure that they are well focused, discussions at WTPF shall be based solely on a single report by the Secretary-General, and contributions from participants based on that report, prepared in accordance with a procedure adopted by the Council and based on the proposals of Member States and Sector Members, and on the views of Associates, Academia and stakeholders, and WTPF shall not consider drafts of any new Opinions that were not presented during the preparatory period foreseen for drawing up the Secretary-General's report prior to the forum;

10       that broad participation in WTPF and operational efficiency during the forum shall be facilitated,

*instructs the Secretary-General*

to make the necessary preparations for convening WTPF based on *resolves* above,

*instructs the ITU Council*

1        to continue to decide on the duration, date, venue, agenda and themes of any future WTPF;

2        to adopt a procedure for preparation of the report by the Secretary-General referred to in *resolves* 8 above;

3        that the procedure referred to in *instructs the ITU Council* 2 should include, as appropriate, participation open to all Member States and Sector Members, and online public consultations open to all interested stakeholders, taking into account the past practices followed and experience acquired by ITU, including in respect of the preparatory process, in the holding of previous WTPFs;

*further instructs the ITU Council*

to submit to the next plenipotentiary conference a report on WTPF for any necessary action.

# ATTACHMENT 2

# DECISION 611 (COUNCIL 2019)

## Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum

The Council,

*recognizing*

Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Dubai, 2018) on the world telecommunication/information and communication technology policy forum (WTPF),

*considering*

that the purpose of WTPF is to provide a venue for exchanging views and information and thereby creating a shared vision among policy-makers worldwide on the issues arising from the emergence of new telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, and to consider any other policy issue in telecommunications/ICTs which would benefit from a global exchange of views, in addition to the adoption of opinions reflecting common viewpoints,

*decides*

1        to convene the sixth WTPF in Geneva, Switzerland, for a duration of three days, preferably back to back with the WSIS Forum 2021 (WTPF-21);

2        that the theme for WTPF-21 is as follows:

"*Policies for mobilizing new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development*:

The WTPF-21 would discuss how new and emerging digital technologies and trends are enablers of the global transition to the digital economy. Themes for consideration include AI, IoT, 5G, Big Data, OTTs etc. In this regard, the WTPF-21 will focus on opportunities, challenges and policies to foster sustainable development";

3        that the preparatory process for WTPF-21 shall be in accordance with Resolution 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018);

4        that the Agenda for WTPF-21 shall be based on the draft agenda contained in Annex 1 to this Decision;

5        that WTPF-21 shall not produce prescriptive regulatory outcomes; however, it shall prepare reports and adopt opinions by consensus for consideration by Member States, Sector Members and relevant ITU meetings;

6        that the report of the Secretary-General shall be developed in the following manner:
   i.    the Secretary-General shall convene a balanced, informal group of experts, each of whom is active in preparing for WTPF-21 in his/her own country, to assist in this process;
   ii.   preparation of the WTPF-21 report by the Secretary-General shall be in accordance with Annex 2 to this Decision;
   iii.  WTPF-21 meetings should be conducted in line with the Rules of Procedure used at the previous two Fora;
   iv.   the final report of the Secretary-General shall be circulated at least six weeks before the opening of WTPF-21.

7  that participation in WTPF-21 shall be open to all Member States and Sector Members;

8  that arrangements for WTPF-21 shall be in accordance with applicable Plenipotentiary Conference and Council decisions for such fora,

*instructs the Secretary-General*

to encourage ITU Member States, Sector Members and other interested parties, to make voluntary contributions to help defray the costs of the WTPF-21 and facilitate attendance of the LDCs.

**Annexes:** 2

## ANNEX 1

**Draft Agenda**
**Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and**
**Communication Technology Policy Forum**

1. Inauguration of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum

2. Election of the chairman

3. Opening remarks and presentations

4. Organization of the work of the WTPF

5. Presentation of the Secretary-General's report

6. Presentation of comments by the membership on the report

7. Discussion

8. Consideration of draft opinions

9. Adoption of the chairman's report and opinions

10. Other business

## ANNEX 2

## Procedure and Schedule for Preparation of the WTPF-21 Report by the Secretary-General

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| **1 August, 2019** | A First Draft outline of the report by the Secretary-General shall be posted online for comments |
| **21 August, 2019** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the First Draft<br><br>Deadline for nominations for a balanced group of experts to advise the Secretary-General on further elaboration of the report and of draft opinions associated with it |
| **1st IEG Meeting (September 2019 during the CWG cluster)** | First meeting of the group of experts to discuss the First Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received |
| **1 November, 2019** | The Second Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, incorporating discussions from the 1st IEG meeting<br><br>This draft will also be made available online for open public consultations |
| **23 December, 2019** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Second Draft, and for contribution on broad outlines for possible draft opinions<br><br>Deadline for inputs from the open public consultations |
| **2nd IEG Meeting (January/February 2020 during the CWG cluster)** | Second meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Second Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received, including from the open public consultation |
| **1 April, 2020** | The Third Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, incorporating discussions from the 2nd IEG meeting and including outlines of draft Opinions<br><br>This draft will also be made available online for open public consultations |
| **June 15, 2020** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Third Draft, and for contribution on possible draft Opinions<br><br>Deadline for inputs from the open public consultations |
| **3rd IEG Meeting (September 2020 during the CWG cluster)** | Third meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Third Draft of the report by the Secretary-General and the comments received, including from the open public consultation |
| **1 November, 2020** | The Fourth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General will be posted online, including the draft Opinions, and incorporating discussions from the 3rd IEG meeting |
| **23 December, 2020** | Deadline for receipt of comments on the Fourth Draft |

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| **4th IEG Meeting (February 2021 during the CWG cluster)** | Fourth meeting of the group of experts to discuss the Fourth Draft of the report by the Secretary-General, including the draft Opinions, and the comments received |
| **15 March, 2021** | The final report of the Secretary-General to WTPF will be posted online, including the draft Opinions |
| **Mid-May, 2021 (back to back with WSIS Forum 2021)** | Sixth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum |

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