

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Telecommunications and Information Administration**

**Connecting the Unconnected Worldwide in Light of the ITU's  
WTDC-21**

**Request for Public Comments**

**Docket No. 210503-0097**

**COMMENTS OF INTEL CORPORATION**

*Submitted June 7, 2021 via email to [WTDC21@ntia.gov](mailto:WTDC21@ntia.gov)*

**Introduction:**

Intel Corporation welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to NTIA on Connecting the Unconnected Worldwide in Light of the ITU's WTDC-21. Intel is a leading global semiconductor supplier; our processors, memory, storage, and other products power much of the world's computing capability. Intel is also a leading silicon provider for 5G and Wi-Fi. Intel has a long history of advocating for policies which spur deployment and adoption of high-speed and high-quality broadband to the benefit of society. Answers to selected questions are provided below.

**1. ICT Development Priorities**

**a. Over the next five years, what should the U.S. government priorities be for telecommunications/ICT development?**

Intel encourages governments to establish supportive policies that enable market-led development and expansion of high-speed intelligent broadband networks (e.g. 5G and Wi-Fi 6E). Support for the establishment of programs to facilitate digital access by low-income households/students which includes both broadband access and devices, as well as programs which provide digital skills training are also important.

**b. Are there particular areas of focus for economic development, as well as**

**telecommunications/ICT development that might help the United States align with developing countries’ development interests?**

The ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-2021) Regional Preparatory meetings/draft initiatives (and regional/national strategies) demonstrate that high-speed broadband networks/connectivity (including financing), digital skills, and security are clearly important to developing countries seeking to improve their digital economies. These areas should be considered to align with the needs of developing countries. It should be noted that high-speed broadband (e.g. 5G and Wi-Fi 6) is also critical for the global success of other key technologies important for economic development such as Artificial Intelligence, IoT, cloud, etc.

**c. What are valuable venues, forums, or methods to focus this work?**

The ITU WTDC-21, ITU-D Study Groups, ITU Global Symposium for Regulators, ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission, ITU World Summit on the Information Society, ITU regional events and relevant United Nations events are all potential venues for this work.

**2. U.S. Stakeholder Community**

**a. In General**

**i. What are the challenges or barriers towards connecting the unconnected? Are there particular lessons or policy approaches regarding the gender digital divide?**

Affordability is one barrier; this can be addressed through financing mechanisms such as targeted subsidies for not only connectivity and devices, but also for the development of digital skills. In some cases, a lack of political support and coordination between different ministries may also create challenges. National/regional planning efforts could also be beneficial.

**iv. How best can the U.S. government share its experiences and best practices on telecommunications/ICT deployment overcoming the digital divide, and other telecommunications/ICT developmental topics? In 2021? Longer term?**

The U.S. government can share experiences and best practices via ITU-D events and activities. Additionally, the U.S. government can organize regional/global events in collaboration with organizations such as USAID. The U.S. State Department collaboration with regional organizations and individual countries can also be helpful.

**v. What interest or experience, if any, should the U.S. government be aware of entities participating in telecommunications/ICT projects, capacity-building efforts, and/or donation of ICT products and services globally and/or particularly those focused on meeting developing country needs?**

The ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission has abundant examples in its [reports](#), for example “[Enabling the Use of ICTs and Broadband: Understanding What Works to Stimulate ICT Adoption](#)”. There are also programs of United Nations Regional Offices such as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

**vii. What are some structured corporate social responsibility, goodwill programs, or corporate partnership programs that may be useful resources?**

Intel’s corporate social responsibility information (including 2030 strategy and goals) is available at following link: <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/corporate-responsibility/corporate-responsibility.html>

Importantly, Intel’s 2030 strategy includes making technology fully inclusive and expanding digital readiness. Intel is committed to advancing inclusion and accessibility for millions of people who currently do not have the technology skills or resources needed to access educational, economic, and community resources in our increasingly digital economy. More detailed information can be found at <http://csrreportbuilder.intel.com/pdfbuilder/pdfs/CSR-2020-21-Full-Report.pdf#page=54>.

Additionally, Intel has programs to address the gender divide, for example the Intel® She Will Connect<sup>1</sup> program.

**b. For the ITU and WTDC–21**

**i. How might virtual platforms enhance the development and capacity building work of the ITU Bureau of Telecommunication Development (BDT) and ITU–D study groups, in a post-COVID–19 environment? Are other methods available or appropriate?**

Although remote virtual participation in ITU-D meetings was possible before COVID-19, there were challenges with quality and the platform utilized. Despite challenges at the early stage of COVID-19, the virtual platforms have improved for the ITU-D meetings. Virtual platforms can help to reduce the cost to the BDT while facilitating the participation of more delegates from developing countries. Similar to the strategies of other organizations and sectors, the ITU-D should also consider using a hybrid model for the meetings in a post-COVID–19 environment. We believe in-person meetings are still important, but there may be an opportunity to reduce the total dates of in-person meetings by completing some work/pre-work through virtual meetings. Virtual platforms can also enable capacity-building training for developing countries especially with respect to new technologies.

**ii. How should we best engage U.S. stakeholders and ascertain their input before, during, and after the WTDC–21 (and on an ongoing basis)?**

Outreach to key stakeholders as well as within U.S. delegations.

**iii. BDT is seeking to ensure that WTDC–21 is a development-focused conference that mobilizes people and resources to “Connect the Unconnected to Achieve Sustainable Development” including thematic dialogues, a youth summit, and other events to bring stakeholders together to consider key telecommunications/ICT development topics. How can the U.S. government increase awareness or participation in WTDC–21 in order to help ensure concrete outcomes?**

The U.S. government already provides information through a variety of mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/corporate-responsibility/social-impact-and-educational-initiatives/she-will-connect.html>

### **3. WTDC–21**

#### **a. What WTDC–21 outcomes would best help achieve the Conference’s goal to connect the unconnected and to help raise awareness and mobilize resources to close the digital divide?**

It will be important for WTDC-21 to develop appropriate action plans (including resolutions, regional initiatives, study groups, etc.) to prioritize and focus resources on ways to accelerate the deployment of high-speed broadband infrastructure and connectivity.

#### **b. What development projects, ideas, and activities might be useful for the U.S. government to advance through the ITU Development Sector?**

The U.S. government can prioritize information sharing regarding U.S. strategies and actions on broadband demand-creation programs, financing mechanisms, and efforts to accelerate high-speed broadband connectivity (e.g. 5G and Wi-Fi 6). Recognizing the important role that the ITU-D plays in the dissemination of information to developing countries, the U.S. should also consider potential mechanisms to facilitate sharing of information with relevant standards development organizations as appropriate.

#### **c. What ITU–D accomplishments should the U.S. government encourage the ITU seek to replicate?**

ITU-D accomplishments regarding broadband connectivity, school connectivity (GIGA), ITU GSR, COVID-19 response and digital inclusion could be encouraged.

Intel appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and looks forward to continued collaboration with NTIA.

Respectfully submitted,

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