

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development

2024 Input to High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

*The Assembly in resolution 75/290 B reiterated that “In the conduct of the thematic reviews, the high-level political forum could consider the inputs to the high-level political forum from intergovernmental bodies and forums, including relevant multi-stakeholder forums, and, as appropriate, the findings, research, data and recommendations from the United Nations system.” The General Assembly decided that the theme of the 2024 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC shall be **“Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.”***

*The 2024 HLPF, without prejudice to the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs, will review in-depth: **Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere; **Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; **Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; **Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and **Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.*

Introduction:

The [Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development](#) was established in 2010 by ITU and UNESCO with the aim of boosting the importance of broadband on the international policy agenda and expanding broadband access in every country as key to accelerating progress towards national and international development targets. Led by H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim Helù of Mexico, it is co-chaired by ITU’s Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. It comprises over 50 Commissioners who represent a cross-cutting group of top CEO and industry leaders, senior policymakers and government representatives, and experts from international agencies, academia and organizations concerned with development.

This high-level platform examines the most pertinent issues relating to global broadband connectivity and develops consensus-driven policy recommendations for achieving its 7 advocacy targets and the UN 2030 agenda. The Commission leverages the strength of its membership and collective expertise to advocate for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services as a foundational element to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commission published its annual, collaborative 'State of Broadband' report and almost 40 Working Groups on thematic areas from health, education and gender equality were established, including recommendations for reaching universal broadband connectivity addressing different stakeholders. The Commission has also been instrumental in launching number of global initiatives (EQUALS, Giga, etc.) and advocating with its educational campaigns (MSMEs day, SDG Digital etc.), events (WSIS, STI Forum, LDC5, UNCTAD e-week etc.) and inputs to the UN processes.

Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.

- **SDG 1 - No Poverty:** The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the deep digital divide that exists globally, significantly affecting economies and exacerbating poverty. Individuals with internet access have been able to adapt to the "new normal" by shifting to remote work, online learning, and utilizing digital services for everyday tasks. However, those without connectivity have been left further behind, widening the poverty gap. The broadband ecosystem has the opportunity to play a positive role in society and economies, strengthening infrastructure, institutions, and systems that not only address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also prepare the world for future disasters. Building back better with broadband, preparing against future shocks, and ensuring universal equitable access is part of the new normal will require an emphasis on digital infrastructure and technologies in the pandemic response, recovery, and resiliency-building efforts.

Reference:

https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/pol/S-POL-BROADBAND.21-2020-PDF-E.pdf
https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/pol/S-POL-BROADBAND.23-2021-PDF-E.pdf
<https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/covid19-crisis-agenda-for-action/>

- **SDG 2 - Zero Hunger:** Global crises have highlighted the importance of digital connectivity in maintaining food systems. Broadband access in rural areas can support digital agriculture, enabling farmers to use data for precision farming, access market prices in real time, and support supply chain transparency to reduce food loss and waste. But those without **access** may struggle to maintain food production levels and market access, exacerbating hunger issues. The Commission's focus on improving connectivity can therefore directly contribute to reducing hunger.
- **SDG 13 - Climate Action:** The multifaceted crises of the pandemic and climate change have shown the need for reliable data and connectivity. Broadband connectivity can support early warning and environmental monitoring systems and public awareness campaigns about climate change. However, without universal connectivity, the digital divide could hinder global efforts towards climate action. Digital and broadband has an important role to play in combating the effects of climate change. Sustainable solutions for the expansion of access and use of broadband must be considered as the global digital transformation advances. For example:
 - Address environmental impacts of digital infrastructure and the potential of connectivity in addressing the climate emergency
 - ICT companies need to do everything they can to reduce and eliminate their operational GHG emissions. This includes adopting concrete targets in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations for minimizing the rise in temperature to 1.5°C.
 - Building resilience. Digital and broadband can demonstrate leadership in targeting the reduced carbon emission – and can actively help build resilience to climate stress.
 - Digital and mobile technology can address climate change in seven ways (GSMA, 2021) enabling clean energy and energy efficiency; improving mobility and logistics; improving natural resource management and forestry; improving agriculture; managing waste solutions; improved waste management and circular economy solutions; increased disaster preparedness and effective response.
- Reference:
 - <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/>
 - <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/open-statement-from-the-broadband-commission-for-sustainable-development-to-the-marrakech-climate-change-conference-cop-22/>
 - https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WGClimate_BridgeReportEnglish2012.pdf

<https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2021/>
<https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/>
<https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/>

- **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** The global crises have underscored the importance of digital connectivity in maintaining peace, justice and strong institutions. Access to the internet can empower citizens, increase transparency in governance, and facilitate digital governmental services. But a lack of measures can lead to an increase in misinformation, disrupting peace and stability. The development and use of digital technologies is also impacting how governments operate and function. Digital transformation, including artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, has become one of the highest priorities for public organizations. For instance, governments are increasingly trying to digitize their services through technology because of growing public expectations. But some governments are asked to do more: to create an enabling environment in which green, inclusive, equitable digital transformation strengthens democratic societies and economies. Several studies have indeed revealed critical digital competencies gaps in the public sector, including in the Global South. It is therefore extremely important to identify and address those digital transformation gaps and to succeed in the public sector, as a catalyst of change for societies and economies in digital age. The Commission advocates for digital inclusion, [child online safety](#), [measures addressing disinformation](#) and [digital skills development](#), both for citizens and civil servants to strengthen institutions.

Reference:

<https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/balancing-act-counteracting-digital-disinformation/>
<https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/ai-capacity-building/>

- **SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals:** The events of the last three years, with a global health pandemic and the swift international pivot to digital delivery of goods, services, work, and play, have yielded unique insights into just how critical stable, broadband access is - and will continue to be. The challenge of unprecedented global pandemic in 2020 has demonstrated the unquestionable centrality of access to connectivity for all, in order to effect sustainable development, economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusion. COVID-19 has also uncovered and highlighted the inequalities among and within countries, and the urgency of achieving universal access to broadband connectivity. The Broadband Commission is committed to leverage information and communication technologies (ICTs) to accelerate interventions for human progress, as exemplified by the considerable beneficial interventions initiated by the Commission's own members during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The achievement of the SDGs will require affordable, ubiquitous and meaningful broadband connectivity with the associated essential competencies and application. Through its consensus-driven [policy recommendations](#), the Broadband Commission can work towards expanding broadband connectivity and digital skills globally to support effective implementation of the SDGs. The Commission also calls for the collaborative effort to ensure that people around the world are not only connected, but that they also have the skills and knowledge to use that connectivity.

In this regard, SDG 17 for SDG 4, inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all, is absolutely critical. Not only is SDG 4 an enabler of all other SDGs, but it is a crucial accelerator of *meaningful* connectivity. Quality education continues to evolve to encompass the concept of digital literacy, including advancing global standards around digital and data literacy in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Digital technology can support education and opportunities for

skill enhancement throughout people's lives, offering them an opportunity for socio-economic empowerment, adaptability and resilience to remain competitive in the job market and make meaningful contributions to society, regardless of their age. Partnerships are at the core of expanding opportunities for lifelong learning for all through digital technology. However, the digital divide prevents much of the world's population from leveraging the benefits of these opportunities, and thus it must be urgently addressed through multistakeholder cooperation, such as through the Broadband Commission's efforts to achieve universal meaningful connectivity.

Reference:

<https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/the-state-of-broadband-2020/>

<https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2023/>

Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, considering the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development recognizes digital connectivity as the foundational element of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission is convinced that achieving affordable universal connectivity is essential for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and making good on our pledge to Leave No-one Behind.

- **Universal Meaningful Connectivity:**

While significant progress has been made in increasing access to broadband globally, 2.6 billion people remain offline in 2023. By ensuring that broadband infrastructure is affordable and accessible to all, in alignment with the Commission's Advocacy Targets, we continue to bridge the digital divide and drive progress across multiple SDGs. This includes SDG 1 (No Poverty) by creating opportunities for economic growth, SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), by enabling farmers with technology to increase food security, SDG 4 (Quality Education) by enabling online learning, SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by fostering innovation, SDG 13 (Climate Action), by enabling individuals and communities to use technology to monitor and respond to climate change, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), through the digitalization of government processes to increase transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

While the global markets still face strong economic headwinds today, digital connectivity has accelerated as people, businesses, and governments pivoted strongly towards online communications. Recent events have demonstrated that the demand for connectivity is not only emerging but also substantial and sustained, particularly from the global South, where many remain unconnected or under-connected. This trend is expected to continue and potentially grow in the coming years. Taking stock of lessons learned during the pandemic, policymakers could consider the positive economic impact of infrastructure investment while reviewing progress towards achieving universal broadband access. By recognizing the undergirding and crosscutting enablement of communications for everything from health and education through to entertainment and transactions, the cost/return equation would be transformed.

A transformative opportunity for the world to capitalize on this strong shift towards digital foundation building has occurred in several demand-driven ways:

- Consumers demanding faster, easier, safer services and digital payments

- Citizens driving demand for government services, with governments moving towards delivering digital services pro-actively
- New entrepreneurs leading micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) driving demand for demand for digital transformation and connectivity services.

The Broadband Commission is working with governments, private sector, and civil society, realizing the SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) to advocate for policy recommendations to incentivize and accelerate investments in broadband and increase [smartphone access](#), ensuring that everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status, can access the benefits of digital connectivity. In its report, [Connecting Africa Through Broadband: A strategy for doubling connectivity by 2021 and reaching universal access by 2030](#) the Commission asserts that achieving the goal of universal affordable access to ICTs for all Africans will require a sustained and committed effort on the part of governments, the private sector and development partners. In addition, the [Executive Summary of the 21st Century Financing Models for Bridging Broadband Connectivity Gaps](#) offers four strategic recommendations for funding universal connectivity:

1. Broaden the Base of Contributors;
2. Earmark Proceeds from ICT Sector Participants;
3. Reform Universal Service and Access Funds (USAFs);
4. Create an International Fund

These strategic recommendations act as a foundation for driving connectivity toward the goal of connecting all populations into a larger fabric where individuals and communities are not excluded from the opportunity to live, work.

- **Develop Digital skills/capacity and promote digital inclusion and entrepreneurship for a digital economy**

The development of digital skills is a key component of sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. Without the necessary skills to navigate the digital world, people are unable to fully participate in the digital economy, engage in virtual education, work remotely or use online resources to improve their lives. The Broadband Commission is committed to advocating for [school connectivity](#), [child online safety](#), [MSMEs connectivity](#) and [digital capacity building](#) programs and resources to ensure that everyone, regardless of age or background, can acquire the necessary digital skills to participate in the modern world and global digital economy. This not only contributes to SDG 1 (No poverty) and 4 (Quality Education) but also SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by preparing people for future digital jobs and opportunities, while also providing them with the tools to discern between true and disinformation, supporting a more just and peaceful society.

The Broadband Commission's Working Group on School Connectivity's outcome report: [The Digital Transformation of Education: Connecting Schools, Empowering Learners](#) introduced a methodology and framework for connecting primary and secondary schools to the Internet based on a four pillars approach: map schools, connect schools, finance school connectivity and empower learners. This working group also led to the launch of other collaborative initiatives that are working to advance digital skills and connectivity worldwide. Innovative Initiatives like [Giga](#), a partnership incubated in the Broadband Commission, have led the way in mapping and connecting schools to provide learners with connectivity and in some cases become a connectivity hub for communities.

Digital skills have been a key component of the 2021 [Digital Learning](#) Working Group and the 2022-2023 UNESCO-chaired Working Group on [Data for Learning](#). In both these reports, the importance of a wide range of digital skills, which include ethics and sustainability dimensions, is underscored. The 2023 Global

Education Monitoring Report advocates for a skills framework that touches on all 5 competence areas, inspired by the European Union's DigComp 2.2: Information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving. Education and training systems need to integrate these holistic digital skills throughout curriculum within initial education and training as well as provide opportunities to upskill and reskill throughout life. UNESCO supports countries to develop teacher professional development policies, ICT/Digital Learning policies that centre the importance of competency development, and UNESCO is actively working on AI competency frameworks for teachers and students which are being iteratively developed and will be launched at Digital Learning week in September. The ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators has adopted the five DigComp competence areas, with a reduced set of questions relative to the EU digital skills indicator, as a **future basis for indicator 4.4.1** (in collaboration with UIS), aided by a pilot exercise in Brazil from 2022, which supports a global applicability of this approach.

Increasing MSME connectivity in low- and middle-income countries has the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits. The connectivity of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to the Internet and broader digital economy is an under-looked development issue. MSMEs form the largest share for their economies and are critical to helping to achieve the SDGs. Increasing their digital connectivity can help them become more efficient and increase their revenues. MSMEs face several barriers to leveraging digital connectivity, related to access, affordability, relevance, knowledge and digital skills, as well as safety and security. Women micro-entrepreneurs are heavily impacted by the social norms and structural inequalities of their respective regions and stand to benefit from approaches to advance digital connectivity that are gender inclusive. [The Working Group on connectivity for MSMEs](#) highlighted that increasing MSME participation in the digital economy will require stakeholders such as governments, international organizations, companies, and NGOs, to fully participate in facilitating this trajectory: closing connectivity gaps; creating digital enablement to drive awareness and usage, and programmatically supporting underserved and marginalized communities. The Broadband Commission continues to advocate for the importance of MSME connectivity, and seek to monitor progress in this regard.

The Broadband Commission Working Group on AI Capacity Building has created a digital competency framework for civil servants, outlining essential competencies for navigating the digital context. The framework identifies three key challenges governments face, categorizes digital competencies into three domains, and offers nine recommendations for stakeholders, governments, the private sector, and academia. The report urges civil servants to enhance their capabilities for implementing digital and AI transformation initiatives.

- **Global Digital Collaboration**

Achieving the UN Agenda 2030 will depend on commitment to our common responsibility to collaborate, partner and develop more inclusive and sustainable models. It is essential that all stakeholders are involved along the process to leverage the power of digital to leave no one behind. To mobilize efforts to bring the life-changing benefits of digital transformation to everyone and to reach SDGs, the Broadband Commission puts broadband connectivity at the forefront of global policy discussions. For more than a decade, the Commission has advocated for universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity with a commitment to:

- Contributing thought leadership, advocacy efforts, knowledge and learning resources related to the SDGs, including on education/skills, health, gender equality etc; (The Commission contributes annually to many UN & non-UN led processes and key industry meetings like: UNGA, HLPF, WSIS, TES, COP, LDC5, CSW, GSMA Mobile World congress, WEF, IGF, UNCTAD e-commerce week among others). The Commission contributes to UN processes and events annually to provide the

holistic perspective of its members, including the [Global Digital Compact](#), the [High-Level Political Forum](#), the [5th Conference of the Least Developed Countries](#) and [WSIS](#).

- Leveraging its collective expertise and collaborative solutions to generate policy, regulation and technology recommendations for harnessing the power of digital connectivity to leave no-one behind; (The Broadband Commission has convened over 40 Working Groups on the socioeconomic impact of ICTs and issues the annual flagship State of Broadband Report, that analyzes global connectivity challenges and successes, and tracks progress toward achieving its 7 Advocacy Targets)
- Fostering and catalyzing public-private partnerships. (For example, the Commission has been an incubator for many high-impact initiatives such as UNICEF/ITU Giga, Equals and the Child Safety Online Declaration. Several impactful initiatives have been incubated such as [Giga](#), [EQUALS](#), and the [Child Online Protection Declaration](#).)

The Broadband Commission is an example of an effective cross-sectoral platform bringing together a diverse group of 50+ world leaders to discuss the impact of broadband and connectivity for achieving the Commission's seven targets and the UN 2030 Agenda. The Commission calls for collaborative effort to ensure that people around the world are not only connected, but that they also have the skills and knowledge to use that connectivity.

References:

- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/msmes/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/school-connectivity-2020/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/child-online-safety-declaration/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/ai-capacity-building/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/smartphone-access/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/ldc5-open-letter/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/wsis-outcomes-2023/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/gdc2023/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/hlpf-2023/>
- [Artificial-Intelligence-and-Digital-Transformation-Competencies-for-Civil-Servants.pdf \(broadbandcommission.org\)](#)

Three examples of specific actions, policies and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development is committed to advocating for sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions that build on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

- **Strategies and policies to enable broadband adoption and accelerate digital inclusion:** To eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, it is crucial to prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive national broadband policies. Such policies should focus on ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality broadband services. This aligns with the Commission's [Advocacy Target 1](#), which calls for all countries to have a National Broadband Plan or strategy, or to include broadband in their Universal Access and Service Definitions. This policy-

level commitment is the first critical step towards enabling digital inclusion and harnessing the power of broadband for sustainable development.

- **Innovative Financing Models for Universal Connectivity:** Achieving the SDGs will require significant investment in digital infrastructure. As such, the Broadband Commission advocates for innovative financing models and partnerships that can mobilize the necessary resources. This is in alignment with the Broadband Commission's [Advocacy Target 2](#) of making broadband affordable in developing countries by 2025, and [Advocacy Target 3, of getting everyone online](#), directly contributing to SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Recommendations for innovative and inclusive of financing and funding connectivity models are outlined in the Broadband Commission Working Group Report on [21st Century Financing Models](#) Executive Summary, the State of Broadband Report 2023 and [other recommendations](#):

- Broaden contributor base and implement creative funding approaches, including incentivizing infrastructure funding, reforming Universal Service and Access Funds (USAF) approaches
 - Alignment and incentivizing funding contributors is key for government connectivity plans, mobilizing all sectors' pools of capital by removing challenges and barriers to network infrastructure investment
 - Build network infrastructure policies to last with sustainable and agile plans
- **Digital Capacity Building:** Digital skills are fundamental to fully leveraging the potential of broadband connectivity to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in line with [the Advocacy Target 4 on digital skills development](#). The Broadband Commission believes in the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in this area. By bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society, and educational institutions, we can develop comprehensive strategies for digital skills development. This includes improving [access to devices](#), providing [digital skills training to civil servants](#), teachers and students, collecting data and integrating digital skills and the use of data into formal education curriculums. The recent Broadband Commission report on [Data for Learning](#) calls for stakeholders to take three actions to improve the digital education ecosystem:
 - 1) Close the digital data divide to make education more relevant and resilient for all learners everywhere.
 - 2) Close the data skills divide to make education data use safer, smarter, and more secure.
 - 3) Strengthen international normative instruments for data-sharing across borders and between public and private institutions.

In addition, the Commission's [Working Group on AI Capacity Building for Civil Servants](#) developed a Competency Framework for Civil Servants for Digital Transformation, including AI, that aims to:

- Promote trustworthy, inclusive and human rights-centric implementation of AI technology
- Enhance the capabilities of civil servants to engage in national digital transformations
- Build a knowledge platform for future capacity-strengthening efforts by the Broadband Commission, including localized initiatives

The Working Group's Digital Competency Framework for Civil Servants proposes recommendations to enhance civil servants' digital skills, requiring government capacity building programs, private sector collaboration, and academia establishing curricula and interdisciplinary programs for digital transformation,

and promoting knowledge sharing among stakeholders. The key recommendations from the framework for all stakeholders in charting a way forward for digital transformation include:

- Raising awareness of artificial intelligence and digital competencies through implementing digital transformation in government and creating an enabling environment through improved digital governance.
- Fostering multi-lateral cooperation between international, regional and national organisations through creating coalitions and platforms for knowledge exchange and mutual learning of good practices.
- Contextualizing, localizing and adapting AI and digital transformation based on capacity building needs analysis.
- Sharing learning resources for AI and digital transformation capacity building through developing open learning hubs and multi-pathway curricula to facilitate training of civil servants based on their needs.
- Monitoring the impact of AI and digital transformation projects with qualitative and quantitative tools and in collaboration with research centres, to identify and share best practices.

References:

- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/21st-century-financing-models-2020/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/data-for-learning/>
- <https://www.broadbandcommission.org/advocacy-targets/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/ai-capacity-building/>

Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

The example of selected Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development's follow-up actions and measures to support the implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit, including:

- **Advocacy:** The Commission plans to intensify its [advocacy](#) efforts to raise awareness about the fundamental importance of broadband connectivity in achieving the SDGs, especially as it reached the deadline to achieve its seven advocacy targets. It will leverage the influence of its membership to bring connectivity to the top of global policy discussions and use its channels to illustrate the importance of connectivity for inclusive and sustainable development. Examples of the Commission's advocacy work include:
 - Continued contributions to UN Processes & Events
 - [Interactive educational campaigns](#)
 - [Bi-monthly newsletters](#)
 - [Dissemination of reports and policy recommendations](#)

- [Multistakeholder events](#)
- **Policy Recommendations and Thought leadership:** The Commission continues to develop and promote [policy recommendations](#) for all stakeholders to increase access, affordability and use of broadband. The Commission highlights the cross-sectoral actions of its memberships to track progress on its goals, as well as provide real-life case-studies of effective programs. The Commission will continue to develop recommendations through its [Working Groups](#) and Annual [State of Broadband Report](#).
- **Fostering Global Digital Collaboration:** The Commission fosters partnerships between governments, private sector, civil society and academia to ensure a holistic perspective when preparing policy recommendations. By building these diverse partnerships, the Commission can facilitate the collaborative efforts needed to expand broadband access and use, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission contributes to multistakeholder initiatives and provides inputs to processes of the United Nations, such as:
 - [Global Digital Compact](#),
 - [High-Level Political Forum](#)
 - [5th Conference of the Least Developed Countries](#)
 - [WSIS](#)
 - [Digital Learning Week](#)

References:

- <https://broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/advocacy-campaigns/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/ldc5-open-letter/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/wsis-outcomes-2023/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/gdc2023/>
- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/hlpf-2023/>

Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF

The Broadband Commission annually releases the State of Broadband report. This report offers a one-of-a-kind, worldwide overview of the accessibility and affordability of broadband networks. It also includes a series of actionable policy recommendations and considerations jointly developed by the members. For consideration into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF, the Broadband Commission's 2023 [State of Broadband Report: Digital Connectivity: A Transformative Opportunity](#) offers five considerations for the road ahead to achieve the Commission's Advocacy Targets, and thereby advance progress on the UN 2030 Agenda.

- 1) **Define (and re-define) measurable goals for “universal meaningful connectivity”, to meet today’s needs**
 - a. While governments should be supporting infrastructure incentives in high-cost areas, demand support initiatives, and digital ecosystem initiatives, countries should avoid falling into a digital chasm of seeking to meet minimum standards only; countries should also be aiming for high-performing, high-capacity connectivity, setting the connectivity ambition bar as high as possible
- 2) **Close the usage gap by addressing key barriers to people adopting and using the internet where coverage is available**

- a. Policies and initiatives addressing digital literacy, affordable devices, relevant content and maintenance support are powerful tools to increase adoption and close the Usage Gap. The residual coverage gap, particularly in low density rural areas will be met by a mix of fiber, terrestrial wireless and satellite technologies should be available for funds as is most appropriate. Recent entry into service of Very-High-Throughput Satellites in the Geostationary Orbit as well as new low earth orbit satellite constellations have begun to provide low cost, high quality broadband connectivity to previously inaccessible and costly areas to serve.
- 3) Broaden the base of contributors and implement creative funding approaches, including incentivizing infrastructure funding and reforming Universal Service and Access Funds (USAF) approaches**
- a. For digital transformation to fully benefit everyone and close the digital divide, industry and governments must work together to put high-performing, high-capacity connectivity in place at speed and scale. Governments can broaden the base of contributors by including companies participating in and benefiting from the digital economy. Governments could be earmarking ICT sector contributions to governments and spending it on initiatives supporting connectivity and adoption goals, and reforming USAFs to be more effective financing mechanisms that support and expand connectivity to ICT services.
- 4) Align and incentivize funding contributors to mobilize all sectors' pools of capital by removing challenges and barriers to network infrastructure investment**
- a. This requires governments to go with the grain of development finance institutions (DFIs) and ensure that challenges and barriers to private sector investment are removed and reduced, e.g.
 - i. Ensuring market structures are sustainable and incentivize investment,
 - ii. Ensuring technology and vendor neutrality; where governments avoid picking winners, distorting markets and impinging on private sector investment.
 - iii. Enabling a fair competition / level playing field, spurs investment, innovation and cooperation. It also means that the best technologies rise and scale on their merits, securing broad use, interoperability and affordability
 - iv. Trading off spectrum fees and extending license lengths for commitments to build out meaningful connectivity infrastructure to areas where it is lacking rebalance, fostering transparency and efficient permit granting procedures, providing harmonized mobile spectrum in a timely and affordable manner, focusing on harnessing long-term societal value.
 - v. Direct government interventions should be limited to market failures alone and in helping meet the needs of underserved households and businesses, again without distorting competition dynamics and in a way that amplifies private sector investments, respecting technology neutrality.
- 5) Build network infrastructure policies to last with sustainable and agile plans**
- a. Governments should consider building sustainable policies that are both robust and resilient, giving policymakers the agility to scale up and/or adjust plans where necessary. A number of approaches should be considered:
 - i. Using global, open standards within the network infrastructure. Without global standards, it would not have been possible for communication network technologies to compete, succeed and scale globally. Because the industry adopted and used international standards widely, it resulted in the expansion of communication technology coverage to regions not previously covered, and scaling up improves affordability and enable cost reduction for the entire supply chain: manufacturers, operators, and users. Countries should seek to prevent fragmentation of standard setting for telecommunications and digital technologies and pursue the continuation

of and adherence to global open standards as is the case with mobile technologies in 5G, extending to 6G.

- ii. Creating a database of funding best practices and their impact on broadband adoption and economic development,
- iii. Creating an international ICT investment fund with the objective of supporting sustainable development of broadband connectivity and hosting the fund in a multilateral development bank (MDB) or an existing international organization.

References:

- <https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2023/>