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| APTlogogreen3 | ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY | **Document No.:** |
| **The 2nd Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21 (APT WTDC21-2)** | **APT WTDC21-2/**  **INP-xx** |
| 24-26 February 2021, Virtual/Online Meeting | 25 January 2021 |

Chairman of Working Group 1

**ISSUE PAPER OF WORKING GROUP 1**

1. **ABSTRACT**

1.1 The 1st Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21 (APT WTDC21-1) considered the structure and terms of reference for the Working Groups. According to decisions of the aforementioned meeting, Working Group 1 (WG1) will consider ITU-D Programmes, Study Groups and Associated Questions.

1.2 This issue paper intends to stimulate discussions and identify possible issues relevant to WG1 that can be developed into APT Common Proposals (ACPs). APT Members are encouraged to actively participate in discussions and provide comments on this paper.

1. **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

2.1 APT WTDC21-1 was held on 24 July 2020 as a virtual meeting, which agreed to the structure and the Terms of Reference for the preparatory process. The specific Terms of Reference for WG1 are to:

* Consider matters relating to ITU-D Programmes, Study Groups and Associated Questions taking into accounts the strategic goals and objectives of the ITU in particular to those of ITU-D;
* Assess the achievements of the relevant parts of the Buenos Aires Action Plan;
* Consider Resolutions, Recommendations and Decisions relating to ITU-D relevant to the activities of this WG;
* Identify priority areas and key issues required for development and preparation of the draft common proposals.

1. **ISSUES**

3.1 The Number of Study Groups and their titles

ITU-D has two study groups, each was tasked with studying a number of important study topics and questions. Considering the fact that resources in international organizations are limited and no new funds are envisaged, there is no ongoing discussions about adding the number of Study Groups of ITU-D. As additional study groups would require reallocation of resources from regional initiatives and projects, it is advisable that the Asia Pacific Region to propose to keep the same number of study groups for the next study period. However, it is possible to suggest the new title of Study groups once we finish discussions on future Questions of Study groups. The current ITU-D Study Groups are as follows;

Study Group 1 (SG1): Enabling environment for the development of telecommunications/ICTs

Study Group 2 (SG2): ICT applications, cybersecurity, emergency telecommunications and climate-change adaptation.

3.2 Questions for the next study period (2022-2025)

The Study Group Questions assigned by the WTDC-17 and the issues and expected outputs of each Questions are identified at Section 5 of Buenos Aires Action Plan. It is highly recommend that APT Members to review the Section 5 of Buenos Aires Action Plan(especially the topics and scope of each Questions) before suggesting new or revised Questions.

During the ITU-D Study Groups meetings held in 2020, the future of questions has been discussed briefly and the preliminary views reported to TDAG virtual meetings from 2 to 5 June in 2020 as the [SG1 Chairperson’s report](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0012/en)(refer to ANNEX Ⅱ). Discussion of new ideas for future Questions of ITU-D Study Groups continued over the course of the SG1 and SG 2 rapporteur group meetings in 2020. It was expressed during the meeting that future Questions should be as unique as possible so that experts can be engaged with specific knowledge on such topics and in order to avoid duplication of work across the various Questions. Others highlighted the need to not restrict thinking on the structure of the Questions to what is currently available. Moreover, the importance of considering future developments and needs when crafting the Questions was highlighted to ensure that the studies are relevant and useful at the time when they are released in 5-6 years’ time. The results of these discussion will be reported to the annual SG meeting in 2021.

3.3 Thematic Priorities

The 27th meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) took place on 23 November 2020. At this meeting, TDAG unanimously endorsed “Connecting the unconnected to achieve Sustainable Development” as the overall theme for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21), scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa Ethiopia from 8 to 19 November 2021. TDAG also agreed that the ITU-D input to the Strategic Plan being elaborated by TDAG in the lead-up to the PP-22. APT members are urged to participate in TDAG Working Group on Strategic and Operational Plan (TDAG-WG-SOP) for its discussion and review the proposed [ITU Strategic Plan Workflow](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27-INF-0005/en), which clarifies the timelines for member proposals on the ITU-D component of the ITU strategic plan.

The Section 2 of Buenos Aires Action Plan specified 11 Programms based on the 4 objectives set out in the ITU-D contribution to the ITU strategic plan(2020-2023) and the 24th meeting of TDAG in 2019 endorsed and supported the BDT Director’s strategy to establish Thematic Clusters organized around the 11 programmes defined in the Buenos Aires Action Plan adopted by WTDC-17. TDAG expected this cluster-based approach will enhance the timeliness and quality of deliverables under the Buenos Aires Action Plan, and 10 thematic priorities adopted by BDT to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the ITU-D work programmes. (refer to ANNEX Ⅲ)

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| **Programmes defined in the Buenos Aires Action Plan Programme** |
| - Telecoms/ICT network infrastructure and services  - Cybersecurity  - Disaster risk reduction and management, and emergency telecommunications  - Policy and regulatory framework  - ICT data and statistics  - Capacity building and human skills development  - Innovation  - Concentrated assistance to LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition  - Telecommunication/ICT services and ICT applications  - Digital inclusion for empowering women and girls, persons with disabilities and other people with specific needs  - Climate-change adaptation and mitigation |

With noting these, when we consider matters relating to ITU-D Programmes, Study Groups and Associated Questions, we need to take into accounts the ITU-D thematic priorities for the next cycle which is currently discussing at the TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities(TDAG-WG-RDTP).TDAG-WG-RDTP has held three virtual meetings in 2020 and 2021. At its third meeting in, four Thematic Priorities were proposed to assist ITU membership in their preparations for WTDC-21. Please refer to Annex Ⅲ.

3.4 APT Members may wish to provide comments on the discussion areas stated in this section and also propose additional issues, if any, for consideration relevant to WG1.

1. **CONCLUSIONS**

The WG1 Chair and Vice-Chair welcome comments and suggestions from APT Members in relation to this issue~~s~~ paper.

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**ANNEX Ⅰ: Questions assigned by the World Telecommunication Development Conference to ITU-D study groups**

**Study Group 1**

􀍴 **Question 1/1**: Strategies and policies for the deployment of broadband in developing countries

􀍴 **Question 2/1**: Strategies, policies, regulations and methods of migration to and adoption of digital broadcasting and implementation of new services

􀍴 **Question 3/1**: Emerging technologies, including cloud computing, m-services and OTTs: Challenges and opportunities, economic and policy impact for developing countries

􀍴 **Question 4/1**: Economic policies and methods of determining the costs of services related to national telecommunication/information and communication technology networks, including next-generation networks

􀍴 **Question 5/1**: Telecommunications/information and communication technologies for rural and remote areas

􀍴 **Question 6/1**: Consumer information, protection and rights: Laws, regulation, economic bases, consumer networks

􀍴 **Question 7/1**: Access to telecommunication/information and communication technology services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs

**Study Group 2**

􀍴 **Question 1/2**: Creating smart cities and society: Employing information and communication technologies for sustainable social and economic development

􀍴 **Question 2/2**: Telecommunications/information and communication technologies for e-health

􀍴 **Question 3/2**: Securing information and communication networks: Best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity

􀍴 **Question 4/2**: Assistance to developing countries for implementing conformance and interoperability programmes and combating

counterfeit information and communication technology equipment and theft of mobile devices

􀍴 **Question 5/2**: Utilizing telecommunications/information and communication technologies for disaster risk reduction and management

􀍴 **Question 6/2**: information and communication technologies and the environment

􀍴 **Question 7/2**: Strategies and policies concerning human exposure to electromagnetic fields

**ANNEX Ⅱ: Preliminary views on the Future of ITU-D Study Group 1 Questions**

**Question 1/1: Strategies and policies for the deployment of broadband in developing countries**

The group is of the view that the question has to continue and the topics of interest to be reflected in the next study period would include: (i) policies, strategies and regulatory aspects of broadband, (ii) broadband access technologies, (iii) financing and investment aspects of broadband, (iv) impact of COVD-19 and other pandemics on broadband networks, (v) digital transformation/infrastructure and (vi) co-deployment & sharing broadband infrastructure with other infrastructural networks. The approach the group understands best would be a holistic approach addressing the study in a broader perspective.

**Question 2/1: Strategies, policies, regulations and methods of migration and adoption of digital broadcasting and implementation of new services**

The group understands that the question should continue by taking broadcasting in a more general manner, considering the relationship among content delivery networks and evaluating the new video-centric converged service providers from the regulatory, economic and technical points of view. The items of study for the next study period would include: (i) transition from traditional digital broadcasting to video-centric converged service providers, (ii) strategies of introducing new broadcasting technologies, emerging services and applications, (iii) best practices on spectrum planning related to the referred transition, (iv) costs of the referred transition, and (v) the digital dividend.

**Question 3/1: Emerging technologies, including cloud computing, m-services and OTT:** **challenges and opportunities, economic and policy impact for developing countries**

The group is of the understanding that question should continue considering that the combination of m-Services and the Cloud create a solid foundation for digital transformation the world is experiencing, though not everywhere and not at the same speed. With the addition of IoTs (Internet Of Things, or smart connected Objects), we have a better and more complete view of where the world will be going in terms of services, that in times of pandemics, enables most business continuity. The items of study would include: (i) how do we unleash this vision, (ii) scenarios and use cases across many sectors, (iii) regulatory and policy blockers, (iv) business and investment scenarios that help deploy this vision, and (v) relevant case studies.

**Question 4/1: Economic policies and methods of determining the costs of services related to national telecommunication/ICT networks**

The group is of the view that the question should continue with the focus and coordination on economic aspects of national telecommunications/ICT markets, studying the related topics and collaborating with other sectors and on statistics within ITU-D. The items of study for the new study period would include: economic impact on the value chain of (i) ICTs and (ii) OTTs, (iii) new types and modes of investment, (iv) design of tariffs, (v) economic aspects/implications of digital taxation approaches, (vi) new business models, (vii) economic incentives for bridging the digital divide, (viii) national aspects of digital financial inclusion, (ix) new economic aspects affected by national telecom/ICT market environment, and (x) economic regulatory aspects of national telecom/ICT.

**Question 5/1: Telecommunications/ICTs for rural and remote areas**

The group is of the view that question is important and needs to be continuously updated and evolved to take into account (i) the changing pace of technology, (ii) new policies for connectivity in rural and remote areas, (iii) solutions and guidelines on how these communities can be capacitated to deal with pandemics such as COVID-19, (iv) case studies, (v) possible review and recommendations of universal service funds, and (vi) the role of innovation in rural ICT and other rural business startups for developing applications and services for rural and remote areas. These would be the topics for future study on the question, which would not be a silo and would collaborate with other groups.

**Question 6/1: Consumer information, protection and rights: Laws, regulation, economic bases, consumer networks**

The group is of the view that the question should continue due to the relevance of consumer protection in such a dynamic sector and as technology and business models keep changing. Also, because member states are at various stages of adoption of new technologies and regulatory evolution and need to prepare themselves to industry 4.0 and the fifth-generation regulations. The items of study would include: (i) consumer education and awareness, (ii) development of capacities to cope with periods of pandemics such as the COVID-19, (iii) linkages to competitive service provisioning, protection of innovation and data in telecom networks, (iv) responsible use of new technologies, and (v) fostering consumer trust in new technologies while protecting innovation through self-regulation and co-regulation.

**Question 7/1: Access to telecommunication/ICT services by persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs**

The group is of the view that the question should continue to ensure that information, products and services are accessible to all people regardless of their gender, age, ability, location or financial means. Therefore, timely implementation of right enabling environments is key to sustainable development, especially in times of pandemics, where ICT accessibility has to be a political priority. The items of study would include: (i) leverage digital accessibility as a priority; (ii) national programs and strategies on education and training at the country level; (iii) digital accessibility resources including education and training to increase expertise at a national, regional and global level and facilitate the appropriate implementation of policies and (iv) innovative accessible digital solutions and ICT applications for an independent life.

**ANNEX Ⅲ: PROPOSAL FOR WTDC-21 THEMATIC PRIORITIES**

(Document TDAG-WG-RDTP/20-E)

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| C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg**TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities**  **21 January 2021, Virtual** | | |
|  | | **Document TDAG-WG-RDTP/20-E** |
|  | | **18 January 2021** |
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| **Title:** | Proposal for WTDC-21 Thematic Priorities | |

TDAG, noting that 3.7 billion people remain unconnected, has adopted “**Connecting the Unconnected to Achieve Sustainable Development”** as the theme of the 2021 World Telecommunication Development Conference (Addis Ababa, 2021). Ensuring a ubiquitous, equitable and affordable connectivity has become increasingly more important in the context of the global pandemic that continues to cause serious socioeconomic shifts and an increasing reliance on ICTs. This was also noted in the UNSG's Digital Cooperation Roadmap.

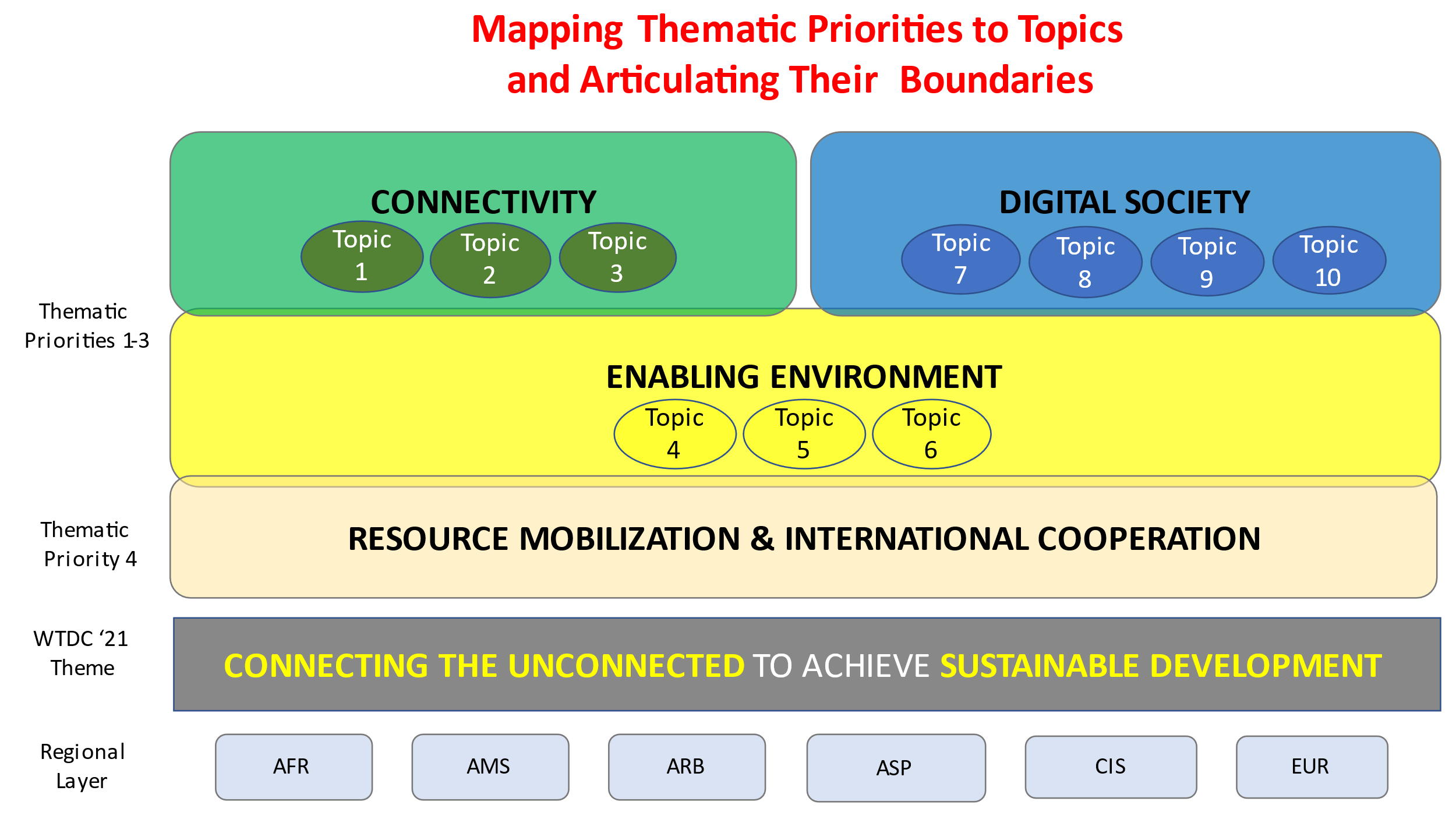
The work of BDT is aligned along Topics that emanate from its objectives, programmes, projects, and initiatives. Hence, such Topics play a key role in facilitating coordination and creating synergies with different stakeholders and within the BDT for achieving ITU-D mandates and objectives. The following are the ten topics based on WTDC-17 Buenos Aires Action Plan (BAP) as presented in Document [TDAG-WG-RDTP/2-E](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG26.RDTP-C-0002/en) (13 July 2020):

1. Capacity Development
2. Cybersecurity
3. Digital Inclusion
4. Digital Innovation Ecosystems
5. Digital Services & Applications
6. Emergency Telecommunications
7. Environment
8. Networks & Digital Infrastructure
9. Policy & Regulation
10. Statistics

For better impact, more coherence, improved coordination and enhanced clarity, clustering of Topics into Thematic Priorities can be considered by combining related topics. The objective is to present succinct and comprehensive Thematic Priorities that are aligned with the theme of the Conference and at the same time facilitate the work and management of BDT. The Topics that can be considered as supporting components of the Thematic Priorities should emanate from the Addis Ababa Action Plan to be adopted by WTDC-21 and will determine the work of ITU-D over the next four years (2022-2025). In what follows, four Thematic Priorities are proposed to assist ITU membership in their preparations for WTDC-21 and to start discussions in TDAG-WG RDTP with a view to achieving a fit-for-purpose ITU-D:

1. **Connectivity:** The focus of this Thematic Priority is on the deployment of modern, available, secure, accessible, and affordable broadband telecommunication/ICT infrastructure. This Thematic Priority would seek to foster the development of infrastructure and services by utilizing new and emerging digital technologies, including building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICT. The needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS should be prioritized and given due attention. The following topics can be considered as supporting components of this Thematic Priority: ***Future Networks and Digital Infrastructure*, *Cybersecurity****,* and ***Emergency Telecommunications****.*
2. **Digital Society:** The focus of this Thematic Priority is on the development and use of telecommunications/ICTs and applications and services to close the Digital Divides and empower people and societies for sustainable development. This is of critical importance as societies adapt to the changes that are needed to reengineer as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In doing so, there is need to recognize the important role that women and youth can play in making the digital society a reality. The following topics can be considered as supporting components of this Thematic Priority: ***Digital Inclusion***, ***Digital Services and Applications***, and ***Environment.***
3. **Enabling Environment:** The focus of this Thematic Priority is on fostering an enabling policy and regulatory environment conducive to sustainable telecommunication/ICT development. This Thematic Priority comprises key enablers that underpin ITU’s work to deliver on the Connectivity and Digital Society priorities. The following topics can be considered as supporting components of this Thematic Priority:***Statistics****,* ***Digital Innovation Ecosystems, Policy and Regulatory environments****,* and ***Capacity Development****.*
4. **Resource Mobilization and International Cooperation:** The focus of this Thematic Priority is on mobilizing and attracting resources and fostering international cooperation on telecommunication/ICT development issues. This Thematic Priority is also cross cutting by providing the resources and fostering international cooperation to deliver the relevant global outcomes. The following topics can be considered as the supporting components of this Thematic Priority: ***Projects, Partnerships, Membership,*** and ***ITU-D Study Groups***.

The concerns and needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are crosscutting across all Thematic Priorities. Below is a pictorial presentation of the above concepts, mapping thematic priorities to topics and their boundaries.



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