

## **Broadband India Forum Advocates for Inclusive Development on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2023**

**New Delhi, 17th May 2023:** World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is observed each year on May 17 to improve global awareness about the immense potential of the Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in shaping societies and economies. Its primary objective is to bridge the digital divide and foster widespread access to emerging technologies and connectivity through collaborative efforts on a global scale.

**HISTORY OF WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY (WTISD)** World: The inaugural Telecommunication Day was observed on May 17, 1969, in honor of two significant milestones: the establishment of the International Telecommunication Union and the signing of the pioneering International Telegraph Convention in 1865. Later, in March 2006, the U.N. General Assembly designated May 17 as the official World Information Society Day, highlighting the importance of information society in the modern era. Subsequently, in November 2006, during the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference held in Antalya, Turkey, it was decided to merge the celebrations of Telecommunication Day and Information Society Day into a unified observance known as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, continuing to be held on May 17 each year.

**THEME OF WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY (WTISD):** The theme for the 2023 commemoration is 'Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies'.

Approximately two-thirds of the population in the least developed countries (LDCs) lack access to the Internet, facing barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, affordability, and skills. "We are in a race against time to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030," said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General. "The year 2023 brings together the 5th United Nations Conference on the LDCs to accelerate sustainable development in the places where investments and international assistance are most needed. At the same time, the world's least developed countries are the planet's greatest untapped resource. Investment in these young vibrant countries can help drive sustainable growth for generations."

**BIF's PERSPECTIVE ON WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY (WTISD):** BIF wholeheartedly embraces the objective of using ICT for inclusive development and staunchly advocates for universal accessibility, affordability, and availability of the Internet. BIF firmly upholds the principles of inclusivity, technology neutrality, and the comprehensive utilization of all technologies to guarantee reliable internet access for all individuals, particularly those situated at the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy who are most in need of it today.

The least developed countries demand paramount attention from the international community. Given that a significant majority of individuals in these countries reside in rural areas, it is imperative that affordable and consistently accessible information and communication technologies (ICTs) serve as an essential tool for rural connectivity. Such ICT infrastructure not only enhances productivity but also elevates the economic and social well-being of the people. The transformative power of ICTs empowers individuals and communities, fostering equity, sustainability, and contributing to global peace, prosperity, and stability.

Mr. TV Ramachandran, President of BIF, said, "ICTs can be a catalyst for development and

change, and we are committed to making them accessible to all. We recognize that the challenges facing the least developed countries are complex and multifaceted, but we also believe that there is immense potential for using ICTs to address these challenges and create a better future for all."

### **About Broadband India Forum**

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as an independent policy forum and knowledge-based think-tank that works for the development and enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology- neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country's ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.

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