Executive Summary

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. While the global markets still face strong economic headwinds today, digital connectivity has accelerated as **people, businesses, and governments pivoted strongly towards online communications,** and we continue to see new internet devices and applications, growing broadband penetration into developing markets.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development continues to see progress as we move towards universal and meaningful online activity. It is heartening to note that the global offline population continues to steadily decline to 2.6 billion people in 2023, a reduction from the estimated 2.7 billion people offline in 2022.

"This improvement in connectivity is another step in the right direction, and one more step towards leaving no one behind in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin."

> *We won't rest until we live in a world where meaningful connectivity is a lived reality for everyone, everywhere."*

This year's ITU State of Broadband 2023 reviews the progress of the seven Advocacy Targets, and notes the wins that can be seen as we move towards broadband being universally available, equitable, and affordable. Yet despite the gains, market trends for consumption and supply are shifting, and may not be strong enough to guarantee that the objective of universal and meaningful connectivity will be met by 2030. It therefore looks at the cost of meeting Broadband Commission targets – **what are the considerations for how the next lap of connectivity for digital transformation can and should be financed and funded?** It offers five considerations for the road ahead, see below.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development welcomes stakeholders and partners to work on achieving universal and meaningful connectivity by 2030, to ensure not just connectivity, but also that those who are connected have the skills and knowledge to use it.

Five considerations for the road ahead

1 Defining (and re-defining) measurable goals for "universal meaningful connectivity" to meet today's needs

2 Close the Usage Gap by addressing key barriers to people adopting and using the Internet where coverage is available

3 Broaden contributor base and implement creative funding approaches, including incentivising infrastructure funding, reforming USAF approaches

4 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

5 Build network infrastructure policies to last with sustainable and agile plans