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## Telecom Regulators Issue Best Practices for COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Global telecom regulators today issued best practices to help countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. They stress the importance of promoting an adaptive, resilient, and collaborative regulatory regime.

The GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines were released after a three-day virtual meeting – the 20th session of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-20).

“This crisis has demonstrated that information and communication technology is a unifying thread that runs through all aspects of our societies and economies, and our approach to ICT investments must recognize and embrace this reality,” International Telecommunication Union Secretary-General Houlin Zhao said in a statement. “At stake is the ability of regulators and policy-makers everywhere to unlock investment to support growth, jobs and innovation – but also to save lives and demonstrate their value added in this increasingly connected world.”

“The GSR-20 Best Practice Guidelines emphasize the need for coordination among all stakeholders, integrating sustainability into regulatory frameworks, maximizing benefits while reducing harms of digital technologies, striving for transparency and trust throughout the regulatory process, an evidence-based approach, and frequent revision of regulatory frameworks to ensure they remain fit for purpose,” a news release said.

The document emphasizes the importance of creating an agile digital regulatory framework, establishing codes of conduct, upgrading national emergency plans, and reforming spectrum policies.

On spectrum, the document says that “spectrum managers need to be able to respond timely, making spectrum available for wireless applications when and where it is needed as easily as possible, giving spectrum users and innovators flexibility to provide services that will deliver the greatest benefits. An agile and flexible authorization framework, using technology- and service-neutral approaches may enable spectrum users to deploy equipment quickly and smoothly and evolve their networks. Ensuring sufficient unlicensed spectrum is available drives innovation and investment in a range of technologies that can complement and support networks and expand broadband access at low cost. While regulatory reform for the purpose of bringing new radio systems and services to market is a laudable objective, spectrum reform should also be focused on ensuring that access to broadband service is provided affordably to those areas and populations that have been traditionally unserved or underserved.” - Paul Kirby, paul.kirby@wolterskluwer.com

