

FEATURED

## The Broadband Commission Community responds to COVID-19

Agenda for Action  
 for Faster and Better Recovery

In moments of crisis, Broadband Commissioners come together to offer immediate support to communities worldwide

The [Agenda for Action](#) was adopted by over 50 Broadband Commissioners and their organizations to accelerate the collective response around COVID-19. It includes immediate efforts that governments, global industry, civil society, and international organizations can undertake to support the development and strengthening of digital networks that remain so inherent to keeping our economies and societies working. The three pillars of resilient connectivity, affordable access, and safe use of online services provide a framework for all commissioners to mitigate the immediate adverse effects of COVID-19 through new commitments.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, our Commissioners and their organizations have launched a number of initiatives to provide immediate support to communities worldwide. Listed below are their responses, organized by sectors of society and marked by the pillars of the Agenda for Action that they uphold.

THE 3 PILLARS OF THE AGENDA FOR ACTION:

- Resilient connectivity
- Affordable Access
- Safe use of online services for informed and educated societies

INDUSTRY, PRIVATE SECTOR      ACADEMIA, NGOS, NONPROFITS, CIVIL SOCIETY      UN, IGO, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS      GOVERNMENT, POLICYMAKERS, REGULATORS



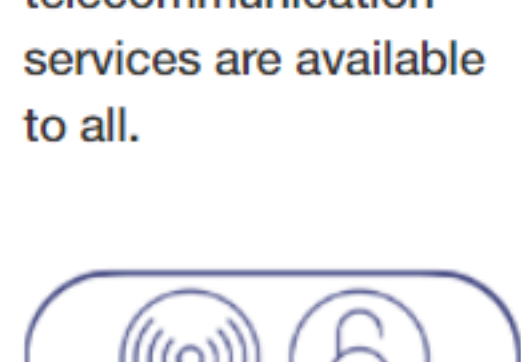
Commissioner Hans Vestberg, CEO of Verizon, has released a number of [initiatives](#) to support first-responders and maintain connectivity to vital services, including building new COVID-19 hotlines and deploying Verizon Response Teams to provide on-demand services. Verizon also [partnered](#) with the New York Times to offer students free access to Times journalism.



Broadband Commission Co-Chair, CEO of Grupo Carso, and President of the Carlos Slim Foundation, Carlos Slim released a [statement](#) on the allocation of one billion pesos through the Foundation to support health measures, education learning platforms, and employees and clients of Grupo Carso.



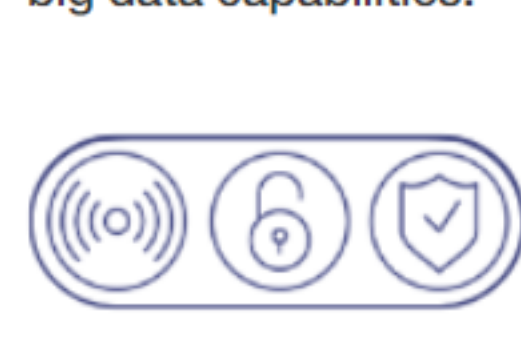
ITU Secretary General and Broadband Commission Co-Vice Chair, Houlin Zhao, launched a [global platform](#) to sustain and ensure continuity of telecommunication networks during the COVID-19 crisis. The Global Network Resiliency Platform will assist governments and the private sector in ensuring that networks are kept resilient and telecommunication services are available to all.



Broadband Commission Co-Chair and President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, emphasized resilience in his [written statement](#) for the G20 Extraordinary Virtual Leaders Summit, stating "Let's work together to end the COVID-19 pandemic and build resilient health systems to keep our people safe in the future."



Director General of GSMA, Mats Granryd [recognized](#) the contributions made by mobile providers to deliver affordable access, provide vital services through cooperation with local governments, and help monitor and limit the spread of disease through the leverage of big data capabilities.



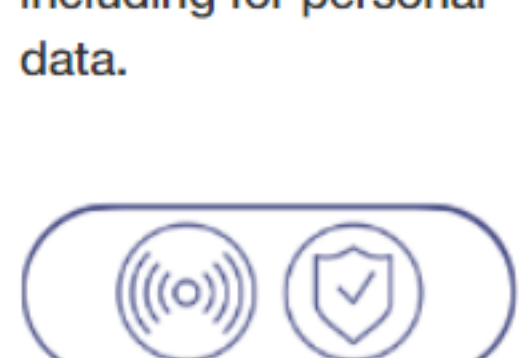
CEO of Samena Telecommunications Council, Bocar Ba, published a [press release](#) calling for a united technology-policy-collaboration to expedite the implementation of 5G across the world in order to deal with the aftermath of COVID-19



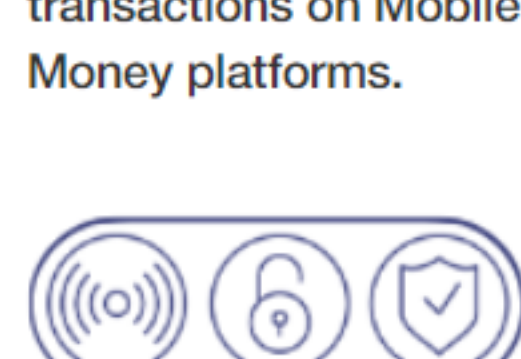
Director General of UNESCO and Broadband Commission Co-Vice chair, Audrey Azoulay, launched the [Global Education Coalition](#) to support countries in scaling up their best distance learning practices and reaching children and youth who are most at risk.



Commissioner Marc Cichy, President of the UKE, released a [statement](#) on new measures to manage network congestion and guarantee service continuity. In addition, UKE entered into a [joint agreement](#) on the special protection of users against data phishing sites, including for personal data.



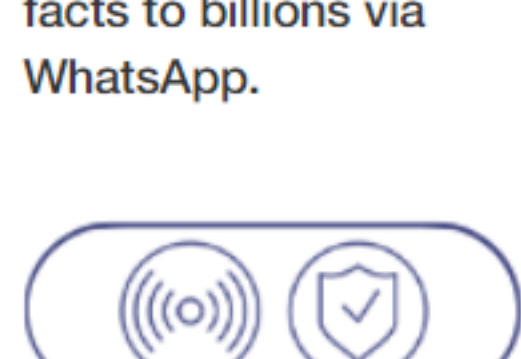
President and CEO of MTN, Rob Shuter, is prioritizing keeping people connected. Through the [Yello Hope package](#), MTN is providing relief products to support mobile and digital platforms that relay vital information, offering free school and university sites to facilitate distance learning, and zero-rating some transactions on Mobile Money platforms.



Smart Africa Director-General, Lacina Koné has called for proposals and Digital Solutions for Governments to Tackle the [#Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic in #Africa](#).



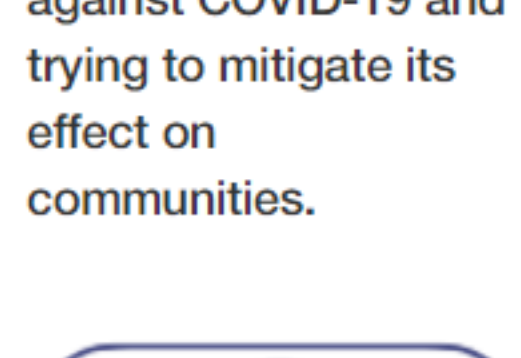
Commissioner Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, launched a [#BuildforCOVID19 hackathon](#) to promote the development of software to take on challenges related to the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, WHO launched a [Health Alert](#) to bring COVID-19 facts to billions via WhatsApp.



Dr. Amani Abou Zeid, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, has released a [joint continental strategy](#) to limit transmission and minimize harm in Africa, amid the COVID-19 outbreak.



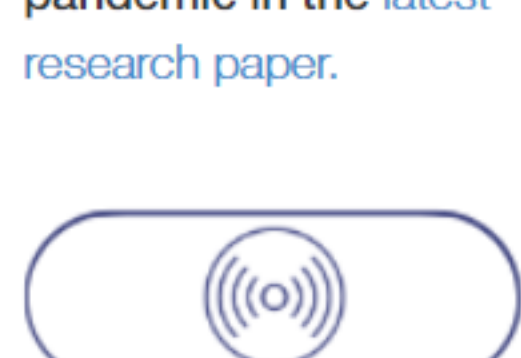
Rajeev Suri, CEO of Nokia, confirmed the launch of a [Coronavirus Global Donation Fund](#) to provide financial assistance to charities, hospitals, health clinics, and other frontline non-governmental organizations who are leading the fight against COVID-19 and trying to mitigate its effect on communities.



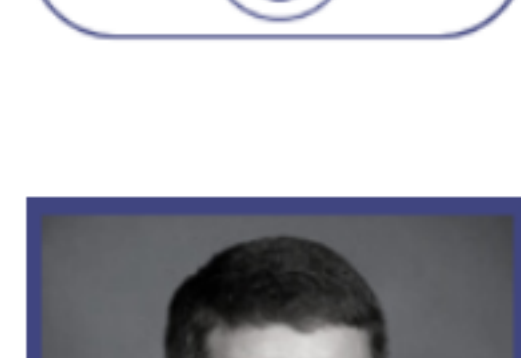
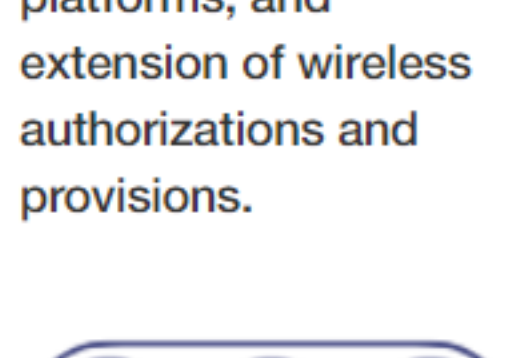
President and CEO of the Web Foundation, Adrian Lovett, released a [statement](#) on the Contract for the Web, a plan of action to increase access to the web, fight misinformation, and ensure the responsible and effective use of data.



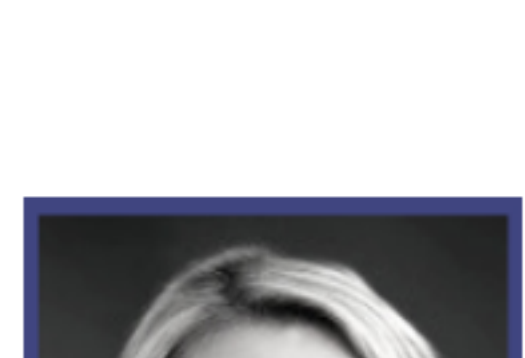
UN Global Pulse director, Robert Kirkpatrick, joined forces with researchers from WHO and the MILA- Quebec AI institute to map the landscape of artificial intelligence applications that are being built to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in the [latest research paper](#).



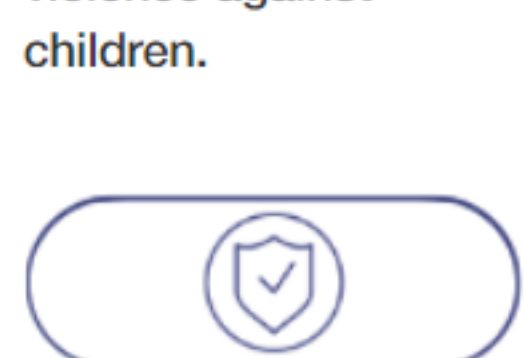
Commissioner AI Mansoori, Director General of TRA released a number of [initiatives](#) launched by the government of the UAE to enhance the ICT sector, including free mobile phone internet data to enable distance learning and access health platforms, and extension of wireless authorizations and provisions.



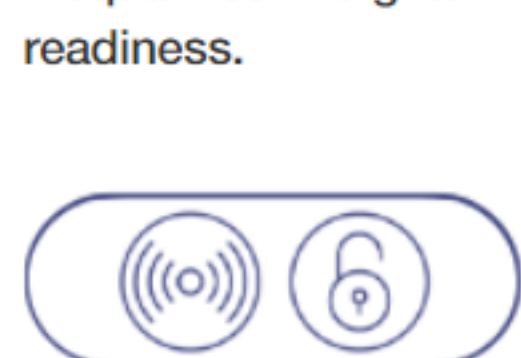
Commissioner Paul Mitchell of Microsoft [shared](#) the company's efforts to provide assistance in the areas of: community support, remote working, education & family, and research & academia.



Joanna Rubinstein, President and CEO of World Childhood Foundation signed a [joint Leaders' Call for Action Statement](#) to raise awareness and outline specific actions to reduce the increased risk of violence against children.



UNCTAD Secretary-General, Mukhisa Kituyi, published a new [analysis](#) that provides snapshots of how technology is being used as a critical tool in maintaining business and life continuity, and reveals inequalities in digital readiness.



Chairman of Digicel Group, Denis O'Brien, [ensured](#) the activation of business continuity plans and protocols aligned with WHO recommendations and teamed up with Health Ministries to assist the public with timely and accurate information.



Internet Society (ISOC) President & CEO, Andrew Sullivan wrote an [article](#) on how the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need to deploy access and network-improving technologies according to the needs of the communities.



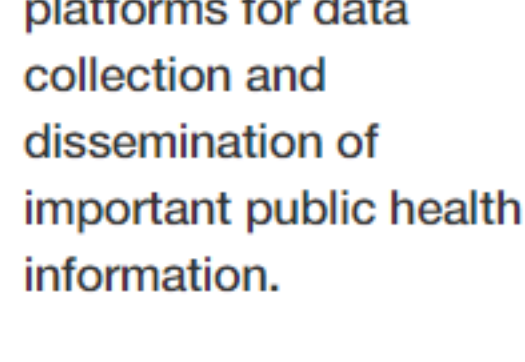
FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu, rolled out a [toolkit](#) for smart policymaking during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure that policymakers can rapidly review and assess options through the Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis (FAPDA) platform.



Commissioner Sun Yafang of Huawei [shared](#) the company's initiatives to fight the spread and impact of the virus in the fields of artificial intelligence assisted healthcare, online education, and enterprises on Cloud.



Dr. Ann Aertis, head of the Novartis Foundation, announced that the [Novartis COVID-19 Response Fund](#) will allocate \$20 million to help impacted communities worldwide, including programs to strengthen digital platforms for data collection and dissemination of important public health information.



CEO of Intelsat, Stephen Spengler, released a [statement](#) sharing Intelsat's commitment to protecting its employees and ensuring continuity of its global operations through the establishment of a COVID-19 Task Force, activation of the Intelsat Emergency Broadcast System, and comprehensive testing of remote-work capabilities.

