Communication of Engagement

Description of Actions

The GSMA has successfully implemented actions to promote and positively impact sustainability goals and principles as promoted by the UN Global Compact and the broader UN System. The GSMA has undertaken activities in awareness raising, capacity building, public-private dialogues, mobilising the private sector to action on the SDGs, fostering partnerships and closely collaborating with various United Nations agencies to generate impact at the local and global level. This report outlines details on some of the key impacts and activities implemented by the GSMA over the past years since the previous COE submission. The GSMA remains committed to our engagement with the UN Global Compact and leading the charge on positive change for our industry. The GSMA tracks much of our impact here: https://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/

Collaboration, Activities and Achievements

Climate Action

In February 2020, the ICT industry took a step forward in tackling climate change with the release of the first-ever science-based pathway to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions across the telecoms sector. This supports the GSMA's commitment to helping the mobile industry achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Science-Based Target (SBT) is the result of a collaboration between the ITU, GeSI, the GSMA, and SBTi to develop a sector-specific decarbonisation pathway that allows ICT companies to set targets in line with the latest climate science. It includes emissions reductions trajectories for mobile, fixed and data centre operators to meet the ambitious Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°c, designed to substantially reduce the risks and effects of climate change.

Twenty-nine operator groups representing 30 per cent of global mobile connections are already committed to SBTs. These include America Movil, AT&T, BT, Bharti Airtel, Deutsche Telekom, Elisa, Far Eastone, KPN, Magyar Telekom, NTT DOCOMO, Orange, Proximus, Reliance Jio Infocomm, Safaricom, Singtel, SK Telecom, STC, Swisscom, T Mobile USA, Taiwan Mobile, TDC, Tele2, Telefónica, Telekom Austria, Telenor, Telia, Telstra, Verizon, and Vodafone.

The GSMA has also launched a Climate Toolkit for operators which includes company guidance for setting science-based targets. Further information is available at:
https://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/climate-action-toolkit

Digital Declaration

The GSMA's Digital Declaration unites CEOs from across industry sectors who are committed to acting ethically in the digital era and delivering what matters most to digital citizens, industry and governments. The Digital Declaration captures the key guiding principles business leaders must adhere to keep pace with consumer expectations. It calls on businesses to respect the privacy of digital citizens, handle personal data securely and transparently, take meaningful steps to mitigate cyber threats and ensure everyone can participate in the digital economy as it develops; whilst combating online harassment. These commitments are designed to confront the most pressing challenges within the technological era, whilst fortifying an inclusive, trusted and innovative digital society for all. To date, 82 CEOs from around the globe have signed up to the commitment.

Joint Action Plan

Fostering knowledge-sharing, notably through the ITU's Global Network Resiliency Platform (#REG4COVID) and the World Economic Forum's COVID Action Platform (the COVID Digital Response Network and the Digital Transformation for the Post-COVID World group), the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development's Agenda for Action, and other platforms and fora, this call for action has been developed as part of a fast-tracked collaboration initiated by the World Bank, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), GSMA and the World Economic Forum. More information can be found here.

Gender

In 2020, the GSMA partnered with the *Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network* and *Flow in Action* to run an online *Innovation and Creativity Challenge* aimed at building digital skills for girls between the ages of 8 and 16 across the Commonwealth and beyond. The challenge ran for 2 months and was aimed at educators and parents. The GSMA also co-hosted a webinar and participating in the ITU's online dialogue on *Girls in ICT: Inspiring the Next Generation* and EQUALS Twitter Chat *Digital Heroes*. A full overview on *GSMA's Girls in ICT Day 2020* can be found by clicking here.

The GSMA was been awarded the **2020 G7-EU Women Empowerment Principles Award in the Best Network Category**. The GSMA was chosen as the winner by a UN Women appointed Youth Jury. The Jury represented a group of young women with a strong background in gender equality and women's empowerment. The GSMA holds Leadership roles in the UN-led EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality and secured funding from World Bank, EU and Verizon for new EQUALS projects on access, skills and leadership for women. The GSMA co-published a pilot study on "Perceptions of Power: Championing Female Leadership in Tech".

Mobile operators are driving efforts to address the digital divide. As part of the GSMA Connected Women Commitment Initiative which launched in 2016, 39 mobile operators have made formal commitments to reduce the gender gap in the customer base of their mobile internet or mobile money services, driving an effort to accelerate digital and financial inclusion for women across Africa, Asia and Latin America. So far they have collectively reached over 35 million additional women with these services. Their efforts include offering low-cost internet-enabled handsets to address women's price sensitivity, savings and loans products aimed at women, emergency balance and alerts to help women feel safer when using mobile phones, increasing the number of female agents and merchants, and improving digital literacy among women through educational programmes and interactive content.

In India, Vodafone Idea has reached millions of women with its Sakhi safety service, which includes a system to alert pre-defined contacts at the touch of a button in a crisis, emergency credit and a means to privately top-up without having to reveal personal phone numbers to agents, who are usually men.

In Kenya, where women are 34% less likely than men to use mobile internet, Safaricom's low-cost smartphone offering as part of its Maisha ni Digital umbrella has been successful in reaching more female customers than men, through focusing on affordability, digital skills and relevance. Safaricom partnered with Google to launch subsidised, entry-level Neon range smartphones at a competitive

price of $35–$40 using Android Go, a lighter version of Android's operating system that reduces data costs for customers. Information leaflets explain how to use the handset, download apps and open an email account, agents help onboard women and local media campaigns raise awareness of the handset, apps and features in a way that local men and women can relate to.

mPower Youth

To mark 30 years since the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the GSMA and UNICEF released a guide for mobile operators on "Enhancing Children's Lives through Mobile".

AI for Impact

The GSMA published the 'AI Ethics Principles' paper provides principles that, when applied alongside existing laws, regulations, and privacy principles such as the GSMA Mobile Privacy Principles, can help mitigate ethics and privacy risks associated with AI. Trustworthy AI grounded in the right frameworks and principles, designed and deployed in a manner consistent with international human rights conventions, and supported through research, training and education, can lead to benefits for society and the global economy.

COVID-19

The mobile industry has never been more important to the world's citizens and economy. Our role at the GSMA is to unlock the power of connectivity so that people, industry and society thrive, and we will continue to play a leading role in supporting and amplifying the vital work our industry is doing at this time. A list of all the GSMA's efforts can be found here.

Mobile for Development (M4D) Initiatives

Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation (M4H)

- The programme contracted eight new grantees under round three of the M4H Innovation Fund, bringing our portfolio to 22 grants in total (including the inaugural Disaster Response round). To date, M4H Innovation Fund projects have directly impacted the lives of 714,000 people, with four grantees scaling or replicating in new contexts (Lumkani, Refunite, Mercy Corps and Flowminder).

- Facilitated five new partnerships between MNOs and humanitarian organisations, reaching a total of 19 partnerships. The portfolio of projects implemented by M4H has impacted 454,000 people in humanitarian contexts who are now better able to access and use life-enhancing mobile services.

- Replicated two business models in new countries, training mobile money agents on Humanitarian Code of Conduct principles (MTN Rwanda and Uganda in partnership with Alight) and providing digital financial literacy training for female mobile money agents (in partnership with Grameen Foundation).

- M4H published 10 reports, translated from English into an additional four languages. In 2020 alone, M4H reports were cited 36 times and downloaded around 15,000 times. Of note was the *Digital Lives of Refugees* report, which was downloaded 3,146 times and cited 21 times by stakeholders such as UNHCR, UNDP and ODI.

- Influenced policy change in Kenya, unlocking access to vital mobile services for recipients of a digital ID project led by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS). We documented the steps and events that culminated in a policy shift in Uganda that enabled approximately 600,000 refugees to legally register for mobile services in their own name.

- Provided capacity building training to over 150 policymakers representing over 16 governments and intergovernmental bodies, including The World Bank and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Ecosystem Accelerator

The GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator programme focuses on bridging the gap between mobile operators and start-ups, enabling strong partnerships that foster the growth of innovative mobile products and services. These partnerships bring impactful mobile solutions to the people and places that need them most, generating the greatest socio-economic impact. In particular, the programme operates an Innovation Fund which supports start-ups from Africa and Asia-Pacific with direct grant funding, technical assistance, and connections with mobile operators.

Key programme statistics:

- 34 start-ups in 23 countries have been allocated £6.6m of grant funding by the programme.
- 4.2M beneficiaries have been impacted by the portfolio start-ups.
- £4.2M in additional funding has been raised by the portfolio start-ups, mostly from commercial investors.
- 18 start-ups now have partnerships with mobile network operators.
- 13 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals are addressed collectively by the portfolio.
- £8M of income has been unlocked through their services, for low-income populations and local MSMEs.

Mobile Money

With over a billion registered accounts (an increase of 10.2% in 2019) and close to $2 billion in daily transactions, mobile money is expanding like never before. The GSMA State of the Mobile Money Industry Report 2019 showcases 290 live services in 95 countries and 372 million active accounts (an increase of 13.6% in 2019), highlighting that mobile money is entering the mainstream in most markets where access to financial services is low. Mobile money services are now available in 96% of the countries where less than a third of the population have an account at a formal financial institution.

2019 also witnessed a growth of 21.8% and 26% respectively in mobile money transaction volume and value (USD), with the number of mobile money agent outlets almost tripled over the past five years. The reach of a mobile money agent is now seven times that of ATMs and 20 times that of bank branches. The GSMA's Mobile Money team estimates that there will be 1.5 billion registered mobile money accounts and 529 million active accounts by the end of 2025.

To take the industry to the next level, GSMA led the development of Mobile Money Certification, launched in 2018, to provide a comprehensive risk management and consumer protection framework for mobile money services. To date, 13 leading mobile money providers have become certified, providing safe and reliable services to 204 million registered customers globally.

Regulation has a significant impact on mobile money adoption and usage, impacting the ease with which new customers can enrol, the range of services that can be offered, and the commercial and operating environments for mobile money providers. GSMA's Mobile Money Regulatory Index 2019 indicated an improvement in regulatory environments of 32 countries (with Tunisia, Somalia and Argentina formalising mobile money regulations for the first time, followed by new regulatory framework in Singapore, PNG and Pakistan, among others).

To drive financial inclusion through innovation, the GSMA Inclusive Tech Lab, that focuses on a range of innovative areas developing and implementing technical solutions, launched updated harmonised mobile money APIs and a new platform to test mobile money interoperability.

Mobile money is emerging as a powerful tool to deliver humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in times of crisis. 60% of mobile money providers reported partnering with a humanitarian organisation to deliver mobile money-enabled cash and voucher assistance with digital cash assistance delivered to over 2.7 million unique mobile money accounts.

In these times of COVID-19 crisis, mobile money has proven to be an invaluable tool by facilitating safe and efficient money transfer and payment services. In order to shield the most vulnerable user segments, a number of mobile money providers went the extra mile to make digital financial services accessible to the under-served, for example:

- Some operators extended fee waivers to all transaction bands (e.g. Airtel Africa), others extended fee waivers to certain transaction types such as utility bill payments (e.g. Orange Senegal).
- KCB Bank and Safaricom in Kenya have set aside funds for digital loans for the SME sector during the period of the pandemic.
- Wave Money committed to waiving all service fees for the disbursement of funds by non-government organizations (NGOs) or other donors to people impacted by COVID-19.
- Airtel Payments Bank has waived all charges on cash withdrawal through instant money transfer as financial aid for its account holders during lockdown, alongside providing a free insurance cover to its business correspondents.

The mobile industry is also working to ensure that women and other underrepresented groups are not left behind when it comes to accessing digital financial services. According to the latest findings from the World Bank's Global Findex database, women across low- and middle-income countries are, on average, 33% less likely than men to have a mobile money account.

In Bangladesh, Grameenphone's GPAY app enables users to pay their utility bills and top up their SIM using their smartphone. Grameenphone realised that Bangladeshi women are traditionally the bill payers in many households, but that they have lower literacy levels than men. Based on researching the needs of its female customers, Grameenphone revamped the app to be more user-

friendly and intuitive, which help helped drive a 7% increase in the proportion of its female customers.

Digital Skills

The wide-scale social and economic challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic are providing stronger incentives for individuals, businesses and governments to more actively pursue digital solutions. As people face lockdown and social distancing measures, the internet becomes a vital tool for accessing critical information and services. Yet acquiring the skills to go online and unlock the benefits of the internet remains a challenge for many, including the 3.3 billion people who are covered by mobile broadband networks but who are not using mobile internet services. The GSMA recognises the vital importance of digital skills as a means of empowering people to overcome the usage barrier and, as part of our efforts, we are supporting industry initiatives by:

- Enhancing the GSMA Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit (MISTT), to support safe access training materials with a range of new modules available remotely.
- Launching a GSMA Innovation Fund to encourage the development of innovative solutions for mobile internet adoption and digital inclusion, including overcoming digital skills barriers. The fund will focus on countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa with grants of up to £250,000.

To help people improve their digital literacy, use the internet more safely on their mobile and ensure they have the skills required for a digital future, the GSMA Connected Society programme developed the Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit (MISTT). The MISTT uses a 'train the trainer' approach which consists of short lessons that can be easily adapted to local needs and languages; MISTT modules have already been translated into French, Hindi, Swahili, Bengali and Kinyarwanda. The MISTT modules are available in video format to enable users to learn remotely. It has also been integrated into the Life App, a self-care basic digital content application developed by KaiOS Technologies for KaiOS-enabled phones to equip first-time internet users with tools and resources in digital skills, health, education, gender equality, agriculture, finances and more.

The MISTT has already been deployed in 21 countries, benefiting over one million people. In Bangladesh, for example, Banglalink trained over 100,000 customers in three months, which increased both the number of customers who started to use mobile internet and the levels of usage (with those who received the training increasing their data usage by 228%, compared to an increase of only 59% for those who did not receive the training).

To support innovative solutions that tackle the digital skills barrier to mobile internet adoption and use for those not currently online, the GSMA launched the Innovation Fund for Mobile Internet Adoption and Digital Inclusion. Projects were able to apply for funding on innovations that overcome a number of the barriers to mobile internet adoption including Digital Skills, Accessibility, Affordability, and Safety and Security, and demonstrate commercially sustainable models that can be scaled and replicated across similar environments.

Connected Society launched the 'Mobile Digital Skills Alliance', a new initiative dedicated to generating and sharing knowledge, disseminating best practices and fostering collaboration to drive the scaling up of mobile digital skills across low- and middle-income countries.

Assistive Tech

Marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the GSMA launched the 'Principles for Driving the Digital Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities'. The Principles aim to further inspire the mobile industry to help close the mobile disability gap. The 'Principles' set out a framework for action, together with recommended activities, to help address the barriers that currently prevent persons with disabilities from accessing and using mobile-enabled products and services. Research conducted by the GSMA in LMICs shows that persons with disabilities are less likely to own smartphones and use mobile internet than persons without disabilities.

The framework has been endorsed by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Mobile & Wireless Forum's (MWF) Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative (GARI), Global Disability Innovation Hub, the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), PurpleSpace and The Valuable 500. Mobile operators who have signed up to the Principles include Dialog Axiata PLC, Optus, Orange Group, Safaricom PLC, Telefónica Group, Turkcell, Vodacom South Africa and Zain Group.

GSMA Mobile Industry Impact

Since committing the industry to the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, the GSMA has been tracking its impact on them on an annual basis. In 2019, an additional 610 million individuals used mobile to access educational information for themselves or their children, taking the total to 2 billion people, equivalent to 40% of mobile subscribers. This supported the industry's contribution towards SDG 4: Quality Education, which saw the biggest impact score improvement in 2019 to become the second-most impacted SDG. Delivering education remotely has become particularly important during the COVID-19 outbreak, with students accessing educational lessons via SMS, USSD or web platforms. As well as connecting students to these solutions, operators in many countries are providing free access to educational content.

The mobile industry achieved its biggest impact on SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, largely due to extensive mobile network coverage and more affordable mobile services – the importance of this is reflected in SDG Target 9.c.10 There are now 7.1 billion people around the world covered by mobile broadband networks, up from 6.2 billion in 2015. The biggest improvement has been in 4G population coverage, which increased from 55% to 85% (equivalent to 2.5 billion additional people covered) in this period. More generally, the continued increase in the use of mobile and mobile internet has contributed to the industry's impact across all the SDGs. By the end of 2019, 5.1 billion people (66% of the global population) were using a mobile phone, an increase of 600 million people compared to 2015. In addition, 3.8 billion people (49% of the global population) were also using mobile internet, representing an increase of 1.1 billion people since 2015.

Good Health and Well-being also recorded a strong improvement, with 1.6 billion individuals (32% of mobile subscribers) using mobile phones to improve or monitor their health – an increase of 330 million people since 2018 and direct impact on SDG 3. This includes remote diagnostic services, whereby individuals can contact practitioners through voice, SMS and video services, as well as the distribution of health programmes via mobile to allow people to monitor their well-being. As the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified existing weaknesses and gaps in health systems, digital health

solutions are likely to play an increasingly important role to address systemic challenges in healthcare services. The use of mobile financial services (such as mobile banking and mobile money) increased by 620 million people in 2019 to reach 2.3 billion adults (42% of subscribers). This creates employment, raises productivity and helps to formalise the economy, contributing to SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Mobile money services in particular, have an important role in helping to close the gap in access to financial services in LMICs.

As operators shift to a 'payments as a platform' model, allowing more industries to integrate with mobile money services via open APIs, there is an opportunity to offer a broader range of financial services to meet the varied needs of the population. It also supports new business models, such as for paying utility services, supporting the industry's impact on SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. For instance, the rise of pay-as-you-go (PAYG) models for energy and water allows individuals to acquire otherwise unattainable assets through regular small instalments via mobile money. In particular, the PAYG solar model is gaining momentum: in 2018, PAYG solar providers captured 91% of the $500 million invested in the off-grid energy sector, and nearly 4.2 million PAYG solar units had been sold in Africa at the end of 2019, an increase of 48% on the previous year.

There has also been an increase in usage of mobile-enabled services among underserved parts of the population. In 2019, an additional 100 million individuals living in rural areas of developing countries used mobile to access government services, taking the total to 320 million people using such services, equivalent to 17% of rural subscribers. 220 million individuals in rural areas of developing countries also used mobile to access agricultural information services in 2019, an increase of 80 million people. With agriculture central to many developing economies, this has helped to drive the industry's impact score for SDG 2: Zero Hunger, which was one of the most improved SDGs in 2019.

IoT connections increased by 6 billion between 2015 and 2019, reaching 12 billion connections worldwide. This accelerated the industry's impact on a range of SDGs. For instance, the rise of smart city solutions as part of efforts by governments to improve traffic flow and increase safety supports SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. IoT deployments maintain momentum in the home and workplace The consumer segment currently accounts for most IoT connections, representing 59% of total connections at the end of 2019. This is expected to change, with enterprise IoT growing rapidly to overtake consumer IoT in 2024. Growth will be fuelled by deployments to support industrial use cases (e.g. robotics, factory floor automation) as well as health and public infrastructure assets. This will drive a significant impact on several SDGs, including SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.