



World Summit of Information Society 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of Communications attended the opening ceremony of the **World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2022** in Geneva, Switzerland, where **India showcased its telecom prowess during multilateral & bilateral engagements.**

- The participation comes with India contesting the re-election to the [ITU \(International Telecommunication Union\) Council](#), for the term 2023-2026. India has been a member of ITU, since 1869 and has been continuously participating, actively in the works, and activities of the Union.

What is WSIS?

- The World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022 represents the world's **largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community.**
- The Forum provides **structured opportunities to network, learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.**
- The Agenda and Programme of the Forum will be built on the basis of the submissions received during the Open Consultation Process.
- Furthermore, the 2022 WSIS Forum will **provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines** in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

What are the Highlights of the Minister's Address?

- India has developed the Low mobility Large Coverage Standard, earlier called [5Gi](#) using a new waveform that enables 5G towers to cover wider areas in rural and remote areas.
 - These standards were among the first 5G standards, which have been approved by the [ITU](#) and have also become part of Globally harmonized 3GPP (3rd Generation Partnership Project) Release 17 standards. These will be immensely helpful for countries with similar geographical spread.
- Over six hundred villages are being connected on [Optical Fibre cable](#), with nearly 175,000 already connected.
- Villages left out of 4G connectivity are being covered through [Universal Service Obligation Fund \(USOF\).](#)
- India focuses on the **use of technologies that can accelerate development and bridge this divide**, like using E band wireless carriers, [LEO \(Low Earth Orbit\)](#) and [MEO \(Middle earth Orbit\)](#) satellite connectivity among others.
- India has issued the first service license for LEO or MEO connectivity and hopes to harness the technology to enable digital inclusion in remote areas.
- Developing 5G test bed, indigenous 4G and 5G stack, development of Indian 5G standards and setting up of 6G innovation forum are the initiatives to reduce cost, facilitate faster 5G spread in rural areas and eliminate dependency on specific vendors.

What is Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)?

- **USOF** ensures that there is universal **non-discriminatory access to quality ICT** services at economically efficient prices to people in rural and remote areas.
 - Currently, it is charged at the rate of 5%, while the TSPs demand it to be reduced to 3%.
- It was created under the Department of Telecommunications in **2002**.
- It is a **non-lapsable fund**, i.e., the unspent amount under a targeted financial year does not lapse and is accrued for next years' spending.
- All credits to this fund require **parliamentary approval** and it has a **statutory support** under **Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003**.

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