

# ITU CONNECT ARAB SUMMIT

16:30-17:30, MONDAY 5 MARCH

DOHA, QATAR

## PRESS CONFERENCE

### MR BRAHIMA SANOU

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INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

- It is a great pleasure to be here with you this afternoon.
- Let me begin by saying that like the previous speakers, I am delighted by the huge level of interest this summit has generated.
- I am confident that with so many inspirational leaders guiding our work, we will be able to mobilize the resources needed to roll out advanced ICT infrastructure across the region and to address digital inclusion issues.
- Over the next two days, different high-level sessions will address important regional issues including access and infrastructure, cybersecurity, innovation and entrepreneurship, local digital content, and education.
- Perhaps most importantly, the summit will help deliver concrete answers to the following questions:
  - How can ICT be used to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals on health, education and employment creation?
  - How can we dismantle entry barriers to education, digital literacy and entrepreneurship?
  - How can we help support a robust Arab ICT industry?

- How can we collectively ensure easy access for all while securing our transactions, and protecting people – and especially children – online?
- How can we do more to give the Arabic language the prominence it deserves online, given that it is the sixth most spoken language, and yet only 113<sup>th</sup> of the 140 languages present on the web?
- How do we use ICTs to preserve our cultural heritage and to enhance social inclusion and social cohesion?
- Some 60% of the population of the Arab region is under thirty years old. This region is blessed with millions of young people who are smart, digital natives.
- Projections show that there is a need to create at least 50 million new jobs in the region by the year 2020 – and this summit will certainly explore ways and means to respond to the job demands of youths through creative entrepreneurship initiatives.
- One important element of this event is its power to bring innovators and investors together to forge new projects and partnerships focusing on the Arab world.
- With some 46 billion dollars' worth of market opportunities already identified, we are expecting some exciting announcements over the next two days.
- To conclude I would therefore say that one thing is certain: many here share my enormous optimism for the untapped potential of this region, and are as enthusiastic as I am about investing in this vibrant and booming region.

Thank you.