ITU Asia-Pacific Regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Emergency Telecommunications

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Closing Remarks by
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Honorable Mr. Houlin Zhao, Deputy Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union,
Mr. Bat-Erdene Jalavsuren, Chairman, Information, Communication Technology and Post Authority of Mongolia,
Mr. Battogtokh Osokhun, Vice Chairman, Communications Regulatory commission of Mongolia,
Dr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, ICT and Development Section, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, ESCAP,
Distinguished Delegates, Partners, Participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

In fact, Mongolia is the first country, where I started an action relating to Emergency Telecommunication, since I joined the ITU in 2001. Hence, I am very pleased to have worked closely with Mongolia for the last decade together, while having been moved by the way in which the various Mongolian authority, commission and agencies have demonstrated your support and commitment to this critical issue of Emergency Telecommunication.
Having said that, the ITU Regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Emergency Telecommunications has now come to a closing. I on behalf of the ITU - its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in particular, would like to congratulate you all on this successful Forum with fruitful discussions you have had in the past few days.

Throughout the six sessions, we had shared a lot of experiences and exchanged views on various aspects of Emergency Telecommunications: e.g.,

Starting from Session 1, we all do not argue that Telecommunications and ICTs play a vital or facilitating role in all phases of disaster management, and especially in saving lives. However, we also recognized that there are still challenges remained such as effective coordination among stakeholders, last mile early warning, disaster awareness raising and capacity building, impact of climate change among many others. It does not matter whether a country is a supermarket or a corner store of disasters, whenever it is the very life saving mission, it is always critical. Therefore, we need to make efforts to overcome these challenges.

In Session 2, we emphasized the role of telecommunications and ICTs in disaster and emergency management. We looked at technology options and critical information required for effective disaster management and especially for persons with special needs such as the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). We recognized that satellite and wireless communications are essential, when wired telecommunication infrastructure is brought down by a disaster. Spectrum allocation for emergency purposes is another key component for disaster management. Effective early warning also needs to take into account future technologies like digital broadcasting and international standards such as Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), which is an ITU Recommendation.

Then, we discussed about various ICT applications for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management in Session 3. Satellite applications provide data, which can be turned to critical information and insight of events especially for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response. Again, we were reminded of the needs of requirements for persons with special needs and disabilities.
In Session 4, we have learnt a lot from country practices and experiences, in which I do appreciate all speakers for your efforts on preparing this information sharing with all of us here. We learned that when it comes to a natural disaster, no one is completely prepared and we always learn from the past in order to improve whatever systems and arrangements we have had.

For Session 5, we addressed the role of international organizations such as ITU and ESCAP in facilitating and assisting governments in any efforts on Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management, particularly on emergency telecommunications. It is no doubt that not only coordination at all levels within a country, but also international coordination and cooperation are essential for life-saving missions. Hence, we need to make more efforts to enable this coordination and collaboration. Tampere Convention is one of the tools we should apply and implement it the soonest, if your countries have not done yet.

I was pleased to see that we had very fruitful discussions and even made suggestions for steps forward in the last session. I assure you that ITU and ESCAP as well as our partners will take away and follow on your suggestions. Nevertheless, we will need your commitments and supports in order to turn these suggestions to something implementable, thereby meeting our ultimate goal, which is ensuring security of lives wherever we are and whenever it is.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before closing, please allow me to thank again, the Information, Communication Technology, and Post Authority (ICTPA) of Mongolia, for your excellent hosting of this Forum with such a warm hospitality to all of us. My deep appreciation also goes to supporters of the Forum, especially the Communication Regulatory Commission of Mongolia (CRC), the Australian Government, and the ESCAP. I am also grateful to all sponsors: Gemnet, Information Communication Network, G-Mobile, and Mobicom. I am sure that you all will join me to thank the secretariat teams from the ICTPA, CRC and ITU - both HQs and Asia-Pacific Regional Office - as well as our volunteers, who have worked days and nights to
make this Forum very successful. Moreover, I thank our Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Zhao, for his full participation and support to this Forum. Last but not least, I thank speakers and all of you for your very efforts, active participations and contributions to the success of this Forum.

I do wish you a safe journey back home, while looking forward to not only seeing you again but also implementing actions discussed and agreed together with you in your own countries to make the world a safer place.

Thank you very much for your attentions and participations.