

**Speech by François Rancy, Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau
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<http://www.spectrum2020.ca/welcome/index.shtml>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to be with you this afternoon in Ottawa. It is particularly encouraging to me to see that so many talented people are interested in spectrum.

As we all know, radiocommunications are changing the World. They have effectively turned it into a global village. They are changing the life of practically everybody in the World by providing instant connection between people. The development of broadband radiocommunications will have an even greater effect by providing, in addition, instant access to information and to an unlimited number of applications which make professional, social and personal life easier and richer.

As we all know, spectrum is the condition and the fuel for this development. One of the top priorities of the ITU, which manages spectrum at a worldwide level, is therefore to ensure that this common resource is allocated and used in the best possible way to support the development of broadband radiocommunications. This is why I am very happy to present to you the role played by the ITU in support of broadband radiocommunications.

The “U” of ITU stands for Union, but also stands for “You”. Most of the work of the ITU is done by the efforts and the talent of people like you, who form its membership and, by consensus, build the regulatory, operational and technical environment which makes the development of radiocommunications possible.

The role and the activity of the ITU in this regard is threefold, and derives from the evidence that this global village requires global solutions.

Firstly, by making global spectrum allocations and identifying spectrum at global level for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), the ITU intends to ensure global roaming and economies of scale for the production of mobile terminals and network equipment. These allocations are made by World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs), which have established a global framework for broadband mobile spectrum in 2000, for the band at 2.5-2.7 GHz and in 2007, for the bands at 700 MHz, 800 MHz and 3.4-3.6 GHz. All these bands have already started to be used or will be used soon for broadband mobile. Given the remarkable growth of traffic generated by smartphones, additional spectrum may be required soon. This issue will certainly be discussed at the forthcoming WRC, next January, for a possible allocation and identification of additional spectrum in 2015-16.

Secondly, by adopting recommendations on radio interfaces, including harmonized frequency plans, the ITU intends to provide the best possible quality at the most affordable cost, while consolidating the possibilities of economies of scale for the industry. The corresponding work is conducted by ITU-R

Working Party 5D, and most of you are familiar with the process it has been using to develop standards for IMT-Advanced. On the basis of a detailed evaluation against very stringent technical and operational criteria, this work has concluded that “LTE-Advanced” and “WirelessMAN-Advanced” should be accorded the official designation of IMT-Advanced. The detailed specifications of IMT-Advanced technologies will be provided in a new ITU-R Recommendation expected in early 2012 and service rollout in 2013-14.

Thirdly, the ITU is informing and assisting its Members in order to better understand the challenges faced in developing broadband mobile communications, in particular in respect of making available the appropriate spectrum. To achieve this, we are organizing, as part of a joint effort by the Telecommunications Development Bureau (BDT) and the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), a series of workshops held at sub-regional level and hosted by countries willing to go ahead in this domain. This effort is intended, in particular, to increase the level of cooperation between neighbouring countries in order to achieve sub-regional harmonization on the use of spectrum, hence avoid harmful interference in border areas between future broadband mobile systems and other potential users of the spectrum.

Such harmonization is particularly important in the 700-800 MHz bands, which are still used by terrestrial broadcasting in many countries, and represent what is called the “digital dividend”. Broadcasting closely relates to the fundamental rights of countries, to the identity and culture of Nations. Taking spectrum away from broadcasting is therefore a very critical decision, which has social, and cultural consequences. In addition, public financial support is often required to mitigate the effects of possible associated disruptions in public service provision. For these reasons, a decision on the allocation of the digital dividend often needs to be taken at the highest level of the State.

Digitalization of terrestrial television however, offers the possibility to do such an allocation with minimum impact on broadcasting, as a result of the much higher spectrum efficiency of digital transmissions. Because the corresponding frequencies have very attractive propagation characteristics, reallocating part of that spectrum to mobile services is a unique opportunity to bridge the digital divide by providing broadband mobile coverage to sparsely populated areas at a much lower cost than at higher frequencies.

In such a context, sub-regional or regional coordination may facilitate decision making. It is in any case required to avoid harmful interference between the services involved. To assist administrations in this decision-making, the ITU will need to rely on the experience and support of countries which have successfully undergone this process, like Canada.

To conclude, I would like to praise the very important role played by Canada in ITU discussions and studies on spectrum issues. I am convinced that the existence of structures like the Advisory Spectrum Board of Canada, which gathers all spectrum stakeholders in a country in an effort to build consensus positions, is a key factor for successful action at the ITU, where this approach is used for taking decisions. I would like to thank you all for this and encourage you to support ITU’s efforts in building broadband communications for our global village.

Thank you very much for your attention.