

# The Context of South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC)

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# The SATRC

- ▶ Established in 1997 in cooperation between APT and ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in a high level commitment from 9 South Asian countries
- ▶ Discusses and promotes the area of co-operations of all the issues relating to regulations in telecommunications which are of common interest to the telecom regulators of the South Asian Countries
- ▶ SATRC Members consists of the regulatory bodies of the following nine South-Asian countries:
  - ▶ **Afghanistan:** Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA)
  - ▶ **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)
  - ▶ **Bhutan:** Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA)
  - ▶ **India:** Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)
  - ▶ **Islamic Republic of Iran:** Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA)
  - ▶ **Maldives:** Communications Authority of Maldives (CAM)
  - ▶ **Nepal:** Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA)
  - ▶ **Pakistan:** Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)
  - ▶ **Sri Lanka:** Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL)

# Scenario of SATRC

- ▶ With a population of over 1.8 billions, the SATRC represents one of the largest sub-region in terms of telecom and ICT market opportunities
- ▶ Consists of developing, least developing, land locked and small island developing economies
- ▶ South-Asia sub region is among the top global markets by subscriber growth for 2015-2020
- ▶ While penetration of telephone and internet services are increasing at a good pace, still many challenges faced by the telecom regulators in the region

# Challenges

- ▶ Level of penetration of broadband internet
  - ▶ SATRC countries had not yet reached at a satisfactory level in terms of broadband uptake
  - ▶ A large number of population still not connected to broadband
  - ▶ Providing last mile connectivity still a major concern for SATRC regulators

# Challenges...

- ▶ Affordable prices for broadband internet and cost of international connectivity
  - ▶ Price for broadband internet is extremely high compared to other parts of Asia and the world
  - ▶ For landlocked countries like Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal the high cost of international connectivity is a bottle-neck for offering broadband services at affordable prices
  - ▶ Offering quality broadband service at affordable price is at the priority for SATRC regulators

# Challenges...

- ▶ Tackling the significant market power, merger and acquisition
  - ▶ Due to the evolution in the mobile technology, merger and acquisition becoming common phenomenon in telecom market
  - ▶ It has also created the risks of going back to monopoly and abuse of dominant positions in the market
  - ▶ SATRC regulators are facing problem to tackle these issues due to lack of experience

# Challenges...

- ▶ Lack of a sustainable national broadband roadmap
  - ▶ Smart digital economy is now at driving force for sustainable development
  - ▶ Digital economy has opened up many fronts for regulators to tackle
  - ▶ SATRC regulators are facing problem to tackle these issues due to lack of a sustainable national broadband roadmap which can address innovative policy and market friendly framework for smart digital economy

# Opportunities

- ▶ SATRC still remains an emerging markets in terms of providing broadband services
- ▶ Demand for data will increase many fold with the uptake of broadband services
- ▶ Hence, scope and opportunities are immense for regulators to play their roles in terms of
  - ▶ Connecting the unconnected
  - ▶ Ensuring a sustainable growth of broadband and digital economy



# Cooperation

- ▶ SATRC is providing the necessary platform for cooperation among the regulators
- ▶ SATRC members adopt SATRC Action Plans (SAP) for a period of two/three years for enhancing cooperation on the common matter of interest
- ▶ To implement the adopted SAP, SATRC members provide extra budgetary contributions
- ▶ SATRC members uphold their commitments for cooperation by providing experts to the work of SAP

# Current focused work of SATRC: SATRC Action Plan Phase VI

- ▶ Currently, SATRC is implementing SATRC Action Plan Phase VI (SAP-VI) for period 2017 - 2018 with core budget US\$163,000
- ▶ The focused issues (work items) are carried out in two working groups
  - ▶ **Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services:** Chaired by Bhutan InfoCom and Media Authority and involved 25 experts from SATRC members
  - ▶ **Working Group on Spectrum:** Chaired by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and involved 21 experts from SATRC members

# SAP VI: Work Items

► Following work items are currently under study in SATRC:

WG Policy, Regulation and Services	WG Spectrum
1. Regulatory approaches to enhance broadband experiences	1. Developing spectrum roadmap in SATRC countries for future mobile broadband
2. Policy and regulatory aspects of infrastructure sharing	2. Spectrum management for the deployment of IoT
3. ICT regulatory framework for M2M communications and IoT in SATRC countries	3. Wireless backhaul - Spectrum, technology and policy consideration
4. Enhanced consumer protection in digital economy	4. Proliferation of Wi-Fi network in SATRC countries
5. Regulatory framework for mobile virtual network operators (MVNO)	

## SAP VI: Work Items...

- ▶ Work continues in the working groups via meeting, e-Meetings, survey questionnaires and workshops
- ▶ Work Items studies will be complete by August 2018 with SATRC deliverables
- ▶ Suggestions and observations are welcome for developing the deliverables on work items

# Conclusions:

- ▶ SATRC is unique sub regional program in APT. SATRC members are continuously putting efforts for making it a regional platform for the telecommunication regulators of South Asia
- ▶ Members are providing extra budgetary contributions voluntarily for the implementation of the activities of SATRC
- ▶ SATRC has been successful to develop regional outcomes on common issues
- ▶ In future, SATRC would take further initiatives from creating close cooperation among the SATRC members
- ▶ SATRC would also like to encourage mutual cooperation with other regional associations of telecom regulators



# Thank You

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