

Regional Development Forum (RDF) for the Americas
Speech by
Ing Teresita Palacios,
President of the National Telecommunication Commission, CONATEL

- Mr Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau,
- Mr Oscar León, Executive Secretary of CITEL,
- Ms Cecilia Ugaz, Representative of the United Nations Development Programme and Resident Coordinator,
- Mr Bruno Ramos, Regional Director, ITU Regional office for the Americas
- Mr Sergio Scarabino, Head of the ITU Office in Santiago,
- Members of the CONATEL Board,
- Esteemed delegates and representatives of the countries of the Americas,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
-

On behalf of our National Telecommunications Commission and of the national Government, I would like to welcome you most warmly to the city of Asuncion, the capital of the Republic of Paraguay.

It is an honour for Paraguay to host the ITU Regional Development Forum for the Americas, and I would like to thank ITU, represented by the Director of BDT Mr Brahima Sanou, for the confidence it has placed in my country and in CONATEL in entrusting this task to us.

The regional development forums offer opportunities for dialogue at a high level, for cooperation and partnership among public telecommunication/ICT authorities, regulators, private sector companies, academic institutions, and regional and international development bodies, on specific issues pertaining to regional telecommunications and ICTs.

We are meeting today in Asuncion, at this regional development forum, mindful of the major protagonist in all our actions: our people, the peoples of the Americas. Because our peoples, which means all of us, deserve sustainable economic and social development for our countries and deserve to see the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations Agenda for 2015-2030.

And telecommunications/ICTs have a key role to play in achieving this.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals calls for collaborative effort, requiring harmonization and coordination among the various players in the telecommunication/ICT sector.

The Republic of Paraguay, with the collaboration of ITU experts, has drawn up its National Telecommunications Plan (NTP) 2016-2020, and we take this opportunity to thank BDT for all the help it has given us.

With its National Telecommunications Plan, Paraguay has sought to recognize current realities and make telecommunications an integral element in Paraguay's National Development Plan 2030, the country's strategic framework for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The NTP recognizes the fundamental importance of coordination among the different telecommunication players to ensure that any action is consistent with those goals. In its National Telecommunications Plan, Paraguay affirms the principles of affordability and accessibility which, in line with the SDGs, acknowledge that access to telecommunications and ICTs

will enable us among other things to improve quality of life for vulnerable population groups, in particular by addressing the effects of climate change and reducing hunger and poverty.

The NTP also focuses on the development of national networks and capacity. This in turn will enable the entire population to enjoy better access to knowledge and will improve educational standards and access to the health care system, through development and investment plans which are intended to be one of the specific outcomes of the NTP. The plan will also produce social benefits including a reduction in the gender gap in terms of access.

This forum will address topics of importance for the development of telecommunications. We are here to bring about an exchange of experience, expertise and good practice, to use the opportunity for dialogue and debate on these important topics and create a more conducive environment for the development of telecommunications in our countries, tackling the major challenge of the digital divide and ensuring that our peoples benefit from the opportunities offered by telecommunications.

I hope very much that this forum will be beneficial and productive.

And let us not lose sight of the fact that we are here for the sake of people, our people. I wish those of you who are visiting our country a very pleasant stay with us and hope you enjoy our warm climate and the warm hospitality of the Paraguayan people, who welcome you here with open arms and thank you for your visit.

Thank you.