OPENING REMARKS FROM MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES [INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ITU) SIDE EVENT – DEPLOYING BROADBAND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT], ON THE 10TH MAY 2011 IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Your Excellency Dr. Hamadoun Toure, Secretary General of the ITU,
Your Excellency Houlin Zhao, Deputy Secretary General of the ITU,
Mr. Russell Southwood, Moderator of this event
My fellow participants
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me take this opportunity to convey sincere apologies from Hon. Prof. Makame Mnyaa Mbarawa (MP), the Minister for Communication, Science and Technology who could not attend join this important Conference following an invitation from the Conference organizers due to other pressing government commitments. I wish to affirm that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is committed to the various initiatives of the United Nations in addressing poverty issues in the Least Developed Countries as reflected by the present Conference.

Mr. Chairman, having said that on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania let me take this opportunity to say few words for opening our discussions. These remarks will focus on economic challenges facing the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the existing opportunities that broadband technologies may offer addressing these challenges which we believe will contribute immensely in the discussions that will follow soon.

Mr. Chairman; today's meeting aims at taking stock of the implementation of various programmes of the Brussels Conference held in 2001, especially the fourth commitment on infrastructure development and ICT services with special focus on LDCs. Ten years have gone since the Brussels Conference LDCs have witnessed various declarations, strategies and initiatives at international, regional and national levels under Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Brussels Programme of Action (BPOA), Broadband Commission and others aiming at fostering and speeding up socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Least Developed Countries. Besides these, a number of forums have been conducted encompassing identification of specific and general challenges affecting social and economic development especially for LDCs; formulation and harmonization of strategies/goals to address those challenges including formulation of Plan of Actions with clear targets and milestones.

Mr. Chairman, among the main challenges facing the LDCs are low technological capabilities, lack of both physical and soft infrastructure, fragmented development efforts, high inflation rate in some countries and relatively high poverty levels. However, we are all aware that the world

business transactions have changed a lot and most of which depend on information and communications technologies (ICT). Governance, revenue collections and provision of social services like education, health, democracy and other public services are also dependent on ICT infrastructure and services. Thus, we need to change towards a direction that promotes the use of ICT. The most Developed Countries are now taking advantage of ICTs which *virtually* cross their borders to sell and buy goods to other countries including LDCs. ICT is now used to promote and ensure good governance and also control loses on revenues, improve efficiency on service delivery and enhancement of security. This makes ICT to be a very powerful tool for development of any countries and for ICT to deliver such services we need to have a broadband infrastructure. I do believe that the world community is ready to collaborate with the LDCs to ensure that these countries become beneficiaries in the knowledge base in this economic era. On the other hand, LDCs must identify the inherent weaknesses, strengths as well as needs that should be addressed once financial resources are available. In addressing these challenges, collaboration at the regional and international levels will be very important.

Mr. Chairman, for the past ten years (since 2001) Tanzania as a Least Developed Country, has been initiating various programmes and projects to implement BPoA. Tanzania started with formulation of an ICT Policy (2003), established an independent regulator through the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Act (2003), established of a Universal Fund through Universal Communications Services Act (2006), construction of the National ICT Broadband Backbone (still in progress) which also provides connectivity to almost all neighbor countries including the landlocked ones. Recently, Tanzania enacted an Electronic and Postal Communications Act to guide and oversee the implementation of various services like migration process to digital broadcasting by December 2012, establishment of the new addressing system and postcode systems in Tanzania. All these efforts have helped to promote the ICT industry in Tanzania including implementation of the converged licensing regime in 2005.

According to the Tanzania Communications Regulations Authority (TCRA) report, more than 21 millions SIM cards have been issued by December 2010 compared to only 284,109 users of telecommunications services in 2000. Telephone penetration rate by December 2010 reached 46 percent while internet penetration rate was only 11 percent in the same year. Besides these successes, Tanzania is facing a few but serious challenges like low capacity of our ICT technical personnel, cyber security challenges which will likely affect our countries if not very well considered. For LDCs, it has been noted that only around 40% of LDCs population own mobile phones with negligible access to internet. Hence, the tasks and priorities of transforming communities and increasing sustainable broadband access cannot be overemphasized.

Mr. Chairman, besides the above successes and challenges, issues related to ICT infrastructure development and ubiquitous access to broadband services at households level in urban and rural areas and various studies/researches done (e.g. Poverty and ICT in Urban and Rural Areas in East Africa i.e. PICTURE AFRICA) have agreed to be among the key impetus in stimulating and supporting socio economic development and poverty alleviation among communities in LDCs

countries. Thus, ICT infrastructure and services deserve and must be treated in a similar manner to other utilities and infrastructures such as roads, ports, electricity, water, etc in all aspects of legal, policy, regulation, financing and investments.

Mr. Chairman, In view of the above, it is therefore pertinent that a secure and stable environment for Broadband Deployment in LDCs is created and harnessed in order to stimulate and ensure sustainable social economic development and poverty alleviation for rural and disadvantaged communities in developing and LDCs countries as clearly articulated by MDGs, BPOA, Tunis World Summit on Information Society, and in various international, regional and national forums.

Mr. Chairman, as previously highlighted, LDCs adopted various strategies/priorities in order to address challenges affecting sustainability and stability of Broadband infrastructure deployments and access to Broadband services. Generally, the adopted priorities are in line with various commitments, strategies and plan of action as per MDGs, BPOA including other regional and national forums. What LDCs can do now is to put all these into action if LDCs are to realize intended goals. As is the case with other infrastructure and utilities like roads, energy and water infrastructures, ICT infrastructures play a pivotal role in stimulating and supporting socio-economic development leading to poverty alleviation, and have cross-cutting effects to all sectors of the economy and society.

Mr. Chairman, it is important for the LDCs to set strategic priority actions that will be implemented in order to address sustainability, security and stability of the industry in the medium and long term perspective. The priority concerns in this area include political will on broadband concept, resource allocation for broadband infrastructure, involvement of private sector under Public Private Partnerships (PPP) mechanism and addressing the electricity power challenge by including alternative sources of clean energy as prerequisite to ICT infrastructure development and access. Other challenges include ineffective coordination and harmonization of various ICT related initiatives nationally and regionally which causes wasteful use of the scarce financial resources.

Mr. Chairman, it is important that we set priorities if we need to develop. Some of the priorities include:

- To have in place an effective mechanisms for coordination and harmonization of Broadband Deployment and other ICT initiatives at national and regional levels.
- Efficient utilization of the available infrastructure by establishing legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage sharing and collocation of ICT infrastructures among players in the industry.

Awareness and Capacity building is a bottom-line objective for deployment of broadband infrastructures in LDCs countries and make them closer and accessible to the households and communities in rural and urban areas. Hence, in order to ensure secure and stable broadband infrastructures in LDCs countries it is imperative that the deployed infrastructures are fully utilized by the public in order to enhance socio economic development. As highlighted earlier, only 40% of LDCs countries populations have mobile phones and majority are not aware of the internet. Hence, efforts must be taken in order to address public awareness and capacity building (tools and skills) in order to empower communities own and/or access/utilize deployed ICT infrastructures. In view of these facts, the priorities include:

- Reviewal of education curricula to include ICT as a compulsory subject at all levels of education system including adult literacy on benefit and usage of ICT related services. The benefits of access to Broadband should be well articulated in order to stimulate demand for ICT services across the society
- Employ political, economical and media policies and strategies in sensitizing the societies across countries on the benefit and need to utilize ICT infrastructures for socio economic development and poverty alleviation
- Build communities' capacity in terms of skills and tools that will enable them to access, utilize and exploit the benefits provided by the deployed broadband ICT infrastructures in order to stimulate social and economic development including alleviation of poverty. Appropriate policies must be put in place to enable communities to acquire tools that will facilitate access and utility of the deployed broadband ICT infrastructures
- In order to enhance awareness and stimulate usage of the deployed broadband infrastructures, LDCs Governments, private entities and donors cooperate and build useful contents relevant to the daily lives of communities in rural and urban areas as to stimulate demand for and usage of affordable broadband ICT services and applications. Government should spearhead implementations of E-Life for the communities
- Build Community information centers – facilitate ICT accessibility to all households especially those with no capacity to own ICT equipments

Mr. Chairman, In order to ensure sustainability of the deployed broadband ICT infrastructures in the long term, LDCs need to establish effective and proactive mechanism for management, operations, maintenance and upgrade of infrastructures, service and application. The concept of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) can be employed depending of the environment for each LDC country.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude my statement, allow me to convey my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this event, especially ITU and United Nations for the good work that made this meeting a success. Let me also thank all participants for allocating time to participate in the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and in particular your

commitment to participate in this side event that looks on the Deploying Broadband for Sustainable Development held here in Istanbul. It is my sincere hope that the discussions on the Deploying Broadband for Sustainable Development will come up with realistic recommendations or proposals that will promote the use of broadband in the course of addressing development challenges and ultimately bring about sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished participants, I wish to conclude my remarks by once again expressing my profound gratitude to the hosts of this conference and wish this forum success in all its deliberations.

I thank you for your attention.