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## WELCOME REMARKS

By

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- Mrs Songporn Komolsuradej, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand
- Mr. Jae-Hong Lim, Head of the United Nations Project Office on Governance
- Mr. Hee Joon Song, Chairman of Prime Minister's Government 3.0 Committee, Republic of Korea
- Mr. Ioane, Koroivuki, ITU's Regional Director for Asia Pacific

### **Distinguished delegates**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning and welcome to the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on e-Government, Smart Cities, and Digital Societies for Sustainable Development 2015.

Before I deliver my welcome remarks this morning, I wish to take this time, on behalf of the Secretary General, Mr. Houlin Zhao, my other colleagues elected officials of ITU and on my own behalf, and indeed on behalf of all the participants to this Forum, to express our condolences to the bereaved families and to the people and Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for the loss of lives and casualties. We wish a speedy recovery to

those injured and healing of the hurt to those who have lost their loved ones. Please accept our deepest heartfelt condolences.

Madam Permanent Secretary, Thank you for the very warm welcome despite this difficult moment that we all share with you.

**Distinguished participants,**

This forum is organized by the International Telecommunication Union and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Thailand in collaboration with the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) and the World e-Governments Organization of Cities and Local Governments (WeGO). It is supported by a number of partners from governments and the industry. Hence the forum is a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together policy makers at various levels and key players in the digital societies from countries around the Asia-Pacific region to share knowledge and experience with each other.

A good life in a city, a community or a nation is about good governance. Sustainable development is also about good governance.

e-Governance is an unprecedented potential and opportunity for developing countries to improve the life of their citizens, particularly those living in rural and remote areas, and to make them active players of development.

With the bigger and bigger proportion of world population living in the cities, e-Governance of cities or Smart Cities will certainly help optimize the infrastructure and services of the cities.

It is because of the huge potential of using ICT for governance that e-Governance is a focus of ITU together with e-Health, e-Education, e-Agriculture, e-Commerce, and other digital opportunities of ICT for development.

Numerous efforts and initiatives on promoting ICT applications and services are underway in ITU and in many other international organizations with whom we working, such as the World Health Organization in m-Health, Food and Agriculture Organization in e-Agriculture, and so on.

For me ICTs is now less about GigaBites, Optical Fiber, or any other hardware of software. ICTs are about people.

We therefore need to embrace the ICT ecosystem through cross sectoral collaboration. Fostering partnership is key for success and it is a fundamental principle in ITU to work in concert with various stakeholders.

As we are talking about digital economy and society, I would like to bring to your attention that following the very successful Global Symposium for Regulators 2015 which was held in Gabon this year, ITU-D has recently published ***“Trends in Telecommunication Reform 2015: Getting ready for the digital economy”***. This report

is the 15<sup>th</sup> edition and it is focusing on digital opportunities and challenges driven by digital communications and services from policy and regulatory perspective.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that this year, 2015, marks a very special year for ITU. The Union has turned 150 years old, but is still very young because life is not about the number of years but about what you do good and remain relevant to other.

In countries worldwide, people are celebrating the ITU's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is my great pleasure indeed that we are here together to also celebrate this remarkable moment. I am very thankful to our host, the Ministry of ICT Thailand, for making the celebration of ITU's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as part of a series of forums taking place here in the beautiful city of Bangkok.

I also would like to express my sincere appreciation to our partners, the Australian Government in particular for its continuous supports for ITU activities and especially this forum; UNPOG and WeGO which are the co-organizers, and ISOC and The World Bank. My gratitude also goes to all sponsors and exhibitors and of course all of you here for your anticipated active participation and contribution to discussions in the next two days.

In concluding, I once again welcome you to the forum and wish you very successful experience sharing that you will bring back and improve the life of your people.

Thank you.