WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION/ICT INDICATORS SYMPOSIUM 2014

OPENING CEREMONY

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TBILISI, GEORGIA

OPENING SPEECH

HOULIN ZHAO

SECRETARY-GENERAL ELECT,
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

Your Excellency, Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister, Georgia

Excellency, Mr. George Kivikashvili, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia

Excellency, Mr. Dimitry Mumsishvili, First Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia and Chair of WTIS 2014

Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a real pleasure and a great honour to be with you here today at the Opening Ceremony of the World *Telecommunication and ICT Indicators Symposium-2014*.

- On behalf of the ITU Secretary-General, we are very grateful to the Government of Georgia for hosting this Symposium, and for the tremendous hospitality you have provided, including yesterday's excursion to the UNESCO-heritage site of Mtskheta, one of the oldest continually-inhabited cities in the world. I know that you made a lot of effort to make this World Telecommunication Indicators Symposium very special.

- Excellencies,
  Ladies and gentlemen,

I have been following ICT trends for many years. Many countries have been making great strides towards the information and knowledge society. I want to congratulate you and hope that when we unveil this year's ICT Development Index, this will also be evident.

I will now reveal a secret: Georgia has made great progress in this year's Index! Congratulations!

Having said that let me stop and pose two questions. Do we really know the population that remains unconnected despite statistics showing that there are 7 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions? Do we know who are the unconnected despite that 3 billion people have access to the Internet or that 2.3 billion people have access to mobile broadband?

- I want to call upon the Member States to help us identify the really unconnected people so we may know who to target as we continue to invest in infrastructure. It is also important for governments as they formulate public policy aimed at stimulating investment and competition in the sector.

Distinguished colleagues,

- Since 1889 to date when we are about to commemorate ITU's 150th Anniversary, ITU has been collecting and processing telecommunication statistics and indicators thanks to the support and contribution by the countries. Our work in ICT measurement has grown from strength to strength. Today, ITU maintains ICT statistics for 200 economies and over 100 indicators. I have no doubt that this cooperation with countries will continue in the future. I can give you my word, ITU is committed to ensure that very high standard is maintained as we help countries monitor their progress towards attaining universal access which in turn could drive economies, education, health and everything that we do.

- At this point, let me congratulate Brahima Sanou, the newly re-elected Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, and his team, for successfully re-engineering what used to be a very small technical meeting to the big Symposium that it has become today. I see Ministers, Director Generals of both National Statistical Offices and

Telecommunication Regulatory Authorities and I also see many experts and very senior Government officials in the room. This diversity is crucial as we need political will and expertise to drive the important process of data collection, processing and reporting. Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Excellencies,

As the ITU Secretary-General Elect, I want to assure you here and now, that I continue to provide unflinching support for the work related to Measuring the Information Society. This is all the more important as the international community has now set the Sustainable Development Goals that recognize that ICTs play a pivotal role for their attainment.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to engaging with you personally and to listen to the many interesting sessions over the next two days.