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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting  for WTDC-17 for Asia and the Pacific (RPM-ASP)** | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg | |
| **Bali, Indonesia, 21-23 March 2017** | | |
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| **Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau** | | |
| REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS | | |

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| **Summary:**  This document contains the summary of discussions during the ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific that took place in Bali, Indonesia, on 20 March 2017, which preceded the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 for Asia and the Pacific.  **Expected results:**  N/A  **References:**  N/A |

**Background**

The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Asia and the Pacific region (RDF-ASP) was organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Bali, Republic of Indonesia on March 20, 2017 at the kind invitation of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) Indonesia. The Forum was held on the eve of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17) for the Asia and the Pacific Region (RPM-ASP). The RDF-ASP’s main objective was to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their desired impact on developing countries in the Asia and the Pacific region particularly in the areas of emergency telecommunication, information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure development, stimulating innovation for inclusive and connected societies and policy and regulatory issues related to ICT development in the region. The Forum also highlighted the key respective areas of ICT development beyond 2017 in the context of contributing to the implementation of the SDGs. The outcome is being submitted as an information document to the RPM-ASP. The meeting was attended by 227 participants representing 27 Member States, 9 Sector Members and 1 Academia Member from the region, 2 Observer Member States and 6 Observer Sector Members, 3 United Nations and its specialized agencies, 2 guest participants. The list of participants can be found [here](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-RPMASP-ADM-0003/en). This report provides an overview of the issues discussed, as well as the issues identified during the course of the Forum. The agenda and this report can be found on the [event webpage.](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/RPM-ASP/Pages/default.aspx)

**Opening Ceremony**

The opening remarks were provided by the following high-level speakers:

* Mr Brahima Sanou, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU
* Mr Douglas Broderick, UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), Republic of Indonesia
* Mrs Farida Dwi Cahyarini, Secretary-General, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), Republic of Indonesia

Mr Brahima Sanou welcomed all participants to RDF-ASP, noting that the theme of this RDF: “ICTs for Sustainable Development in Asia-Pacific” is very timely as we embark on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals known as SDGs. ICTs cut across each and every SDG, and e-education, e-health, e-agriculture, are offering huge opportunities for people across the globe. Today policy makers, regulators, private sector, development partners and all stakeholders of the ICT ecosystem need more than ever to establish an inclusive, multi-stakeholder and collaborative dialogue to achieve socio-economic development. The Regional Development Forum is a perfect platform for such dialogue. In this context, he mentioned several BDT events and partnerships that illustrated the importance of continuous cross-sectoral collaboration to explore the role that ICTs can play in fostering innovation. He also focused on the use of broadband to improve the quality, equity and accessibility of people. He invited participants to the 17th edition of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) that will be held in Nassau, Bahamas, from 11 to 14 July 2017, and to WTDC-17, which will be held from 9 to 20 October 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina under the theme ICT④SDGs, and invited all stakeholders to contribute to its preparatory process.

Mr Douglas Broderick commended ITU for putting ICTs at the center of SDGs. He congratulated the Government of Indonesia for providing a platform for sharing best practices and information, and discussing the role of ICTs in achieving the 17 SDGs. Mr Broderick noted that 15 months into the implementation of the SDGs, the time is right to bring together governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to identify ways of accelerating progress towards the SDGs. UNRC-Indonesia stressed that “data matters”, in particular in a world where the amount of data is increasing rapidly. He provided a number of examples of how Indonesia is making use of big data, including through its UN Global Pulse Innovation lab, to deliver better health and emergency services, and to produce information to improve policy making. Mr Broderick highlighted five mega-trends that will affect Asia and the Pacific region over the next 5-10 years. The first is a new world order resulting from the political changes currently taking place. The second is climate change and the environment, noting that ICTs can play an important role in addressing disasters and environmental damage. The third is urbanization, which exceeds 50 per cent in Indonesia, and which creates increasing infrastructure demands. Another mega-trend is the fourth industrial revolution with a world of artificial intelligence and robots, and ICTs being at the heart of this revolution. The fifth and last mega-trend is rising inequalities with potential unrest and changes in market place structures to which we need to adapt. In closing, Mr Broderick thanked the ITU regional office and the Government of Indonesia for organizing the event, congratulated Mr Sanou for the BDT’s 25-year anniversary, and wished everyone a very successful forum.

Mrs Farida Dwi Cahyarini welcomed all participants to RDF-ASP and underlined Indonesia’s commitment to the implementation of the SDGs and support to ITU. She emphasized the RDF’s role in providing a high level platform for multi-stakeholder discussions, and in sharing and highlighting countries’ experiences and needs in the area of ICTs for sustainable development. She remarked that by developing recommendations for the BDT’s work over the next years, the RDF could help to “*contribute to the attainment of the Connect 2020 goals to bridging the digital divide, and to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in Asia-Pacific’s Member States*”. Mrs Dwi Cahyarini pointed to Indonesia’s commitment to achieve the goals it shares with ITU in bridging the digital divide and increasing connectivity. She highlighted a number of Indonesian connectivity projects, including the Palapa Ring project to extend the country’s fiber optic backbone infrastructure. She further stressed the importance of cyber security and regulation in the area of information and content. The Secretary-General of MCIT addressed the progress that has been made since WTDC-14 and highlighted the importance of forging partnerships to complete the remaining work of the Dubai Action Plan, and for the next set of Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives. She then opened the RDF, by wishing all participants a delightful stay in Bali, the Island of Paradise or Island of Gods, as it is called in Indonesian.

**The following are highlights of each of the sessions:**

The presentations of all speakers can be found on the [event webpage](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/RPM-ASP/Pages/default.aspx).

**Session 1: *Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives Adopted by WTDC-14***

The first session reported on the implementation of Regional Initiatives (RIs) for Asia and the Pacific, strategic outcomes, and identified innovative collaboration and resource mobilization strategies.

The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ITU RO-ASP), presented an overview of the activities under the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives (RIs). The presentation highlighted the importance of telecommunications/ICTs as a key enabler of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ITU Connect 2020 targets. Participants congratulated ITU for the progress made in implementing the RIs, highlighting the need, moving forward, to share knowledge and practices on common RIs from around the world as well as to conduct implementation evaluations and identify successful solutions that can be used by other countries.

The Department of Communications and the Arts, Australia, which presented its contribution to implementing the Asia-Pacific RIs through its annual voluntary contributions to ITU, identified suggestions for the development of the WTDC-17 RIs including that titles and objectives should be clear and concise; expected results should be achievable through the implementation of concrete activities/projects; and RIs should clearly define priorities for the region and focus efforts on addressing them.

The Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) presented its activities relevant to the Asia-Pacific RIs as well as its view on the development of the new RIs for the period 2018-2021. APT proposed greater collaboration between ITU and APT in organizing events, implementing projects, providing capacity building programmes and approaching funding institutions.

The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (MDES), Thailand, presented its support to ITU activities, including Thailand’s contributions to the Asia-Pacific RIs and hosting a range of global and regional ITU events, as well as providing one of the ITU Asia-Pacific Centers of Excellence. MDES suggested that ITU Member States continue to support ITU in implementing the RIs through partnerships and collaboration.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan, highlighted the increase of natural disasters and their impact on economies and lives. The presentation provided information on Japan’s contribution to ITU in the field of emergency telecommunications and suggested that emergency telecommunications should continue to be one of the RIs in the next cycle, adding that Japan will continue to support and collaborate with ITU in the field of emergency telecommunications.

Key suggestions from the session are that ITU members will need to continue or even strengthen their collaboration and partnership in implementing the RIs; when developing the new RIs for WTDC-17, members need to prioritize and clearly define objectives and achievable expected results; and partnerships should be extended to include funding institutions.

**Session 2: *Multi-stakeholder Round Table: Partnerships on Regional Initiatives to promote the achievement of the UN SDGs***

This session emphasized the expanding role of partnerships among United Nations Agencies, Regional and International Organizations, industry players, development institutions and other stakeholders and the role of ICTs in implementing SDGs. Based on experiences and case studies, the session also shared potential areas of ICT development going forward that could facilitate achieving the SDGs.

This session focused specifically on the UN SDG Global Framework, the role of ICTs in achieving SDGs, the FAO-ITU collaboration in e-agriculture in Asia and the Pacific region, initiatives to promote the deployment of IPv6 and ICT infrastructure security, initiatives to meet the SDGs in the Pacific, and the country experience of Digital India and the SDGs.

Participants highlighted that ICTs are cross-cutting in character and crucial for meeting the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs. It is not just about connectivity, but also about digital skills and inclusion, and trust in ICT infrastructure, content, services and applications so that ICTs can effectively be leveraged to help achieve the SDGs. It is therefore equally important that the benefits and connectivity offered are affordable and inclusive in character, that users are digitally literate, and have the trust and confidence in using digital services.

Countries were encouraged to include SDGs in their national planning processes.

Furthermore, the panel noted that there is a need to build synergy amongst digital initiatives, policies, and regulations, nationally, regionally and internationally, to effectively harness the benefits of interoperability, evidence-based analysis and decision making that ICTs enable.

A common SDG-based architecture rather than solution-based architecture is needed to deliver the synergies and efficiency that a digital society envisages.  It is important that a human centric design approach is adopted when addressing SDGs rather than adopting an issue or technology-focused approach.  Any approach should also address the challenges impacting Base of the Pyramid users, avoid being built in silos, and be sustainable. ITU’s Mainstreaming ICTs for SDGs Initiative, launched in partnership with Digital Impact Alliance, seeks to mainstream appropriate digital applications for everyone to have affordable access to key potential game-changing information and services critical to realizing sustainable development of their livelihood and wellbeing and that of their communities.

Effective cross-sectoral partnerships amongst relevant stakeholders (policy makers, regulators, industry, academia, civil society, international agencies) nationally, regionally and internationally, were also highlighted as being key to creating the enabling environment required to effectively implement e-services. Developing e-application strategies and policies, engaging and enabling stakeholders can enhance the ownership of critical stakeholders and assist in prioritizing solutions, thereby enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration and reducing duplication. The FAO-ITU cooperation is a good example of cross-sectoral collaboration with partners and addresses how ICTs can be implemented to enhance agriculture. The joint initiative sets out the framework for an e-agriculture strategy, who should be involved, and what it could include, and can become a wish list to help leverage ICTs for agriculture.

Developing guidelines and regulations around data management, sharing, analysis and its use across different sectors and geographies is emerging as a priority area of national and international cooperation in implementing e-services, and requires priority attention of national ICT authorities and international agencies.

As dependence of other sectors on ICTs increase, they are becoming a critical national infrastructure. To build user confidence and enhance it’s take up, effective policies and regulations, and cross-sectoral collaboration are a high priority. IPv6 and Internet infrastructure security are becoming an increasingly critical areas of focus with the growth of ICTs and new technologies. It is important for government, industry and other stakeholders to raise awareness and accelerate the deployment of IPv6.  There are opportunities for capacity building through the centers of excellence and direct assistance in this area by APNIC, ITU and partners.

Pacific island countries have made significant progress in the deployment of ICTs despite the challenges that they continue to face. There is a need to continue specialized support to Pacific island countries to enhance access to affordable bandwidth; availability of high quality, secure and resilient digital infrastructure; increased availability of e-applications and services; ensuring digital inclusion and building human capacity.  ITU’s efforts in providing direct assistance to countries and in collaboration with stakeholders such as PITA was commended.

The example of Digital India shared how this initiative aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and is helping to create a knowledge economy. The example shows that careful planning and a coordinated approach by various government agencies and other stakeholders is required for success.

Finally, panelists recommended that digital society plans, policies and cross-sectoral regulatory approaches can serve as an important guiding framework and need to include effective implementing measures for national stakeholders to work together. It also creates opportunities for synergies and collaboration at regional and global levels.

**Session 3: *Harnessing ICTs for an inclusive and sustainable connected society: Opportunities and Challenges***

The objective of session 3 was to share new developments, experiences and practices on the role that innovation and ICTs play as enablers of national growth and socio-economic development. The session acknowledged the role of innovation in ICTs for delivering integrated, cross-sectoral and sustainable development outcomes, both in the short and long terms.

The panelists highlighted the need to consider suitable solutions for cost-effective fixed and mobile broadband deployment for bridging the broadband divide. Consideration must be given to follow different approaches for brownfield and greenfield environments (upgrading existing infrastructure vs deploying brand new infrastructure respectively), acknowledging that we are moving to the gigabit broadband era. Wireless technologies such as microwave, Wi-Fi, and LTE make gigabit broadband affordable for rural areas. There is also a need to integrate per-service silo approaches into converged networks to achieve cost optimization and efficiencies.

A number of mega-trends were cited highlighting that the 4th industrial revolution is underway. These include broadband everywhere, distributed cloud, infinite storage, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality, sharing economies, digital currencies, and artificial intelligence, which are all leading to much greater human to machine interactions. In this context, trust and security are essential. Related key policy domains are connectivity and spectrum, standardization, net neutrality, data protection, ownership and location, security and digital skills. There is a shifting focus from connectivity towards a programmable world, and IoT is creating a thirst for connectivity that raises unprecedented demand, thus creating a huge opportunity for innovation and investment. The digital divide must not grow bigger. There is a need for data cooperatives and trusted collaboration, and a global approach to free flow of data is needed, striking a balance between protection and growth.

Cross-border data flows contribute significantly to global economic growth and nations’ GDP and are key catalyst for business innovation with better consumer services and increased welfare. The accelerating pace of digitalization and the ever-increasing volume of data requires more robust measures to ensure data security, privacy and protection. Regulators need to balance between implementing an adequate level of regulation to protect consumers and businesses without impacting growth of data flows through restrictive, complex and vague legislation. To promote data collaboration for the 4th industrial revolution, we need cybersecurity, privacy, compliance, and transparency. There is a need to foster the interconnection of networks in the Asia and the Pacific region, including terrestrial cable networks.

Digitalization is inevitable. It is fueled by access to broadband and smartphones. Broadband used to be about deployment of copper and fiber on the ground, but with 5G technology, novel approaches can be found to reduce the cost of broadband deployment. In this context, regulators and policy makers must strike a balance between protection and growth.

**Session 4: Panel Discussion*: Stimulating Innovation: SMEs, accelerators, incubators and fostering national technology champions***

The objective of the session was to highlight the key initiatives, strategies and non-conventional ways to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, with a focus on accelerators, incubators and promoting a national enabling environment that nurtures local technology champions.

The session explored ways of stimulating innovation beyond technology. Innovation impacts economic and social development and creates new opportunities to improve the lives of people. Given the important role of SMEs in the overall economy – both in terms of employment and revenues – it is key to provide the right enabling environment for innovation. Key challenges faced by SMEs are the lack of infrastructure and funding, and changing technologies. Other important tools to drive innovation are accelerators and incubation centers.

The role of policy makers, regulators, the private sector, platform service providers and academia was also discussed as well as the changes required in the policies and regulations to fuel innovation. In this regard, several Member State initiatives were presented. In order to foster innovation, particularly of SMEs, governments need to build trust and transparency and develop light and flexible regulation to avoid bureaucracy. Governments should also create the environment to help SMEs gain access to financial resources. Some countries have facilitated and encouraged Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), including by working with partners outside the ICT sector, which has driven innovation. Policy makers and regulators were also urged to define appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the creation and implementation of PPPs. The session further highlighted the importance of data protection and privacy, an area where governments and regulators play an important role as ICTs become even more pervasive.

The panel emphasized the need for innovative solutions that can help in achieving and tracking the SDGs, including through the use of big data. When addressing the link between ICTs and SDGs, panelists highlighted the need to leave no one behind and to include people with specific needs and empower women.

It was concluded that to take full advantage of the innovations in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, governments must provide the right regulatory framework to create trust and opportunities, provide access to resources, and engage all stakeholders to build collaborative innovation platforms.

**RDF 2017 Closing Session**

In the wrap-up session, Mr Ioane Koroivuki, Regional Director of the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, provided a summary of each one of the four RDF-ASP sessions. He thanked the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, all moderators and panelists, participants, the Master of Ceremony, all support staff and the ITU staff.

Mr Koroivuki, on behalf of the BDT Director, delivered the closing remarks in which the Director thanked all participants and wished everyone returning home safe travels, while noting that he is looking forward to the discussions that will take place at RPM-ASP scheduled to begin the next day.

In closing, Mr Ikhsan Baidirus, Head of Center of International Affairs, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, thanked the BDT Director, RO-ASP and all the participants on behalf of the Republic of Indonesia for their productive discussions. He indicated that through effective implementation mechanisms, such as the ITU-D Regional Initiatives, growth of the ICT sector may be ensured.

Mr Ikhsan Baidirus, Director of Telecommunication MCIT Indonesia, Chairman RDF-ASP 2017

Bali, Republic of Indonesia

20 March 2017

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