



**Regional Preparatory Meeting
for WTDC-21 for Africa (RPM-AFR)**
Virtual, 29-30 March 2021



Document RPM-AFR21/INF/2-E
26 April 2021
English only

African Telecommunications Union

ATU Secretary General's Opening Remarks During the Opening of the WTDC-21
Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa

Contact:	Name/Organization/Entity:	Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union
	Phone number:	n/a
	E-mail:	sg@atuuat.africa

[RPM-AFR21](#)



ATU Secretary General's Opening Remarks During the Opening of the WTDC-21 Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa Held on Monday, 29 March 2021

The Minister of Digital Economy, Posts and Digital Transformation of Burkina Faso,
H.E Ms. Hadja Fatimata Ouattara

The Minister of Innovation and Technology of Ethiopia, Dr. Ahmedin Mohammed,

The AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amad Abou-Zeid,

The ITU BDT Director, Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin,

The UNECA Executive Secretary, Dr. Vera Songwe,

Director General's Present,

Distinguished Delegates,

The Youth Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to welcome you to this Regional Preparatory Meeting, which I believe is part of a bigger moment for the continent of Africa and for the legacy I hope to leave behind when my period at the helm of ATU comes to an end.

It is the distinguished honour of the Union that the journey towards WTDC-21 is one that we have not had, and by all indications, will not have, to walk alone. To that extent, I am happy to reflect on what it means for ATU that we have the assurance of the support of ITU as we travel this road. Africa will always remember and be proud of this level of dedication and commitment in enhancing our mutual capacity to access all possible opportunities available in the preparation for WTDC-21, including this regional preparatory meeting.

The bigger message that we desire the world to know is that Africa is ready. We have no yearning to look back and every resource at our disposal is being appropriately channeled to guarantee success. Yet again, this success is pegged on much more than our collective readiness. For all of us to be ready, all African countries must be individually ready. This is only possible through a demonstration of sober efforts, especially in this preparatory phase. The efforts must be substantial enough to a degree that will be visible when they are put in motion during the conference. In other words, when the time comes, our harmonized voice must be adequately measured and sufficiently loud for Africa to be heard.

I am also happy to reinforce the fact that Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is a special place for Africa. Our umbrella organization, the African Union has its living room in the city, and therefore to trust Addis as the host of WTDC-21 is simply an expression of confidence in a fashion that we already believe in as the African people. We are not only inviting the world to Addis, but also to our continental home and the throbbing center for all our major undertakings.

In previous deliberations, we have commonly agreed that for the purpose of the event, Africa will be focusing on; building of digital economies and fostering of innovation; promotion of emerging broadband technologies; the building of trust and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technology; strengthening human and institutional capacity; management and monitoring of the radiofrequency spectrum and transition to digital broadcasting.

With only a few months left to the conference, it is much more vital today, than yesterday, to motivate partnerships and collaborations that present us strategic value as a continent. This will inch us closer to locking down these focus areas. Even as we elevate our priorities, a question that must remain solid in our minds, is how best we are driving our priorities to conform to the combined aspirations of Africa as defined by AGENDA 2063. This is our best chance to putting up a roadmap for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future.

All these will be a pipe dream if we do not deliberately go back in time to a familiar environment from where we can correctly shape our vision. In my considered opinion, the perfect place to start is WTDC-17. The outcomes of WTDC-17 have the capacity to provide us unique lenses that perhaps can see tomorrow with healthier clarity. It will be meaningful for instance, to establish just how far we were willing to go, and actually did implement these outcomes. This will be helpful in developing an atmosphere of reality as we face the mountain ahead.

As I conclude, it is my hope that the individual regional priorities for all the sub-regions of Africa will be founded within the boundaries of specific objectives whose expected results are clearly laid out, and if possible, we should define and examine the financial implication of the priorities ahead of submissions for the African common proposals. I personally look forward to the attainment of this stage given its prospective potential of giving us the latitude we need in order to know, understand and evaluate where we are and what our needs are going forward.

With these few remarks, I want to thank you all for being here and for your dedication to this assignment. Let us do all that we must, to ensure the success of WTDC-21. For a major event taking place in Africa for the first time, it is our moral duty to give it our very best.

Thank you!

Merci!