



10th Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (CRO) meeting



New partnerships for connecting the unconnected

Tuesday, 9 July 2019

Warwick Le Lagon Resort, Port Vila, Vanuatu

The 10th Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' (CRO) on “New partnerships for connecting the unconnected” was held on 9 July 2019, preceding the 19th Global Symposium for Regulators (10-12 July, 2019). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Bocar Ba, and was attended by 33 participants, representing APNIC, AT&T, ARIN, Digicel, ESOA, Facebook, GSMA, Huawei, ICANN, IMSO, Intel, ISOC, ITU, KACIFIC, Lockheed Martin, Loon, OneWeb, SES, TRBR, Telekom South Africa, and Viasat.

The Chairman welcomed participants and expressed his gratitude to the ITU and the Government of Vanuatu for organizing and hosting the meeting.

Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary General, ITU, emphasized on the importance of the private sector participation in the work of ITU. New technologies, including 5G, he said, can offer opportunities as well as challenges, and the role of the private sector is important. The right enabling environment, he continued, can foster innovation, enable the emergence and adoption of new technologies and standards, and strengthen the business case for investment. This in turn will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms Doreen Martin-Bogdan, Director BDT, in her opening remarks, also emphasized on the need to achieve inclusive connectivity. She highlighted the changes that shape the approach to ICT regulation in the digital economy, including through multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation. As the world increasingly depends on ICTs to attain the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, she said, partnerships will play an even greater role to allow us to meet these goals.

Mr. Bocar Ba, CRO Chairman, highlighted the importance of connecting the other half of the population and emphasized on the need for stakeholders, in particular the private sector, to adopt innovative collaborative and partnership approaches, including with government, to help achieve connectivity. The public and the private sectors, he said, must work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals..

Mr. Ba also noted that while different technologies are available to drive connectivity, pushing connectivity to 100% requires the right support ecosystem for technology deployment and scaling. This, in turn, requires different policy and regulatory choices that strike the right balance between regulation, public sector involvement, and competitive market forces.

Discussions

Following introductory remarks on what different industry players are doing and how they are viewing partnerships to connect the remaining 49%, participants discussed business and technology challenges, and the underlying opportunities in achieving inclusive connectivity in a digital economy.

Business Solutions

- What are the business solutions, best market approaches, concrete experiences and use of innovative connectivity partnerships to connect the remaining 49%?
- What different types of investment and business models can drive meaningful and inclusive connectivity to 100%?
- What partnership solutions can scale across different countries? What are the common elements and enablers?
- What are some of the regulatory and collaborative best practices the industry can share in a converged ecosystem?

Technological Solutions:

- What are the solutions and concrete projects the industry proposes in working with ITU to drive innovative connectivity solutions and make ubiquitous different technology mix coverage solutions for remote areas or emergency relief situations and countries with special needs a reality in the shorter term?
- What experiences can be shared and learned from and inform solutions going forward?

Key outcomes from the CRO

In addressing critical questions and proposed ways forward, CRO identified business and regulatory challenges and opportunities towards creating digital strategies and an enabling ecosystem for inclusive connectivity in a digital economy. I

CRO participants agreed on the outcome statement below that was shared by the CRO Chair during the Leadership Debate on 10 July:

- *New collaborative approaches are needed to connect those who are still not able to benefit from the digital revolution, including a broader engagement of the public sector.*
- *Financing of infrastructure expansion for, and enabling adoption by, all of the remaining 49% requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders of the ecosystem.*
- *As such, the policy and regulatory environment has to provide the right incentives to ensure that inclusivity can be achieved commercially in a sustainable way.*
- *In areas that are uneconomical, the right balance has to be struck between regulation, public sector involvement and competitive market forces.*