INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

Chairman's Report

REGULATORY ASSOCIATIONS MEETING
LIBREVILLE, GABON
8 JUNE 2015
14H30 – 17H15

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to give my sincere gratitude and thanks to the Regulatory Associations for your active participation in this year's annual Regulatory Association Meeting.

As the ITU has always managed to create an umbrella of cooperation and platform of information sharing between various regulatory associations across different regions; it is at the ITU's invitation that the Regulatory Association meeting was held this year under the presidency of ARTAC before the commencement of the GSR-15.   BDT Director Mr. Sanou recognized the importance of such associations, reminding the associations of their unique role and position to make a difference.

It is with great honor that ARTAC had the opportunity to chair the meeting this year held in Libreville, on the afternoon of June 8th 2014, in the presence of Mr. Lin Mombo of Gabon and Mr. Brahima Sanou, Director, BDT.

This year, more than 50 participants from 9 Associations (AREGNET, ARTAC, CRASA, EMERG, FRATEL, REGULATEL, OCCUR, WATRA, SATRC) attended the meeting.

The meeting involved three sessions, being:

- Presentation of the main projects and activities of each association
- Access to international communications using fiber optics
- International mobile roaming.

It is my honor to present to you a summary of the meeting in the following points.

Regarding the first agenda item:

- Interventions were made from ARTAC, AREGNET, CRASA, EMERG, SATRC, and FRATEL. The Associations highlighted their activities, in particular relating to access to international fiber infrastructure and mobile roaming, and shared their experiences on the matter of funding of their projects and activities as well as their program of activities for the next year.

- The European Mediterranean Regulators' Group (EMERG) shared information on the EMERG Benchmark Report which provides a comparative assessment of the electronic communication sector in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
- CRASA shared information on its open access and infrastructure sharing studies, noting that Broadcasters and Telecom Operators in SADC face challenges in terms of access to and sharing of infrastructure and also relating to the lack of transparency in pricing models used by owners of infrastructure and carriers.

Agenda items 2 and 3 addressed Access to International Fiber Communications Infrastructure and the Issue of International Mobile Roaming respectively.

During sessions 2 and 3, the ITU representative Ms. Sofie Maddens, Head Regulatory and Market Environment Division informed the meeting of the ITU Project on Open Access to International Fiber, and ITU activities on International Mobile roaming respectively. All the topics discussed in the RA meeting will be available on the ITU website.

In terms of the project on Open access to International Fiber Communications Infrastructure, ITU called upon the RAs to leverage and share our respective information and expertise to establish economic, technical and regulatory structures and solutions – building blocks - favourable to the maximum exploitation of international fiber communications. Many RAs are looking at this important issue, and underlined that political will and champions are important to obtain results. By reducing cost and providing more reliable infrastructure, formerly land locked countries can become land-linked and provide important communications capacity to consumers, and contribute to the economic and social development of their respective countries and regions. CRASA shared its experience, reminding other RAs that it is important to involve other interested parties – such as broadcasters – in discussions and in defining proposed solutions.

In terms of International Mobile Roaming, RAs recognized that considering the international nature of Roaming, it is necessary that all stakeholders work together at the regional level or in bilateral agreements to consider structural measures in the IMR market in addition to any price regulatory measures, to ensure transparency, and to permit NRAs to monitor development in the IMR markets including sharing of information. EACO shared its experience on roaming in their region, stressing that political will at the highest level between the affected countries was a key element in making this happen. REGULATEL shared the experience of the region, underlining that operators themselves can also initiate lower roaming costs, indicating that in their experience, others generally follow.

Regulatory Associations recognized the need for further collaboration and information exchange, looking forward to further collaboration with ITU. The meeting also recommended that in order to involve other stakeholders, ITU may work with RAs to support the creation of a network of parliamentarians dealing with ICTs and telecommunications so that they may be better informed on issues of relevance to the sector and take such information into consideration when participating in the policy making process.

I would like to thank the International Telecommunication Union for organizing a successful and fruitful meeting where many views and information were exchanged, providing us all greater insight on key topics that are creating a global impact on our industry. Special thanks to the presenters for sharing their experiences and providing practical solutions that will help us when facing regulatory challenges.