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Policy Statement by

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Your Excellencies, my colleague friends and elected officials of the ITU, let me take this opportunity on behalf of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation CTO to congratulate you all on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ITU-D.

I would also like to thank the government and people of Argentina for hosting this Conference 2017 (WTDC-17) in this beautiful city of Buenos Aires and for the warm welcome they have accorded us since our arrival, and especially for the fantastic reception of yesterday.

There are 52 Member Countries within the Commonwealth of Nations, with a population of 2.4 billion people from developed, developing and least developed economies. Over 60% of this population is below the age of 30. This diversity makes the Commonwealth a unique subgroup of the world which also covers 4 of the 6 regions of the ITU. Most of these are members of the CTO.

According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “the spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human



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progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies”.

Let me therefore highlight some of the key activities we at the CTO have been undertaking and which also fall within the overall mandate of the ITU-D sector and for which reason we have embarked on close collaboration with the ITU.

## **Cybersecurity**

Top of our agenda is cybersecurity, which is of great interest to every country. The CTO is dedicated to encouraging and fostering a culture of cybersecurity and effective cyber governance through the establishment of cybersecurity frameworks, standards and guidelines. We believe that in order to develop trust in the ICT sector and ensure that countries and communities can reap full benefits of ICTs and cyberspace, there is the need to invest resources into cybersecurity.

In 2014, the Commonwealth ICT Ministers adopted the Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model, which lays down principles to guide practical action in governing Cyberspace. On the basis of this model, we have further developed a model National Cybersecurity Strategy which has been used to successfully facilitate the development of national cybersecurity strategies in a



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number of countries and with kind support from the UK government. We have made tremendous progress with many of our Members. These include Fiji, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. I must of course mention that we have most recently partnered with the ITU-D to assist the Government of Swaziland to develop its own NCS.

I'm happy to also announce that the CTO is extending our reach beyond the Commonwealth, by providing assistance to the Government of Senegal, to facilitate the development of their National Cybersecurity Strategy, through a partnership with the Dutch Government.

## **Cybercrime**

We are also committed to developing the capacity within the telecom sector to tackle cybercrime, and have worked with Bangladesh and Nigeria on this issue, with plans to conduct activities in Pakistan in early 2018. I am in particular, pleased with the outcome of our engagement with the young people of Bangladesh on the use of ICTs, under the guidance of the Honourable Minister Tarana Halim.

## **Cyberstandards**

The CTO is also working to develop the capacity of small and medium enterprises to protect themselves against common cyber



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attacks through the implementation of cyber standards. Given that SMEs contribute upwards of 40% of national income (GDP) in emerging economies, we believe that there is great value in this project for our Members. We recently had consultation with Uganda, Cameroon and Jamaica, and plans are in progress for Trinidad and Tobago.

In recognition of increasing cyber threats, the CTO Council which met in Maputo, Mozambique, passed a Resolution to bring this matter to the attention of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, in London in April 2018.

## **Broadband development**

As part of our Strategic Goals, CTO supports our members' initiatives for universal, affordable and high-quality broadband connectivity via enabling policies and regulatory measures that facilitate the rapid rollout of broadband infrastructure.

We believe that broadband access in rural and remote areas can not only encourage development, allowing for greater access to educational and professional resources, but also increase social inclusion. Issues such as universal access, efficient utilisation of spectrum, QoS, technological neutrality and environmental protection are some of the key elements which are considered by the CTO when we provide assistance to our members in broadband



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strategy development. We are pleased that these are also aligned to the work of the ITU in this area; in fact, the CTO has partnered with the ITU in developing the National Broadband Strategy for Dominica.

Distinguished delegates, at the CTO we strongly believe in a multistakeholder approach to all our activities. I therefore urge us all to continue to work together and to share our strengths and experiences, as our commitment to this topic will only result in a better future for us all.

The CTO stands ready to support the outputs of this Conference.

Thank you.