

Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa

Kigali, Rwanda

6-8 December 2016

Mr Brahim Sanou,

Director of the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau

Opening speech

Hon. Jean Philbert Nsengimana, Minister of Youth and ICT, Rwanda

Permanent Secretaries and other government officials present,

Mr Abdoukarim Soumaila, Secretary General of ATU,

Mr Manuel Costa Cabral, com-ITU Chairman,

Representatives of ITU Sector Members,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa for the next World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17), which will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 9 to 20 October 2017 under the theme of ICT ^④SDGs.

First of all, I would like to start by congratulating, on behalf of ITU, and I am sure on behalf of all of you, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda on winning the United Nations' highest environmental award, in recognition of Rwanda's outstanding achievements in environmental protection.

The UN Environment Programme has recognized Rwanda's forward-thinking environmental initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change and said - and I could not agree more - that President Kagame exemplifies the leadership needed around the world to confront the environmental challenges we face today and for our future generations.

Indeed, the leadership of President Kagame has made Rwanda an inspirational model of how to integrate economic development with environmental sustainability, how to reduce poverty through reducing vulnerability, and how to make the environment everyone's business.

Ladies and gentlemen

The first RPM was held a few weeks ago in Bishkek, in the Kyrgyz Republic. During the RPM we reached important milestones towards WTDC-17 and agreed on five draft regional initiatives for the Commonwealth of Independent States region for the years 2018-2021.

I look forward to the next WTDC, when we will review our results and accomplishments and define our way forward with new and innovative ways to meet our objectives and accelerate the attainment of the SDGs.

The format of the preparation of WTDC-17 is based on enhanced membership engagement. Significant efforts are under way to engage our Members at early stage in the preparation the key output documents of WTDC-17.

Preliminary drafts of the ITU-D Contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 (document 7), the ITU-D Action Plan (document 8) and the WTDC-17 Declaration (document 9) have already been prepared and discussed at the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) and its Correspondence Group meetings in April 2015 and March 2016.

All three preliminary drafts are submitted to you at this RPM and will be submitted to the next RPMs for further input.

A general review of the Resolutions of previous conferences is being conducted by the Correspondence Group on Streamlining Resolutions, created at TDAG-16. The relevant report, which provides information on the work of the Correspondence Group and the way forward, will be reviewed and discussed at this RPM.

Dear representatives of the membership:

Although the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 17 SDGs and the related 169 targets after the adoption of the Dubai Action Plan, the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) started mainstreaming them into its work from the last quarter of 2015. The mapping on how our work contributes to the achievement of the SDGs is contained in Annex 3 of the Report on the Implementation of the Dubai Action Plan.

My priority is the implementation of the Dubai Action Plan, with an emphasis on the Regional Initiatives. The Report submitted to you in document 2 provides an overview of the main outcomes of the BDT activities during the years 2015-2017 and highlights the link between results achieved, in line with Result Based Management principles.

The report also details the implementation of the Regional Initiatives. For Africa, we will hear, during these three days, the positive impact that the Initiatives have had on people's lives.

In this regard, I would like to thank all the Administrations of the region for their commitment and dedication which led to this success. I would also like to thank the ITU Regional Office in Addis Ababa, as well as the Area Offices in Yaoundé, Dakar and Harare for the great work done.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The Regional Development Forum for the Africa region, which was held yesterday, was an opportunity to hear from various stakeholders about the ICT sector in the region. The Forum was a great success and I would like to thank everyone for their active participation and invaluable contributions.

To conclude let me renew our deepest gratitude to the Government and the people of Rwanda for the legendary hospitality and for the excellent facilities made available to us for the RDF yesterday and the RPM for next 3 days.

Please use the inspirational environment of Kigali and Rwanda to formulate your contribution to the WTDC inspired by the world you want to see tomorrow.

I thank you.