

**ITU Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Americas**  
**Opening speech**  
**Asunción, Paraguay, 22 February 2017**  
**Mr Brahima Sanou,**  
**Director of the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau**

Ministers of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay

Mrs Teresita Palacios, President of the National Telecommunication Commission, CONATEL

Members of the Board of CONATEL

Governmental Authorities here present

Private sector representatives

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen:

It my great pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Americas 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 for Sustainable Development Goals”- ICT④SDGs.

I would like to thank Mrs Teresita Palacios, President of CONATEL, the Board and the staff of CONATEL for the warm welcome and the perfect organization of this meeting.

2017 is important for the ITU's Development Sector. In addition to holding WTDC-17, the Sector celebrates its 25th anniversary.

Over the past 25 years we have together contributed immensely to the rapid growth and expansion of telecommunication and ICT networks and services, putting ICTs in the hands of billions of people. Let us all join forces to mark this important Anniversary!

The theme of WTDC-17, ICT④SDGs, reaffirms the tremendous potential of ICTs to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs.

E-education, e-health, e-agriculture, big data, open data, cloud computing, and the development of the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence are offering huge opportunities for achieving sustainable development.

The adoption of the SDGs has broadened our mission. We are now required not only to provide broadband and universal access to ICT services at affordable price, but equally important, to make ICTs work for other sectors.

Our actions should therefore go beyond the ICT sector to take into account the ICT ecosystem.

A new ecosystem where ICTs are about streamlining Government processes, bringing education and health to the neediest people in order to create national cohesion, inclusiveness and economic growth.

An ecosystem where ICTs are just about people.

Distinguished participants:

The work that will be undertaken by you here in Asunción during these three days will rely on your enhanced engagement as Members. I know that you have been working hard within regional organizations like CITEL, COMTELCA, CANTO and CTU.

Let me seize to thank CITEL and Oscar León, the Executive Secretary, and Bernadette Lewis, Secretary General of CTU for the tremendous work done already.

As you know, my priority as Director has been the implementation of the Dubai Action Plan, with an emphasis on Regional Initiatives.

RPM Document 2 provides an overview of the main achievements during the years 2015-2017, highlighting the results achieved, in line with results-based management principles.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Administrations of the region for their commitment and dedication which led to the successful implementation of the Dubai Action Plan in the Region.

I would like to thank my colleagues of the ITU Regional Office in Brasilia and the Areas Offices in Barbados, Chile and Honduras for the great work done under the leadership of Mr Bruno Ramos.

Let me also thank all our partners particularly the Latin American Development Bank, the Inter-American Bank and Korea.

Distinguished participants:

The Regional Development Forum for the Americas, 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 all of you for your active participation and invaluable contributions. The Summary of the Discussions is brought to your attention in an Information document.

Distinguished delegates ladies and gentlemen:

It is my hope that next WTDC will embrace the new ICT landscape in order for ITU and ITU-D to remain an active player and facilitator of all innovations of ICT for sustainable development.

Your Excellences Minister of Public Works and Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister of Interior and Minister of Education.

To conclude I would like to thank you again for being our guests of honor today.

Thank you very much.