

## **Opening Remarks**

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**ITU REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR EUROPE**

**27-28 April 2017**

**Vilnius, Lithuania**

Mr Feliksas Dobrovolskis, Director General of the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania

H.E. Dejan Maslikovic, Assistant Minister, Republic of Serbia

H.E. Karol Okonski, Under Secretary of State, Republic of Poland

Mr Manuel da Costa Cabral, Chairman, Com-ITU of CEPT (The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations)

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honor to welcome you to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17), for Europe.

On behalf of ITU and all the delegates here present, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government and the people of Lithuania for hosting this Regional Preparatory Meeting, and for the hospitality extended to all of us.

The World Telecommunication Development Conference we are preparing will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 9 to 20 October 2017 under the theme of ICT **④**SDGs.

The theme ICT **④**SDGs reaffirms the tremendous potential of ICTs to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs. ICTs cut across each and every SDG. 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 economic 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 people in need in order to create national cohesion, inclusiveness and economic growth.

Distinguished participants

This is the sixth and last RPM organized in preparation for WTDC-17.

During this RPM we will report on the implementation of the Dubai Action Plan.

I would like to thank all the Administrations of the region for their commitment and dedication during the implementation of Dubai Action Plan.

I would also like to thank the Europe Area Office for the great work done under the leadership of Jaroslaw Ponder.

Let me also express my sincere appreciation to Mr Manuel de Costa Cabral, Chairman of COM ITU and Mr Paulius Vaina for leading the works towards the preparation of WTDC and for their great cooperation and support.

At this RPM, we will introduce to you the preliminary draft of the output documents of WTDC-17. As an innovation, and for the first time, we are engaging our Members at an early stage in the preparation of these key output documents namely:

- The preliminary draft of WTDC-17 Declaration
- The preliminary draft of the ITU-D Contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan
- The preliminary draft of the ITU-D Action Plan

These documents have already been prepared and discussed at the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) and its Correspondence Group meetings. They are submitted for your consideration and input.

The progress report of the Correspondence Group on Streamlining Resolutions, will be also presented for your inputs.

The Regional Development Forum for Europe, 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 as an information document.

Dear representatives of the membership:

Before I conclude, let me recognize the presence at this RPM of two vice-chairmen of TDAG, Mr Fabio Bigi and Mr. Dominique Wurges and the vice-chairman of Study Group 1, Ms Blanca Maria Gonzalez, and thank them for their dedication and commitment to ITU-D. The same goes for Mr Petko Kantchiev, vice chairman of Study Group 2 who is not here today.

Let me also recognize presence of the Chairman of TDAG, Professor Vladimir Minkin, and observers from other regions of the world, including the Americas, and representatives from Argentina, the Host of WTDC-17, from Africa and from the CIS, region.

I would also like to remind you that today ITU celebrates Girls in ICT Day, an ITU initiative aimed at encouraging girls and young women around the world to consider careers in the growing field of information and communication technologies. Thanks to the support and commitment of hundreds of organizations around the world, we have already involved over 240,000 girls in more than 7,200 Girls in ICT Day events in

160 countries. About 40 girls will be here today to celebrate the Day with us and share their stories and aspirations.

Last but not least, I am pleased to inform you that this year, the ITU Development Sector marks its 25th Anniversary. In the past 25 years we have contributed immensely to the rapid growth and expansion of telecommunication and ICT networks and services, putting the power of ICTs in the hands of billions of ordinary people.

Let us join forces to celebrate our achievements and to commemorate this important milestone on 11 October at a Gala Dinner in Buenos Aires during WTDC-17.

It is my hope that next WTDC will embrace the new ICT landscape in order for ITU-D to remain, for the next 25 years and beyond, an active player and facilitator of all innovations for ICT development.

I wish you very successful deliberation.

Thank you very much.