

ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2017
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

11 OCTOBER 2017
2:30 LOCAL TIME

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE AFTERNOON SESSION 1

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>> Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. If we can take our
seats to start in a few seconds. We invite you to take your
seats to get going with a number of deliberations and
discussions happening today.

We give a chance to our friends at the back to take their
seats, please. To begin with the event. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you to the Ministerial
Roundtables that are going to happen today.

These are happening in the occasion of the 25th anniversary
of the ITU telecommunication development sector, and this will
be the first of two roundtables with a theme of the ICT for the
Sustainable Development Goals. We're going to address them as
mostly as SDGs mostly today. There will be a second roundtable
after the coffee break on the digital economy.

I am very pleased to introduce to you the panelists for
both roundtables sitting next to me. As well as the ITU elected
officials. Deputy Secretary General Mr. Michael Johnson. The
director of telecommunications and standardization bureau.
Director of radio communication bureau.

I will also be introducing the other dignitaries and guests
and speakers as we go along. The first person to introduce now
is Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the ITU. Mr. Zhao.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Good afternoon.

First, I want to thank Argentina's Minister of Modernization Andrés Ibarra and the high-level dignitaries who are here to join us for these roundtables.

I also want to recognize the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who is the platinum sponsor of the 25th Anniversary celebrations. Thank you for your unwavering support!

Our first roundtable will focus on the theme of WTDC-17, "ICT4SDGs." Then we will discuss the future of the digital economy.

Both topics are interconnected.

Information and communication technologies now form the backbone of today's digital economy. Meanwhile, ICTs are driving substantial transformation in many development-related sectors, acting as an accelerator for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The vision of the SDGs is a world where everybody has equal opportunities - where no one is left behind. It's a world where everything and everyone is empowered by ICTs.

Sustainable development has driven the work of ITU-D for the past quarter-century. ITU and ITU-D will play a critical role in the successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As 3.9 billion people around the world are still not connected to the Internet, let's bring the power of ICTs to all nations, all people and all segments of society.

Let's use today's roundtables to move one step closer to achieving progress towards universal and affordable access to ICTs for sustainable development. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you enjoy this afternoon's roundtable discussions. Thank you.

(Applause).

>> Thank you very much. Chairman Zhou. Now I introduce his Excellency minister Andrés Ibarra, minister of modernization of Argentina and will be chairing this Ministerial Roundtable. Please address the audience.

>> Andrés Ibarra: Good afternoon. It is really important for us in Argentina, as I was saying on Monday in the opening ceremony, to have this opportunity to share with all of you these few days ahead.

And of course I would like to thank again the ITU Secretary-General, Mr. Zhou and all elected officials here on the panel.

It's been 23 years since we had the meeting of the ITU here in Argentina. And really for us to have this opportunity once again is a really valuable time for us. And the reason for this is Argentina is really in the midst of a transformational process across all the state players changing as a country.

And the institutional system is changing. And we're moving towards a country where the law overarches everything, institutionalism, legality, and it is here where all of the rules of the game. The different sectors of the economy, the productive sectors. If we look at each of these areas where the government is working and making real changes. We can see that we're looking at a structural and in depth change in each of these areas to ensure that Argentina once again can be placed in a competitive world in which people have a lot of faith and respect from countries and from international organizations.

For us, this is important because belonging to these international organizations and sharing these days ahead with you in Buenos Aires, across all the international organizations, we're working on economy. It's part of our open government and in telecommunications. For Argentina this is incredibly important for us, because after many years we've been somewhat absent from this.

And in many cases, we lost the real rhythm of where we were going. So now this gives us an excellent opportunity as a state and as a new government for businesses, for all of our community. So I want to sincerely thank you for giving us this opportunity. Furthermore to outline the roles of the international organizations in this. The possibility of generating genuine exchange on strategies, on innovation, on looking at new technologies.

This really lends us an important opportunity. Today as a complement to this, and to complement previous meetings on the opening ceremony. On Monday we had some sideline events. I would just like to make reference to some further comments. I would like to give you some further information where Argentina is working on some new areas.

On Monday, we spoke about that we're looking to build a digital national plan. And from this basis, Argentina will have a digital agenda. To have a real transformation on the state of play, of this sector.

When I talk about transformation, I mean huge opportunities which we would like to develop and harness. Because above anything, we want to give our country and to our people, and to our communities, the opportunity to have a country which is supported by an economy which grows. An open economy to investments. Both local and foreign investment, with very clear rules and understandable ones.

I think that the sector has huge economic growth in the ICT sector. We know that there are a number of different statistical sources through which the dynamism of this sector drives forward the GDP of countries. 20% growth in this sector will lead us to a growth of 1-2% in the GDP of each country.

Therefore this means not the only dynamic aspects of this sector, but also how this spreads amongst other sectors over the economy. As we discussed in our opening ceremony discussion, we'll need to create the enabling environment so our economy grows sustainably. That we're able to develop a productive plan across all of the different sectors in each region of our country.

To ensure this, we need to have a broadband telecommunications structure with adequate speed to ensure that this is possible. Because above all, today the dynamic nature of countries goes towards transformation supported by knowledge and innovation and creativity.

And all of this cannot be achieved unless it is supported by exchanges of structural communication and reform of the communication sector. Therefore, we want to ensure that there is knowledge exchange in each corner of the country. This will facilitate the work and the entrepreneurial nature of small businesses.

Of course, larger companies have the most possibilities and are able to harness these opportunities. But we need to put things in place. We need to ensure communities which are 1500 kilometers away from the capital can make the most of these opportunities. Therefore we want to have a revolutionary change in this sector to ensure we have the right foundations so Argentina is grow sustainably and really generate a world of investment and economic growth and also job creation. Furthermore, I would like to add, this is not just a vision or a dream we have. We know exactly where we're heading. But also this path has already begun.

I would like to emphasize some of the important landmarks we have already launched.

This gives us the initial impetus for the path to begin in the right direction. Some of the important premises which we have put forward, and ITU has worked with us on is Spectrum Management.

This is a condition in Argentina, we have made the first steps from 290-500 megahertz, but we know there's still a lot to reach 100,000 to 200,000 megahertz. This is our vision to work towards, working with the ITU on this. This is the path in which we have embarked.

And with this in mind, we're putting in place necessary conditions to ensure that we can achieve this.

The government and the president himself have put in place a number of standards such as a decree, 1,300, in order to promote an enabling environment for innovation and integrating infrastructure. To harness services. Of course, ambition at the end of this, as I was saying the other day, is to have a

convergence to ensure that we have an adequate legal framework surrounding all of this.

With the laws of convergence, for us this has to go in line with our plans to have a real highway of legality framework. To really have this in place.

To ensure the standards are in place. So this is a path in which we are embarking. And of course, why are we doing this? Because we really fervently believe the need of public and private investment. Just a while ago, we accepted the public private partnership law.

We believe in the need to have a shared development which is complementary and absolutely work in synergy so the state has to put down the state of play. It needs to invest. But also private investment is absolutely essential. We're going to create all these rules to ensure there is a clear state of play. So there's public, and foreign and private investment. On a large scale to work with small and medium enterprises you want this to be a reality. We want to revisit profitability, but also we want to generate an explosion of investment in this sector which allows us to harness the economic growth in Argentina and to increase job creation which is so important.

The state already doing this through the state fiberoptic network plan, and of course there's an objective to reach 1300 different areas and 17 of these are collected already. There's a long way to go, but we want to connect Argentina to have broadband access.

Which today our citizens are demanding from us. And of course we're going to work on rural schools to put in place interconnected schools to give them the Internet.

We want to ensure that smaller meeting businesses and the smaller operators can also see that there are rules of the game. And the virtual operators. All of this is really significantly important for us in terms of the development of the sector.

Of course, having said this, we're going to complement this with the other part of development, with new audio visual sector, Argentina has an enormous pool of talent in the entrepreneurs, and the audio visual industry has really got to make a leap forward in terms of quality and quantity. Which is really significant.

And rules of the game really will generate this very significant growth in this sector. Therefore, it will transform all of the ITU sector to ensure there is a sector which really generates innovation in Argentina, and which will make it a leap forward to harness this power of this sector throughout the country and throughout the world.

The future will see Argentina as a very significant role, because very sincerely, we feel the enabling environment for

growth, which our country requires, is a development of this innovative sector to lead to entrepreneurship, which will lead to the possibilities. So the rest of the economy and the other productive sectors in Argentina can grow in an innovative fashion. I would like to thank you very much. We'll continue to discuss this over the next few days. I'd like to emphasize once again, this is a really excellent opportunity for us to take this opportunity to have a very successful conference. We're very pleased to host it here in Buenos Aires. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you very much Minister. There is a situation unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Ibarra has to leave us now. He will be replaced by Mr. Hector Wise. He's Argentina's ICT secretary and head of delegation here at the ITUWTD. Thank you very much minister.

Now we move on to the first of the Ministerial Roundtables. ITU for development goals is the topic here.

And we will have the opportunity to attend the launch of the ITU book "ICT-Centric Economic Growth, Innovation and Job Creation."

And I should say that it is an honor to introduce to you the people responsible for this meeting and this situation here. Of course, this book. The first one I'm going to introduce is Mr. Sanou and Dr. William Lehr. Next to me. Director of Telecommunications Development Bureau from the ITU of course. We invite you to have a few words of address to us.

>> Brahima Sanou: Excellency, ministers, partners, academia, distinguished delegates. Good afternoon to all of you. I'm standing here to talk to you about the project initiative I launched two years ago.

ITU-D start every academia as member of the ITU. And I found that we should try to take profit or to raise opportunity of having academia as our member to do something.

One day I told them I'm going to challenge you academia. You need to produce something for ITU-T. You need to produce the study that I can take the world, a study that can go back to your universities so the student can use it as a reference paper. As such, you become the bridging gap between ITU and academia.

Here we are today with this first book entitled "ICT-Centric Economic Growth, Innovation and Job Creation."

You can see this goes far. The center of what you're talking about today, which is ICT for development.

Many people are suffering from lack of job. Today that the peace in the world is (Inaudible) by the fact young people don't have job. This book fashion this very important issue for our society.

So I was happy to have that. Thanks to all the people you see in the book, they put together very high-level academia members to work on this book.

As I've been working on it now for more than one year. As I said, this is the first book we are going to continue with that. And today so happy. I'm so proud that there's very high-level academia members who to ITU, sit down together and do this work for the good of humanity and for the good for all the people, the young people. For the good of academia. Finally for ITU, for development.

So thank you very much. We'll be talking to us about what is in the book.

Better to lead them to the floor to talk about it than myself. Again thank you for joining us. And thank you. Muchas gracias.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much Mr. Sanou. Now we move on to the presentation itself. Right now we will see a short video on the content of the book. Take your eyes towards the screens.

>> CHAIR: Excellencies, let's continue and move on with this presentation. I now introduce Dr. Sharafat from Iran and he's the Chairman of the ITU-D study group 2.

>> Thank you very much. Indeed, it gives me a great pleasure to be part of the team who contributed to this book. "ICT-Centric Economic Growth, Innovation and Job Creation."

Two years ago, he gave me a big challenge. How academia could participate in the works of the ITU to produce something which would be rather unprecedented.

I was involved from the very beginning. And I'm very fortunate to be part of the team as the chief editor of this book. I have been fortunate to be associated with a number of colleagues in the academia. And I would like to use this opportunity to personally name them and thank them for their contributions.

As coeditor, I'm very happy to introduce to you Dr. William H. Lehr from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Together we edited this book and wrote the first chapter. I will give you the title of the chapter after I thank the other authors.

In addition we have Professor Tim Unwin from University of London. Alex Wong from World Economic Forum. Professor Emanuele Giovannetti from the University of Cambridge. Also Dr. From the University of Cambridge. Dr. Barker from London School of Economics. And together with Professor Prapinmongkolkarn and Dr. Supavadee Aramvith from University in Bangkok.

Professor Jean-Pierre Auffret from George Mason University. Professor Raul Katz, who incidentally is a son of Argentina from

the Columbia University in New York. Professor James Larson from Stonybrook University.

This book has seven chapters. The first chapter, the title of which is ICT Engines for Sustainable Development. Chapter 2, ICTs Sustainability and Development, the Critical Developments.

Chapter 3, Digital Divide in Digital Multiplier. A Paradigm Shift through Innovation. Chapter 4, the Role of Governance in ICT-Based Sustainable Development. Chapter 5, Business Models for ICT-Centric Sustainable Development. Chapter 6, Job Creation and Sustainable Development.

As you can see, these are addressing many fundamental basis challenges that the world as a whole is facing, and we have tried to provide the readers with how to move forward. Practical steps that need to be taken in order to address these fundamental and basic challenges.

My time is very limited. So I would like to finish by thanking our director who engaged academia in a meaningful, yet unprecedented manner. And opened new opportunities for partnership with ITU by the academia.

Also Dr. Andrew King has been exceptionally helpful in this and I would like to use this opportunity to thank each and every one of my colleagues in the academia. In the ITU, Secretariat and the ITU-D who have been involved with this book. I'm very proud to be part of this activity, and I think I should stop here and see what doctor has to say on the content of the book.

>> I introduce you to Dr. William Lehr from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

>> It's a real honor to be here and I would also like to thank professor Sharafat and director Sanou for being on this project and Andrew king to help make sure things got along. I come from academia and what makes this project new is all were from academia. This wasn't like people pulling things off the shelves. The idea was to get a snapshot of the broad issues affecting the whole world of policy community. Whatever sector you're interested in. And now at the 25th anniversary of the ITU, because the next 25 years are going to be more fundamental than what we've seen before.

Before the first phase for 25 years, if we could have focused on getting the infrastructure out there and getting people to understand what ICTs do and what ICTs need to do in the economy. The next 25 years are going to take more of that, because there's more infrastructure we have to put out there, and there's more trends and things we have to deal with. But it's something we have to deal with economy-wide.

ICTs are amplifiers and accelerators. They make things go a heck of a lot faster. So in framing policy the connection between academics doing research and figuring out what that

means in the marketplace and in policy, the window of opportunity there is much, much shorter.

And so those parties have to work together much more closely. The first chapter that I helped co-author looks at sort of what is the economic evidence of the impacts of ICTs tell us. What that evidence says is that ICTs have the potential to produce great growth and to be key drivers and energizes of all the great things we're going to do if we're going to realize the Sustainable Development Goal. For example if we're going to raise the living standards of everyone on the planet and we do it in the way we did it in the past with not using energy and renewables and things like that, then it will be a disaster.

ICTs by themselves aren't enough and ICTs can also do bad things. They can accelerate income inequities, they can lead to things like winner take all economy. And policymakers need to intervene to try and oppose that.

If we're going to basically have good ICT policy, we have to have everybody involved. And we're going to have holistic economy-wide engagement. It doesn't matter if you're in a sector that's adopting ICTs rapidly or if you're in a market that is not, because wherever you are, you will be affected by this. And if you don't deal with this in a positive way and try and address this head on, you'll be road kill on the next 25 years development here.

One of the key things, and I think one of the key roles of the ITU is helping stimulate the international collaborations, that's going to be absolutely essential. If as a planet we're going to grow forward. And when we talk about dealing with the very policy issues that are covered in this book and the academic scholars in this book come from a range of academic disciplines. It's going to have to be a multidisciplinary engagement, across academia, across industry, all the various industry departments, from agriculture to health care to government to educational sector. We have to build a framework that will be digital economy friendly. On a national and global level.

And deal with market disruptions that are going to occur there. We need to recognize the fact that in the ICT world as we accelerate things, skills are not static. We have to change the way we think about skills development.

We have to basically understand we need to move towards things like lifetime learning and deal with the disruptions. When jobs that for the old economy were replaced by the new economy, what do we do with those people? How do we bring them around and migrate them to be part of the growth that the ICTs can help deliver. That's a key challenge. And we have to deal

with the sort of global coordination. International trade is going to be a huge issue at every level.

The question of how we're going to deal with things like tax revenues, with labor mobility across sovereign boundaries. All these things are going to be key issues. It's a really pleasure to be here today with this book. Which is a start.

And what we hope is it's a start of a collaboration and continued research for the next 25 years. So with that.

(Applause)

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, doctor. You can obtain this book right away. You can download it for free as a PDF. If you need some help with that, let us know. But this book is available to you as of right now. So go ahead and get it right now it's my turn to introduce the vice president of the European commission. He will address us.

(Applause)

Honorable ministers, Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today at the 25th anniversary of the ITU development sector.

For me, as vice president of the European Commission responsible for digital single markets, one subject goes to my heart is how we can use technology to improve people's lives.

In my home country of Serbia it took a great deal of determination to achieve full digital interaction between people and governments. Today Estonia hardly ever needs to go in person to any public administration office. Needs to only ask for personal data once.

Just using digital signatures save Estonia one working week a year, which is equal to 2% of GDP. And which is equal to defense expenditures in Estonia, for example.

Our initiatives to build digital single markets are not only relevant to the European Union. They apply full out to the world, because digital does not recognize country borders. I hope that our work can inspire other countries and regions. When it comes to development assistance, the EU and its member states contribute 52% of the world's official development aid.

The funds managed by the EU institutions alone amount to 32 billion Euros over five years.

Digitalization helps to lead forward development stages, (Inaudible) best technologies and services.

EGovernment tools already save billions just by interconnecting public registers and eliminating irregularities.

That goes for developing countries as much for developed ones. Or take eAgriculture, which can increase the income of small farmers by up to 20%. Mobile payment systems have opened up possibilities for financial inclusion as never before.

But the picture is not entirely rosy. Half the world's population remains offline and most of them are in developing countries.

A major reason for this is cost and affordability, expressed in terms of people's local income. This is where development policy can make a real difference on the ground. In May, the European commission published a strategy to mainstream digital technologies and services into all of our development corporation activities.

It has four main priorities. Ensuring access to affordable secure broadband and to digital infrastructure. Promoting digital literacy and skills. Supporting entrepreneurs and digital innovation. Promoting the use of digital technologies and services across sectors to increase accountability, transparency and coordinates.

It will also help to empower women. Our policy will assist management of vital resources like water, food and energy.

This will mean more effective public services, such as health and education and the use of single registers based on EID to provide identification for everyone.

Africa is our immediate priority. I can tell you today that the European Union, the African Union Commission, and the International Telecommunication Union are close to signing a new project where the ITU's past experience will support Africa to better manage their spectrum and achieve higher quality and affordability of mobile broadbands. We also want to use the EU Africa Summit at the end of November to agree with our partner countries on a common way forward.

Next year the committee for electing American and Caribbean state summits will provide us with more opportunities to engage with Latin American and bolster the digital economy in both our continents.

I look forward to working together with all of you to achieve our common aim. To book digital properly into development. Thank you.

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your words. And valuable discussion so far.

It is now time to start the interactive part of our session today. I will coordinate and help all the dignitaries here. Ministers, deputy ministers, represents of other organizations, if time permits.

We're looking for the biggest and most diverse views we can possibly have in the event today. I invite all ministers to take the front seats now. If you're at the back, I invite you to take the front.

There will be guiding questions. There will be principles, ideas, that will take us through today's discussion.

Firstly, is can you provide examples of technologies, projects and initiatives that have the greatest impact towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in your country? What challenges do you face in implementing these SDGs and how do you see ICTs making a difference?

Taking into account the 25 years of achievements of ITUD, in your opinion, how can the enabling role of ICTs for SDGs be strengthened through global efforts at regional and international level?

Please remember that my role is to maintain traction. Quick and moving forward. I kindly ask you to use not more than three minutes when addressing these issues.

Of course, please understand that if I have to interrupt you, it is because we want to keep discussion as diverse as possible. Remember that you can raise your flag or just put it vertical if you want us to go to you.

At this point, I invite ministers to start addressing us. In first place, we have Bangladesh who is going to address us now.

>> Bangladesh: Mr. Chairman and honorable speakers, distinguished delegates. We all know that telecommunication and ICT directly impacts ACG goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 8, 9, 10, and other goals in various degrees, which involves ending hunger, poverty, promote well-being, inclusive and quality education. Empowering women and girls. Sustainable economy growth. Reduce inequality, et cetera.

So keeping all these in mind, the government of Bangladesh has prioritized the issue of (Inaudible) infrastructure, connecting the unconnected ones to promote eGovernance, eLearning, eHealth. EAgriculture, eCommerce, reducing the digital divide, banking for the banking population. ICT industry (Inaudible) skilled level engagement of women in digital economy. Encourage innovation, initiatives and development of entrepreneurship amongst women. If we go for a few very, I would say effective initiatives that Bangladesh has taken, I would name union digital centers, which has so far provided 116 services and 6 million population of rural areas have taken advantage of these services. 2.5 million are women. Both e-centers have created 17,000 total entrepreneurs amongst 18,000 a hundred are women and government has created e-commerce platform which helps the rural women to market their products which we have created using the social innovation fund.

EHealth care services. The platform has been created by using mobile phone regarding the adolescent's health care education. We have created -- around 95,500 teachers are well

connected. They share their problems, solve their problems online.

It's very popular social media master teachers. We have national portal, which is a gateway to 43,000 plus services and around 3,327,000 -- let me do it again. 327 million services has already been provided. I'm confusing with numbers though.

So one question that I have. It was in my mind since long that according to the SDGs, if we look at SDG Goal 4, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all, I would like to emphasize life-long and for all. Because it does not specify any specific age.

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. All means all women, irrespective of age. I'm raising this issue because we all know that in countries, life expectancy is increasing. And in Bangladesh, life expectancy has increased to 74.

And most of them are female. So what are we actually looking at in future how to address this problem. As we know that affordable and accessible Internet is a precondition for achieving those SDGs and using ICT for SDGs, and also logging women and elderly population. If you look at Goal 3, ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, I would like to give emphasis that for all ages, if you want ensure health care access, how do they really access the health care if they don't have the basic skill to know how to access the services already provided to them?

So this is actually not a statement. I would like to have the input of the honorable panelists present on the podium, that how can we collaborate and work in this issue. Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. Bangladesh representative. Thank you very much. I would like to know if someone in the panel next to me would have some comments to add. Some questions to reply. Something to say. Please go ahead.

>> Thank you very much Mr. Moderator. I think that the Bangladesh are part of the answer. Because Bangladesh was one of the prior years with ITU development sector when the initiated for the first time. The meeting between ministers of ICTs and ministers of education.

In UNESCO. You said it very well. You talked about collaboration. I see this is where the issue is.

Of course, you have the job training, but at the end of the day, education sector. And we should be collaborating more and more with the sectors so they can use ICT as a tool. Because so far what I'm seeing is that (Inaudible).

I try to sketch in things, but sometimes we are trying to sell medicines to people we don't know are sick. So we need to

be more proactive in talking to other sectors. Talk to them, collaborating with them in a way that they can fully use the potential of ICTs for development on all those strategies. That's what I would like to contribute at this point in time. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> I would like to also reply to the very important question that her Excellency from Bangladesh raised already. For your information in ITU-D, we have two study groups. In Study Group 2 where I have the honor to chair the Study Group, one of the questions that in the previous study cycle, we studied was EHealth. And we were working on new platforms, new applications that specifically address the problem that you mentioned.

The question of course needs to be evolved and amended as we have progressed in committee 3 and committee 4 in this very WTDC. We would be formulating now questions, part of which would be an eHealth. I would encourage all countries, including colleagues from Bangladesh to participate in the works of these study groups that would be focusing on many issues including the eHealth that was part of the question that our minister from Bangladesh raised. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. Our next intervention is by the Russian Federation.

>> Russian Federation: Thank you very much. I would like to go back in history a little. One of the first Sustainable Development Goals drawn up in '86 and it was the future we want.

And if we take all the previous revolutions which in one way or another had an influence on humanity, they were all -- they all had side effects which -- not the fact that they -- they weren't all positive.

Now in terms of our goals, our 17 SDGs, I would like to say that we as a responsible organization, under the UN, should more specifically understand all of the consequences of all the decisions we take here and that we are taking.

So what happened is there was this new revolution, this fourth revolution, is linked mainly with ICTs.

So organizations and ministries and industries are all here, where we represent. Now in terms of our countries, perhaps you could say that generally putting figures on this new revolution has been going on for a while. And there are many signs that tomorrow, something we've seen as soon as today.

The greatest challenge for Russia is the fact that our territory is so vast, and there's the population density is different in different areas.

Specifically we have a most recent, most effective project which we have been rolling out in recent years is a project on

laying broadband access to all settlements in the Russian Federation. This has given us the excellent results that we are observing at the moment. And this is clear because citizens have started to use e-Services more widely, and we can see that in many settlements, we have Internet to ensure that we can have distance, remote medical services.

And we have 2,300 kilometers of fiber optics. So this would go five times around the world. This is one of the biggest projects we have undertaken in recent years.

I'm saying that infrastructure is a very important aspect. So that we can meet all the challenges that we have before us.

I believe that for the ITU the main event or activation for us was when with the world information society, and many of the goals we set out there directly correlate to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

And here again, I would like to highlight that we are very much aware of the fact that side effects of any revolutionary period that humanity has experienced so far can be positive.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Do we have representatives from the panel with Russia? Something to add? We go on to our next intervention by the representative of Berlin. Please go ahead.

>> BERLIN:

>> CHAIR: We're having a technical problem. Do we have a mic available? There we go.

>> BERLIN: I'd like to highlight aspects of the ecosystem. The book here highlighted the whole ICT ecosystem. And it links ICTs and sustainable development. My country's challenges are integrating ICTs into national policy documents.

Because for long time, ICTs have been separate and documents are considered to be issues of development partners, for example. And there's also documents from national policy. And these are all separate. So now a major challenge is to be able to reconcile developing on a national level, and incorporate ICTs here so that we can ensure that they help us achieve these goals and set out a framework for follow-up on a national media level. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. I invite all other ministers to please raise your placard, show your flag, raise your hand. Let me know that you want to address the rest of the dignitaries, and of course the experts. Please, doctor.

>> I want to thank the distinguished delegate from Berlin for this very important question. I would like to use this opportunity and refer you to chapters 1 and 4 of this book. In chapter 1, of course we consider the ecosystem. And in chapter 4, the role of governance in ICT-based sustainable development. That's a subject with enough detail and I would like to inform

you again of the fact that this question is already addressed in this book. Thank you.

>> Mr. Chairman I would like to add some information. I reached the opinion in March of this year. I was honored to be the receiver of our Excellency, the head of state. The President. And I am also honored to be received by the President of the parliament. And that is the country where I also have another honor to have a meeting with several ministers.

What happened there is they are talking about eStrategy. And realize that today, the system, the infrastructure may not be that kind of a base to use ICT to transform the country.

While the infrastructure is basically invested and developed by our operators. They have several operating in other countries. As a government to realize ICT can help agriculture, technology research, can help with public health. They would like to have national eStrategy to develop. All of the President of parliament told me he now has task to ask parliament to approve similar laws.

By one ministry. And another ministry. That would be not very much coordinated. I would like to see how can we develop the national e-strategy to guide as a next step for development.

Then I presented to the President of state and the President of parliament. A little bit earlier I met with deputy prime minister of Slovenia.

Look at the whole picture so that you can make best strategy to guide the ICT development social committee development. To each minister to develop their own strategy.

The deputy prime minister with Slovenia wish to share that view with colleagues.

Relatively new to us and I got similar comments from Uganda during our process in Geneva. He comment to me that today the project is important, but not that urgent. I think revise, to see how we can develop national ICT strategy to address our issues.

And this strategy will guide as a (Inaudible) for ICT infrastructures. Based on the national ICT industry.

Think that's something much in my opinion, much wide. And also have provide reference to the future development of ICT.

So the issues as not this book, give us a lot of guidance. But to (Inaudible).

New challenges to us. And we also have to have some kind of studies. By the way, when I was visiting one of the big universities, the university has 80,000 students. I was surprised that over last ticket, there are few students to study the engineers. Engineering, mathematics. And mathematics for

example, almost one organization no good students for mathematics.

So address the general balance, to address this kind of equal opportunities for women and girls, with boys, we have to also be aware of the challenges. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much Secretary-General. Your Excellency.

>> Yes. Thank you and thank you Secretary-General for these kind words. What we're learning in Slovenia regarding your question, there is more or less when we talk about services, technology, knowledge, it's the question of the chicken and egg. So you have to find the way how you in constant corporation, develop all those things together. Because if you build infrastructure and there is not services to use it, it will not be recognized.

If you have services without infrastructure, if you have services and infrastructure without knowledge, again, it's not OK. If you have services which are connected in behind the different government or resource, again they will not be effective.

For us the most common or most important way to approach to the national strategy is to establish constant national corporation. And why I'm strongly convinced we have to deliver not only national, but strong, constant international corporation that we can synchronize our systems. Than our services and our infrastructure will have much bigger impact on quality of life and business opportunities.

>> Dr. Lehr, please go ahead.

>> Thank you. I really like this discussion and I would like to applaud all the folks who have spoken about this. For example, people have sought the use of digital platforms. They can expand inclusion by allowing people to work more flexibly and on schedules that work for them.

The potential downside of that is labor laws that are designed to create safety nets don't necessarily cover them. And then you end up with disruptions where you have digital workers being treated from regular workers.

These things happen across the different sectors.

Now with things like Airbnb and the sharing economy, it affects all these other sectors. the idea you would have national coordinated policies that would go across all these different sectors and then also international coordination seems absolutely essential. I think the ITU is one of the key player in this space going forward.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, doctor. Of course, this is the main point. International coordination. That's what we're

trying to do here. And I invite now the minister from Mali to share his view, please.

>> Thank you very much. I am the minister for economy and communication in Mali. My question is very simple. I know that we, since 2015 have all subscribed to these SDGs. Last time I said that what is important to us in Mali is SDG 9. So how can we bridge the digital divide?

My question is particularly to the ITU partners. What are the new initiatives that they would encourage so that we, Developing Countries, are able to bridge this digital divide.

This digital divide is something we're feeling very keenly in our economies. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Do we have contributions from the panel, do we have contributions from the rest of the floor? Do we have others? No?

OK. Please go ahead.

>> Thank you. Of course everybody knows no simple answers on this question. But I would like to return to this very first topic. Dealing with health care. I think with digital public services, we can create some whole public demand, and if they would like to keep those services, then there is a reason for to incorporate this for example, to make those investments.

And I don't think it's right way to say that at first we have to cover all the country or continent with good networks and then we have to dedicate our people and then we have to start to provide those services.

For me, the services aren't even the most important part in this process. In some cases it's possible to provide, for example, really good health care services in the way that people they are not able to understand. Is it digital or not.

Let's take e-prescriptions for example. So it means people, they have to have identification cards. And on basis of those identities, when there is in the country e-prescription, people will get their pharmaceuticals from drugstore. In case of chronic diagnosis, they don't to visit their general practitioners in all those cases, they can just call and they will get those pharmaceuticals from every drugstore.

So those people, they don't know about this -- how the system works. They lost how did you call my son this system? Ah! E-prescription. This is eHealth care. I like it. I want to get it.

And I would like to say many member states, there are people extremely happy because of those e-prescriptions, but we created another problem. So in Finland, 100% of many conductors e-prescriptions in Denmark in Greece. But when people will travel to Finland, they probably still need it.

So those prescriptions, they are not able to cross (Inaudible) in digital manner in the 21st Century. So we had to go on with this process. We had to enlarge the whole system across the world, I would like to say.

So I would like to say that currents, they can create through providing digital public services. People's demands, and if people will say that I like this system, then politicians, they have to invest much more. And into digital.

And it means also that this digital divide will be not so big problem anymore.

So the fact that people are not enough educated for those digital public services does not mean that it can be like an excuse for governments not to provide those digital public services. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> To answer more on this question, what initiatives are going to take to bridge the digital divide, I think some have already been taken under the ITU to bridge the gap across all aspects.

The first is the geographical aspect. How can we connect regions which are not currently connected to the Internet. Secondly, how can we do so in a financially accessible way for those people concerned. So these two aspects are in reality key, because we need to make frequency bounds available to allow for better coverage, and at a lower cost.

And the bands that have been identified since 2007 by the ITU for this are those under 800 megahertz. So then the ITU is trying to make these bands, frequencies available for digital dividend. And this was highlighted at WRC of the ITU.

And the second point, we need to support member states so that they can speed up their transition to digital broadcasting. And digitalizing these frequency bands which are currently used by televisions and analog televisions. And the third is the initiative to coordinate between member states in terms of frequency use.

To make these bands' use available by all. Service is something that was done by African countries and also in the Arab groups. That's been done the last couple years. We're undertaking this at the moment in the Caribbean and central American countries. So that's some details on the initiatives we have undertaken already. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. We now move on to Iran. Representative minister from Iran, please.

>> IRAN: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Republic of Iran, I would like to congratulate the 25th anniversary of ITU-D.

We all believe in the importance of Digital Inclusion concept as devised with ITU. The Digital Inclusion for communities means access and application of ICT for better life and provision of opportunities for all.

New opportunities which is brought through advances in big data analysis and new dimension in appearing, and name pilot in predicting the future.

I think this is the basic point that brings ICT into real life. For the benefit of people.

New technologies like 5G, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and so on are paving the way for extraordinary power, power predicting the future. This power, of course can be used for, as a tool for a better life for everyone.

And at the same time, can be misused to increase the digital gap between communities and countries. It is a really important fact that if countries in the world do not have the knowledge, infrastructure, human resources and competency for using such a power, the digital gap will be increased exponentially. And the situation would be worse for countries who have less access to social power.

I sincerely hope that ITU can help the world gain access to the knowledge, technology and institutional capacity for balanced access to such potency. I would like to have the comments of gentlemen that what could be probably the program of ITU to help countries that have access to less power, in order to get the potency which is actually necessarily for keeping them on way and helping them to be part of the international community as much as possible. And as fruitful as possible.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister.

>> I like to add a few comments here. We noted that in our opening remarks from our United Nations. That ICT you see a member for each and every SDGs. So that is a very, very good inclusion as it was. And ICT is very much a progress to everywhere. We are very proud of achievement. But here we do have challenges. But we're talking about people who not connect yet. We have to go there to connect to them. We have to extend our infrastructures there. We have to provide good ICT tools to contractors there. We need an investment.

And where is the investment? ICT talked about connect 2020 project, and to have next 1.5 billion people online by 2020.

Someone calculated we need \$450 billion. And we went to World Bank to ask if they can help us. They tell us they don't have money. They have their own project. They have their own priorities.

But when we talked to our industry, 450 billion to connect over (Inaudible) people. You need more. So we have (Inaudible) up here.

And here of course, that people all talk about public or private partnership. I see absolutely correct. We have to encourage public or private partnership. We also have to encourage our sovereignties, government, to help create a good environment for the investment. Because you cannot force it to places that don't see it as profitable.

There's another problem. There's the general perception that the ICT is the business making process is profitable. For example, you don't need to worry too much about ICT development.

So you're in a country, you have your financial ministers. They don't have to give money to you, to our telecom industry. Why you need investment for connecting people.

I am also very pleased to know that one of the partners which to incorporate with Developing Countries to do the business.

For example, we just saw from our leader of the European Union that they put Africa as priorities.

I also note that for example our Japanese prime minister went to Kenya to talk about their project. And the Chinese President went to Johannesburg to talk about their incorporation with Africa. We have India prime minister talk about the cooperation between India and Africa. So we have a lot of partners waiting to help, for example, Africa.

Now if every country in Africa was their own project, with their own ideas, those things would not be (Inaudible) to our Africa members. Africa members may see some problems of conflicting project or overlapping of some kind of investment. So in my opinion, that our members should also look for opportunities to come up with our own priorities, own project. Then present this to our partners to look for partnership.

From ITU, we also try to go to the other so called ecosystems. I myself went to try to look at corporation between ITU and (Inaudible) for agriculture.

18 of September we signed agreement in New York to increase our cooperations. Next week conference, collaboration with ITU members to develop eHealth and to modernize the popular health systems.

And opportunity to see more and more chance to have new initiatives and new projects.

Our members who will have to come up with our own guidance, own ideas, own visions for our own development. put our own priorities on the table for discussion with partners. So that is what I like to add.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. We now go to the representative minister.

>> Thank you. I'll be very brief. As a request to ITU. Biggest challenge in our side of the world is capacity in terms of building applications that will make life easier in the country.

I'm hearing around the room, and I heard a few friends yesterday talking about their countries already developing applications in areas of agriculture, in connectivity, in terms of schools, teachers, communications. These are the challenges that we're facing, and not only that we are not able to produce these ourselves or start these ourselves. But also financially we're not able to. I wonder if ITU can take an inventory of the ITU members who develop these applications, like mobile applications. And if these can be shared amongst member countries. Some of these applications, gearing ITU have been involved in terms of funding and developing them.

If you have developed some in the continent of Africa, I wonder if you can bring it to outside of the room and share it with us, instead of us reinventing the wheel. Share free of cost. Some of that corporation and working cooperatively.

And that's to me strengthening and bringing the ICTs to the regional and national levels. Thank you.

>> Let me just give general comment and then my colleague will provide a few advices.

Particularly close, could be something for us to do very quickly. That if you not find answers from us. I think we do have some information in this respect. We have not consolidated those information.

And you're suggesting to have expenses working with other continents to standardize that kind of benefit.

I think that's reasonable expectation or request. I just like to add one more information that during my previous presentation, I talked about possibility to have suggestions proposals from our members. And this is one of them. Another important project I see from Africa is smart of Africa.

And the smart of Africa is absolutely marvelous project. Such presentations from our members. I see will give us opportunities to look for good partnership. IT would like to work with you and would like to go together with you. Having said that, let me just ask if we could add your advice.

>> Thank you very much. Point well taken. You have resources. Personally I took the initiative four years back to put in place a then-standing group of diverse background.

Around initiative called empowering development. And the first thing we did was to make a stock taking of all the application existing.

And we shared. And you could take stuff from there. But also understand that we need to do something more to just -- to do more than that and find a way to go and share with the Pacific Islands. That's a point well taken. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you. Just shortly on what you asked. Something also very keen about sharing their applications. Sharing the knowledges. But we have a problem.

If some software solution for government, education or something like this is developed in one country, probably it will not just function in other. You have to adopt it. So there is the question of compatibility, maintaining and data supplying.

This is why it is so important inside the country and also wider, that you synchronize the platforms. And we start to exchange part of applications.

If we agree on what kind of data sets we all use and what kind of a communication means, we all use, then sharing software solution is possible. Otherwise, it's very problematic, because it's not only software that you take. Download from X store, plug and play. You have to support it, maintain it, feed it with data, and this is more complicated.

>> Thank you. When talking about (Inaudible) we have to understand this is a reputable development area. Not only in the United States of America or the European Union. But in the European Union -- year 2014, 17 billion years, and according to prognosis, it will be 63 billion years in the year 2018. And when talking about jobs, then 2014, 1.8 million jobs just in the app industry in the European Union. And there will be 12.8 million jobs in that industry in the European Union.

I was in Nigeria and we had some meetings with local start-ups. For example, for one an app to order natural gas. Just in time, in right place. The same software solutions. They know about you but how to get at home and so on. I don't think it's somebody in Europe will create the best kind of apps. It's possible only there where there is a real demand for best kind of apps.

I think once again, they have to support those great people and maybe, one day, they will provide something for the whole world. In Africa, this mobile payment system is used also in some European countries.

So of course, we have to cooperate, we have to share experience. But at first, all the countries, all have to support great people inside of those countries. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. Following your point, I would like to bring into this discussion someone else from the UN. The representative of the U.S. office of the high

representative for the least developed countries. Landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.

I would like to ask you a quick question to just try and close this session. We are seeing the low development countries have a number of challenges. And of course, your office has a major role coordinating, following up what happens afterwards, and concern is about of course, leapfrogging, moving forward, and very importantly, coordinating a number of actors to interact.

How can, from your point of view, make sure that LDCs are not left behind?

>> Thank you very much Mr. Moderator. Excellencies. Ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to be here. And our office, as was mentioned, represents the 91 countries that are the most vulnerable. The least developed, landlocked and small island developing states, and many of the representatives and the honorable ministers have already talked here and in particular, I think put forward very relevant questions to these groups of countries.

They face multiple challenges that make it very difficult for them to reach the SDGs and build their economic growth. And unfortunately, the trends have not been very good recently.

For example, in 2015, the average annual growth in gross domestic product was 3.8%, which is the lowest level of economic growth recorded in LDCs in two decades.

And also for the second year, LDC exports dropped out of world trade, dropped under 1%. That's very low. Under 1%.

So if we are to make sure that the least developed countries are really not left behind in the spirits of the SDGs, we need urgently to reverse these declining trends. Building productive capacity, central priority for the least developed countries and one of the key drivers of productive capacity-building is ICT. And this is ICT as we have heard, is a key priority for all LDCs, small islands and landlocked countries as well.

My office has worked together with ITU and we have come out with a report. It is not yet out, but should be out soon. Say it's called achieving universal and affordable Internet in the least developed countries.

And this highlights that, for example, there's relatively high mobile subscription penetration in LDCs, but Internet access remains low in LDCs. It's estimated 17.5% at the end of 2017 who will be using Internet.

This is growth, but still it's at such a rate that we are very unlikely to reach the SDG target 9C, which asks for providing universal access to the Internet by LDCs in 2020.

But I like to finish with a piece of good news and also directly to the question of the honorable minister, of what is being done in order to help in particular these countries that are lagging behind.

Just a month ago, during the high level week in New York, at the UN, the United Nations and the government of Turkey, after five years of negotiations by UN member states signed a host agreement for new UN entity which is the least developed countries' technology bank. The bank will provide science technology and innovation related services to all LDCs. It will start beginning next year. And it really will help all the least developed countries to integrate them and their society's economies into the knowledge-based economy. It will be based in Turkey and the first years will concentrate on needs assessments and also digital research access. Eventually it will be working on all LDCs. In the name of partnerships I really would like to invite you all to partner with the new technology bank for the LDCs to help the most vulnerable countries reach their science, technology and innovation needs.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. We'll look forward to that publication. Right now we have to break. We have to take a short break. This debate was amazing, excellent. Thank you very much for your contribution. We have a number of speakers. I promise we've taken good notes and in the next session, we will address you, and you will be joining in.

You will be jumping in with your opinions and comments. Remember just one quick thing. You are invited to attend tonight's gala dinner at the Icon hotel. It's just walking distance. There will be security stationed along the way so you can walk. They will guide you.

It's a couple hundred meters.

If anyone has specific needs, there will be shuttles for you departing from the main entrance of this hotel, the Hilton, at 6:45. At the end of the gala dinner tonight, there will be shuttles to take a 10:30 p.m. local time, of course, to return to the official hotels.

Additionally, I would like to let you know there's a booklet in front of you. You can take a peek at it. It's our history. It's the 25 years of the ITU-D, and you're welcome to take a peek, look at it closely of course, and take it with you.

With this we break the session. We take a very short break. At 4:45 we reconvene. So enjoy your coffee and see you -- very strictly -- 20 minutes. Thank you very much.

(Session concluded at 4:28 p.m., local time.)

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