Release of ITU's flagship statistics report: Measuring the Information Society

Welcome Address

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Excellencies,

Colleagues from Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the ITU, I would like to welcome you to the Asia-Pacific launch event of the Measuring the Information Society 2014 Report. This Report is being launched globally by ITU at Tbilisi, Georgia, on the occasion of the the 12th ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium as well as in other regions by the other ITU regional offices.

I would like to express our gratitude to our host the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission of Thailand for its kind support to host this

important event again in this year. My sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Thailand as a partner of this event. This launch is being done globally. in Asia- Pacific region Thailand , being the host of ITU Regional Office, I am quite sure that you would be pleased to note the progress that Thailand has made over the past year.

I would also like to thank our co-organizers, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) for their kind support and presence.

I also take the occasion to recognize the presence of representatives from the Embassies and the diplomatic core, and to ITU Members, Sector Members and colleagues from the Media who are with us here today.

ICTs particularly in the converged digital era, have tremendous impact on virtually all aspects of our lives, while being globally recognized as a critical enabler for creative economy, socio-economic and sustainable development, empowerment of people and local communities in countries at different phases of development. There is no doubt that this fast growing, vibrant and exciting era calls for statistics and indicators to monitor and track access and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). ICT statistics is one of ITU's major focus areas of work and Measuring the Information Society Report, which is now in its sixth year, is one of our flagship publication. This annual report identifies key information and communication technology (ICT) developments and tracks the cost and affordability of ICT services, in accordance with internationally agreed methodologies. Its core feature is the ICT Development Index (IDI), which ranks countries' performance with regard to ICT infrastructure, use and skills. The report aims to provide an objective international performance evaluation based on quantitative indicators and benchmarks, as an essential input to the ICT policy debate in ITU Member States. The Report also compares the prices for ICT Services across economies as affordability is a key to take up.

Friends,

The ICT has manifested itself in all parts of the society with a gamut of applications running over broadband. It has become a critical infrastructure not only for ICT services but also for health, governance, commerce, education

amongst others. So much so that Smart Cities and Smart Societies are being created to leverage the potential of ICTs. New analysis featured in this report shows that many of the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) show significant correlation with the IDI, notably those related to poverty reduction and health improvement. Furthermore, the report finds that progress in ICT development is linked to progress in achieving some of the MDGs, yet another testimony to the role of ICT as a development enabler. An enabling telecommunication policy and regulatory environment can significantly influence the affordability and growth of ICT services, while statistics and data enhances our capability to monitor the development and guide the progress.

In this fast-changing digital era, one of the key challenges in measuring the information society is the lack of up-to-date data, in particular in developing countries. ITU is joining the international statistical community in looking into ways of using new and emerging data sources – such as those associated with big data – to better provide timely and relevant evidence for policy-making. Calls for a "data revolution" are prominent in the international debates around the post-2015 development agenda, and ICTs have an important role to play in view of their capacity to produce, store and analyse huge amounts of data, as well as being a major source of big data in their own right. This report provides the reader with a comprehensive and critical overview of the role of big data from the telecommunication sector, for use in social and economic development policy and for monitoring the future information society.

ITU and UNESCAP, together with other agencies are part of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, which you would appreciate is a formidable task in an ICT embedded society. I also would like to bring to your attention that ITU has also worked with our members and partners to build human capacity in national telecom/ICT statistics and indicators. For instance, just last month, ITU together with the NBTC and ASEAN jointly organized an ITU Forum on Telecommuniactions/ICT Indicators in Bangkok. In recent past we assisted Bhutan, Bangladesh, Philippines, among others to develop ICT indicators and statistical portals to track the progress. We also seek your support in further developing the national statistical capabilities and enhancing regional and global cooperation in this area.

I sincerely hope the outcome will help us identify the key areas of focus going forward, and assist in progressing our work together. Let me hold on to the results for a little while and will soon be back with the presentation of the report after the opening ceremony.

I hope you would find your presence informative and useful.

I thank you ITU