



## **Policy Awareness Workshop on E-waste**

**Hyderabad, India**

**27-29 November 2019**



**Government Of India**

### **OPENING ADDRESS**

**Mr Sameer Sharma**

**Regional Director a.i.**

**ITU Regional Office for Asia-Pacific**

### **Dignitary Address**

1. Mr. Ratan P. Watal, Member Secretary, Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister
2. Prof K Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India (Not attending)
3. Dr. Shailendra Kumar Joshi, Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana or his representative
4. Mr. K. Ramchand, Advisor, Andhra Pradesh, Licensed Service Area, Department of Telecommunications, Government of India
5. Mr. Shri Arvind Kumar, Group Coordinator of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)
6. Mr. B. N. Satpathy, Senior Consultant, Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Government of India
7. Mr. V. Raghunandan, Deputy Director General, International Relations, DOT, India
8. Dr. N. R. Munirathnam, Director-General, Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET)

Distinguished Delegates;

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the International Telecommunication Union , I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of India , in particular Mr. Ratan P. Watal, Member Secretary, Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister for hosting the “E-waste Policy Awareness Workshop” in historical city of Hyderabad bringing together key stakeholders from government agencies, private sector, academia, to address this issue strategically and in inclusive manner, through organizing this unique workshop, to enhance awareness on E-waste focusing on People-Planet & Prosperity.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The impact of E-waste in a society does not happen in isolation. Besides electrical and electronic waste, it is an issue which can directly impact human health, as well as the safety of our workforce. ITU recognizes this and has been fortunate to have forged collaboration with other expert UN agencies, to tackle this issue. **THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)**, which are heavily invested in increasing the awareness of E-waste impacts on health, especially children, globally. **THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO)** which has played its role by strongly advocating against the harmful effect of E-waste on human health, especially vulnerable workers who are often inadequately protected from hazardous substances coming from E-waste. **THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU)** has also contributed with a vast array of research projects in this field, through its programme on Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) and before, to promote sustainable societies. I am very pleased that ITU-UNU-ILO- WHO and UNEP under the family of United Nations have put together this unique awareness workshop under the leadership of Government of India.

Collaboration is pivotal in developing this field, and we have been able to provide countries with assistance in developing national E-waste statistics for example. Through the Global

E-waste Statistics Partnership, ITU is working with its partners to improve and collect worldwide E-waste statistics. For those who are not familiar with the role of ITU, ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. Our work includes allocation of global radio spectrum and satellite orbits for global communication, standards development for telecommunication technologies including recommendations on the management of E-waste, as well as bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

ITU has been given the mandate and role by all its members, to pursue the issue of climate change, particularly in Resolution Res. 182 of the Plenipotentiary Conference, Resolution 66 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference and the "Connect 2020 Agenda for Global Telecommunication /ICT Development.

To this end, ITU has established targets in 2018 relating to E-waste which are:

- By 2023, to increase the global E-waste recycling rate to 30 per cent;
- By 2023, to raise the percentage of countries with an E-waste legislation to 50 per cent.

As the UN specialized agency for ICTs, this effort on E-waste is also ITU commitment to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through its collaboration with other UN agencies, who are present here today.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me turn to the topic of the events. If we observe some of the existing trends, it took us until 2018 to finally wake up and realize that ocean plastic pollution was one of the major environmental challenges. Now it is time to direct the public opinion to electronic waste in 2019 onwards. The numbers are astounding — 50 million tonnes of E-waste are produced

each year, unchecked it could more than double by 2050, to 120 million tonnes. To date, only around 20 per cent, of this is waste properly recycled.

An electronic waste, or E-waste, refers to all items of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) and its parts that have been discarded by its owner as waste without the intent of re-use. It includes a wide range of products – almost any household or business item with circuitry or electrical components with power or battery supply.

In recent years we have witnessed a growing momentum in international efforts to tackle E-waste. It is potentially one of the fastest growing and most complex waste streams in the world. According to the Global E-waste Monitor, which was published back in 2017, as of 2016, **a total of 44.7 million tonnes of E-waste were generated. This is equivalent to 4500 Eiffel Tower of materials.** This amount is staggering, and severely impacts the environment and human health, which often are traded illegally across the globe. The Global E-waste Statistics Partnership will be releasing the latest Global E-waste Monitor in the early part of 2020, with updated global, regional and national estimates.

As we consume without noticing the negative environmental, social and economic externalities, an underlying lack of awareness and empowerment persists, vis-à-vis our responsibilities as consumers and enforcers– in most cases – regardless of whether we are a householder, government or businesses.

In 2016, our region itself generated 40.7% of the world's E-waste, the largest amount in comparison to other regions, which equates to a phenomenal 18.2 million metric tonnes.

This is a real challenge for our region, as we are the most populous of all the ITU regions globally, and many of our Members still fall within the bracket of “developing country”. This makes our region particularly vulnerable, especially when the pursuit of economic developments, through manufacturing and trade, has been given high priority. If we are

not careful, particularly due to weak policies, implementation and enforcement, Asia- Pacific could continue to become recipients of global E-waste, and worst, without proper tools and measurements to manage it.

India itself imports a large amount of E-waste from developing countries in the region whilst it also has a large domestic generation of E-waste, estimated to have been roughly 2 million metric tonnes in 2016. At the same time, India's electronics industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The lack of- and inaccurate data, low collection rates and reuse and only informal or un-sustained repair and refurbishing activities are often a result of our lack of awareness. We face challenges with the inadequate management of E-waste and the related human health and environmental impacts, and of course the loss of economic value residing in our electrical and electronic equipment.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Taking into account the issues , this workshop has been designed to focus on raising awareness among participants about the state of E-waste policy and implementation, business and standards, and capacity and skills potential in the management of E-waste in India with an outcome of feasible action plan for developing these areas nationally.

Keeping in mind the notion of People, Planet and Prosperity – in the context of India – we hope that participants will focus on the opportunities that exists by overcoming E-waste challenges and the taking forward of recommendations to help the Government of India identify new innovations and synergies across various levels and departmental lines. Sharing of international best practices, group exercises and discussions will make it interactive and we will also have an electronic polling system in place which can be accessed via your mobile phones. At the end of Day Two, we will all have the opportunity to take part in an E-waste dismantling session.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

ITU is optimistic that India can be a leading country in galvanizing the efforts of reducing E-waste in this region. Allow me to quote the Secretary General of the ITU, H.E Houlin Zhao,

*"By all coming together on the global stage we can create a sustainable industry that generates less waste, where our devices are re-used, as well recycled in novel ways. This also creates new forms of employment, economic activity, education and trade. "*

E-waste should not just be limited to an environmental and human health issue, but also an opportunity to create green jobs and re-obtain the value in this waste stream as part of a circular economy. This should be the narrative that India aims for, as economic prosperity is an aspiration for every individual.

Once again, I would like to express my deep gratitude Mr. Ratan P. Watal for his vision, leadership and commitment and special thanks to Satpathy Jee for his excellent planning and coordination , C-MET for gracious hosting and to Raghunandan Jee , Deputy Director General (IR) Department of Telecommunications for undivided support to make this event happen in India. My gratitude to colleagues from the United Nations family, the United Nations University, International Labour Organization, World Health Organization and United Nations Environment Program, for collaborating to develop this program. ITU is looking forward to a very productive and interactive workshop.

I wish you all a very productive and interactive workshop.