



**ITU-NBTC International Training Program
Regulatory Enablers for Digital Transformation
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OPENING ADDRESS

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Chairmen, Board Members, Heads of Regulatory Authorities and Senior Policy Makers from the Asia-Pacific Region;

My colleague Ms. Sofie Maddens from ITU HQ;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning and welcome to the ITU-NBTC International Training Program (ITP) 2019.

First of all, I would like to thank you all for such an enthusiastic response and participation in the ITP-2019. As you may be aware, this is the 12th ITP since 2006. On behalf of ITU, I would like to convey our sincere gratitude to NBTC for co-organizing and hosting this Training Program which is the first time that NBTC is hosting the ITP in Thailand. Our appreciation also go to the Department of Communications, Government of Australia, for its financial support and to you all for your participation in this Training Program.

As some of you have participated and contributed, we have just successfully concluded 9th Asia-Pacific Regulators' Roundtable (RR 2019) which was attended by over 50 regulators and policy makers from 22 countries from the Asia-Pacific region. Regulators Roundtable clearly stressed the need for exchange of experiences and dialog amongst policy makers, regulators, industry and other stakeholders on technology, policy and regulatory trends as

we all face issues and challenges in the midst of increasingly converged digital environment and the changing and expanding role of the ICT sector.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last year, we transitioned from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. All three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection – need ICTs as key catalysts, and ICTs will be absolutely crucial for achieving all the 17 SDGs.

It has become a critical infrastructure not only for growth of ICT services but also for services offered by other sector such as agriculture, transport, health, governance, commerce, education, electricity to speak of a few. The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 has endorsed the ITU-wide goals relating to:

- Growth – enable and foster access to and increased use of telecommunications/ICTs;
- Inclusiveness – bridge the digital divide and provide broadband for all;
- Sustainability – manage challenges resulting from telecommunication/ICT development; and
- Innovation and partnership – lead, shape and adapt the Union to the changing telecommunication/ICT environment.

The targets that have been adopted for 2020 as you would see are beyond connectivity and affordability, and include elements such as cybersecurity, decrease in Green House Gas emissions, gender equality amongst Internet users, reduction in E-waste volumes and the need to have telecommunication/ICT environment conducive to innovation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The digital marketplace is constantly evolving and calls for new regulatory regimes. The fifth generation of ICT regulation is coming out of age, unleashing the potential of collaboration to set an enabling environment for innovation and investment.

ITU released Information Paper on “Digital Infrastructure, Policy and Regulation, in the Asia-Pacific Region” released yesterday in the Regulators’ Roundtable which describes how the nations of the Asia-Pacific Region can improve the contributions that communications services make to their economic development through better policy and regulation in relation to communications infrastructure. The report emphasizes that no two nations in the region face the same circumstances, opportunities or challenges and that region is characterized by an enormous diversity containing the most populous

and least populous nations in the world as well as countries at all levels of economic development. Notwithstanding this enormous diversity, there are a range of policies and programs that can be customized and implemented on a national basis which will encourage investment in telecommunications infrastructure and avoid the implementation of counter-productive policies and their associated unintended consequences. I encourage you to refer to this paper and am sure that you will find it practically useful in your respective national policy / regulatory context.

ITU innovation research shows that there is a growing digital innovation divide in many countries, and that ICT-centric innovation ecosystems have a critical role to play in fostering digital transformation that leads to economic inclusion, positive externalities and sustainable growth for communities, cities and countries. Even though many Asian countries have good rankings on the Global Innovation Index, a look at ICT innovation success stories shows that results do not match expectations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I close, I would like to share one thought that you may wish to take on for the rest of the Training Program. While a necessary driver of growth, managing ICT is a double edged sword! ICT can be a good servant but a bad master, meaning that the impact of abuse of this tool in an ICT embedded society also has wide ranging impact on social, cultural, economic and safety dimensions of individuals and nations. Some examples of implications are as follows:

- The same network saving lives through e-health and disaster communications can also take those through cyber-attacks and cyber bullies;
- The same application providing health services and universal education has the potential to expose them to inappropriate contents;
- The lack of interoperability of multiple devices through multiple platforms can create great dissatisfaction;
- The complexity of service delivery makes consumer protection extremely difficult to administer and enforce; and
- Use of ICTs have both sides of coin: i.e., privacy vs. security.

While continuing our existing mandate of moving this sector through infrastructure and appropriate enabling environments, the ICT stakeholders need to step out of their comfort zone and think about public policies like how we can remove hunger and improve health? How can we create more skills and jobs? How can we use it for better governance and commerce? What are the areas where we need to proactively support our fellow regulators in other sectors, nationally and internationally so that they can harness the full benefit with confidence? How do we address challenges that are beyond national jurisdiction?

Like you also, I have so many unanswered questions in my mind and I am sure that the experts – i.e., speakers or even you all with extensive experiences in your own countries - will be able to answer many of these queries!

In a training like this, we can not only learn regulatory initiatives and experiences from the host country NBTC, Thailand where you will see rich content in the ITP involving experiences from regulator, policy makers as well as industry but also there is a unique opportunity to learn from experiences from each other, while I encourage you to interact and network with each other as much as possible.

Finally, I would like to thank you all, especially the participants for taking their time to join this training and I wish you all a very interactive, enjoyable and successful training!

Thank you for your attention.