



**ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe  
Budva, Montenegro**

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**OPENING REMARKS**

by

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**ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe  
“ICTs for Sustainable Development”  
27-28 September 2016, Budva, Montenegro**

- **His Excellency H.E. Vujica Lazović, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister, Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunications, Montenegro**
- **Mr Zoran Sekulić, Director, Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services, (EKIP), Montenegro**
- **Ms Fiona McCluney, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Montenegro**
- **Mr Manuel da Costa Cabral, Chairman, Com-ITU of CEPT (The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations)**
- **Mr Goran Svilanović, Secretary General, The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)**
- **Excellences, Heads of Regulatory Authorities,**
- **Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to the 2016 Regional Development Forum for Europe, here, in the beautiful city of Budva.
- Montenegro is a country that strongly believes in of the potential of ICTs to advance sustainable development. It is also a country that, on an annual basis, on the occasion of the INFOFEST, welcomes many European stakeholders in the ICT sector to discuss trends, challenges and opportunities for the ICT ecosystem in Europe and to foster human capacity building, partnerships, and generate projects.

- Let me express my deepest gratitude to Mr Zorean Sekulić, Director of Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services of Montenegro (EKIP) for facilitating and hosting this important event.
- I would also like to congratulate the Government of Montenegro, through its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Society and Telecommunications, H.E. Dr Vujica Lazović, on the continuous progress and results achieved in building a dynamic ICT ecosystem. I am grateful for your continued support and commitment in building an information and knowledge society, in particular in strengthening institutional and human capacities in field of ICT ecosystem at the national and regional level.
- Meeting in Montenegro every year to discuss important challenges in ICT development in Europe has now become a tradition.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- We are living in an era of convergence of telecom/ICT infrastructure, the convergence of services and the convergence of service providers. We are witnessing the emergence of new players, the displacement of revenues and changes in business models.
- The ICT industry has become broad and diverse, but most importantly it is changing so rapidly that it seems that the future is today. Consequently national and regional priorities change rapidly.
- Even though, at the global level, Europe is one of the leaders in terms of broadband connectivity, affordability, internet penetration, and others, inter-regional disparities still exist and require constant adaptation of actions to the real needs of the region.
- Under such circumstances, reporting back to the membership every 4 years on the occasion of the Regional Preparatory Meetings to WTDC and WTDC itself would not be effective enough.
- Therefore the RDF is meant to be a platform for annual high-level multistakeholder dialogue and interaction between the Telecommunications Development Bureau and membership on the implementation of the outcomes of WTDC, in particular the regional initiatives.
- The RDF is also an occasion to extend the conversation on development issues to other stakeholders of ICT ecosystem who are not yet Members of ITU Development sector, but are seeking engagement in the regional actions.
- I encourage you all to join these regional efforts and to become implementation partner of regional initiatives that generate concrete results.
- Let me share with you good news that today we will be officially handing over to Albania the results of the National Review on the ICT Centric Innovation Ecosystem, as well as results of the Twinning Programme between Albania and Slovenia on the Broadband Infrastructure Mapping.
- ~~The RDF is also an occasion to extend the conversation on development issues to other stakeholders of ICT ecosystem who are not yet Members of ITU Development sector, but are seeking engagement in the regional actions.~~

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- In 2015 the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals – known as SDGs - and 169 targets. The SDGs are a new reference point for developing as well as developed countries, and are expected to

stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

- All three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection – need ICTs as key catalysts. ICTs can facilitate the attainment of the SDGs as the spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies.
- Now, it is up to us to ensure that our words and commitments are translated into activities, projects, initiatives that will help advance the global agenda while continuing to build the information and communication society.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

- Taking into account the recently adopted Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, ITU Member States recently agreed that the upcoming World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) – to be held from 9 to 20 October 2017 in Argentina – be organized under the overall theme *ICT@SDGs*. It will be the first ever conference to discuss this topic at the international level, therefore your involvement is instrumental.
- Participating in the preparatory process for WTDC-17 will give you an opportunity to contribute to the decisions related to ICT policy issues and socio-economic development and set the path for the identification of new regional initiatives for Europe.
- I therefore invite you to contribute to the preparatory process towards WTDC-17. This will kick off tomorrow at our brainstorming session leading towards the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Europe to be held from 27-28 April 2017, in Vilnius, Lithuania and later WTDC-17 itself.
- It goes without saying that the identification of regional priorities and later on the implementation of regional initiatives require a true multi-stakeholder approach led by the governments of the region.
- We in the Telecommunication Development Bureau will continue to extend our hands to all the stakeholders in the region and outside the region.

### **Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- Before closing let me seize this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Chairman of Com-ITU of CEPT, Mr. Manuel da Costa Cabral for the support and close cooperation with ITU and congratulate Mr. Paulius Vaina, who was recently appointed by CEPT as the coordinator of the WTDC project team at Com-ITU. Please let me also welcome Mr Goran Svilanović, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Ms Fiona McCluney, UN Resident Coordinator.
- Our goal is continue to strengthen our cooperation to serve the people of the European region.
- I look forward to very fruitful discussions during this two days of the RDF.
- I thank you.