

Closing plenary of the TSAG

Virtual event

25 September 2020

Remarks

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Mr. Chairman,
TSB Director,
Dear friends,

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening to all of you.

After a failed attempt to join my elected colleagues in delivering opening remarks on Monday, it is my great pleasure to address you today at this closing plenary of the TSAG meeting as we approach the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly.

As you know, ITU's Radiocommunication and Standardization sectors have many things in common. In the core of our work lies the concept of collaboration. We provide the platform for ICT experts and stakeholders, from administrations, industry, academia, and from other standardization bodies to come together and develop international regulations and standards.

Regarding international regulations, a remarkable example that illustrates the concept of collaboration is the World Radiocommunication Conference. At WRC-19, over 3'400 people representing 163 Member States and 129 observer organizations contributed to the success of the Conference. They provided contributions and took consensus-based decisions that enable new technological developments.

I take this opportunity to inform you that 2020 Edition of the Radio Regulations is now available for download from the ITU website. This publication incorporates the decisions of WRC-19 to the international treaty that governs the use of spectrum and satellite orbits.

Regarding international standards, it is the role of the ITU-R and ITU-T study groups to develop such standards. They are defining elements in the global infrastructure of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the ITU has put in place online platforms for remote participation to ensure the continuity of ITU study group meetings. On the upside, we have observed a 100% increase in participation in ITU-R meetings, and I am sure it is also the case in ITU-T meetings. People that would otherwise not have been able to come to physical meetings, can now take part in the virtual discussions. Of course, on the downside, are the technical challenges that we are striving to overcome.

In addition, urgent action is needed to improve gender balance in the ITU. This has been acknowledged by both the ITU-R and ITU-T Sectors, and we are now committed to provide training and all the necessary support to increase the participation and leadership of women in ITU meetings.

Now, more than ever, the Advisory Groups of these two sectors are key in defining processes and working methods that will ensure that the work of the ITU study groups is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Moving into the application of the international framework, I would like to point out the development of regulations and standards for IMT-2020, or 5G systems.

WRC-19 was an important milestone for the development of 5G systems. By modifying the international regulations, it identified additional frequencies for IMT in the millimeter wave bands. In addition, the ITU-R and ITU-T, in collaboration with other standardization and evaluation bodies, developed international standards required for the provision and expansion of 5G services.

The ITU-T has approved several Recommendations on IMT-2020, on aspects that include network architecture, network management and the fixed mobile convergence. And the ITU-R is finalizing the technical specifications for the terrestrial radio interface technologies of IMT 2020. I am confident that this recommendation will be concluded by November.

Dear Colleagues,

As you have noticed, the deployment of new technologies may also raise concerns with regards to the electromagnetic radiation. We have heard lately about movements against the roll-out of 5G networks. Thus, a clear guidance on measurement and assessment of human exposure to electromagnetic fields will be vital for the expansion of emerging ICT technologies.

Looking into the future, the circular economy is becoming the “new normal”. Businesses need to innovate and adapt to a market that demands more eco-friendly products. While governments are expected to promote public policies that foster resource-efficiency, reuse of products, and sustainable practices. The ICT sector is directly responsible for counteracting the rapid obsolescence of ICT products and the generation of e-waste. It is our task to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production.

Finally, in preparation for WTSA, I note the demand of Regional groups that call upon the cooperation and coordination of the ITU-T with the other Sectors and the General Secretariat. Whether on the development of guidelines for virtual meetings and remote participation or holding joint meetings of the Advisory Groups of the three Sectors.

And as the Director of the Radiocommunications Bureau, I reassure you, that the BR is ready to continue working with the TSB to deliver the best outcomes to you, our Members.

Thank you very much.