

8th MENA Spectrum Management Conference

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Pre-recorded video Opening Remarks

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address the 8th MENA Spectrum Management Conference in Manama.

This conference serves as a platform for discussing key spectrum topics, fostering collaboration, and shaping the future of connectivity in the MENA region and beyond.

The MENA region is experiencing rapid digital transformation and a surge in the development of new technologies. These advancements rely on efficient spectrum management and the global harmonization of spectrum resources and technical standards.

The ITU addresses these needs through two parallel work streams: the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) process and the standardization process.

Together, these processes enable the ITU to create a stable and up-to-date regulatory framework that fosters innovations and future technological advancements.

The first stream is the WRC process. It is driven by Member States and culminates in the revision of the Radio Regulations, the international treaty that governs the use of radiofrequency spectrum and satellite orbits. It aims to ensure the rational, equitable, efficient and economical use of these resources, while addressing the spectrum need of diverse radiocommunication services

and administrations worldwide, enabling seamless global connectivity and innovation.

Effective spectrum management is essential to ensure that all users, whether for satellite or terrestrial communications, with emerging technologies, can operate without harmful interference.

We are currently in the second year of the 2023-2027 study cycle and ITU-R Study Groups are defining technical and operational characteristics for satellite and terrestrial services, carrying out sharing and compatibility studies, and developing the basis for WRC-27 decisions.

Some of the key agenda items for WRC-27 include the following:

- WRC-27 Agenda Item 1.7 considers the identification of the 4.5 GHz, 7 GHz, and 15 GHz bands for IMT. These bands are adjacent to those identified in previous conferences for IMT, reflecting the need for contiguous spectrum blocks to meet mobile communication demands. Interesting discussions refer to what is being called “reverse studies”, which address possible interference from existing services into IMT.
- Agenda Item 1.13 considers possible new allocations to the mobile satellite service in the bands currently identified for IMT between 700 MHz and 2.7 GHz for direct connectivity between space stations and IMT user equipment. Also referred to as Direct-to-Device, this can provide mobile connectivity to rural or remote areas, expanding coverage and increasing network resilience during natural disasters. Discussions in the ITU-R Study Groups are also considering the protection of terrestrial base stations and user equipment.
- WRC-27 will also consider future communications on the lunar surface and between the lunar orbit and the lunar surface under Agenda Item 1.15. This agenda item is a foundational element in shaping the future of space exploration and the global communication network extending beyond the Earth.

The second stream I have mentioned is the standardization process. It is industry-driven and relies on contributions from ITU Members, Academia, and other Standardization Bodies to develop international standards and

specifications. Currently, the ITU is working on the development of international technology standards for terrestrial and satellite components of IMT.

For the terrestrial component of IMT-2030, or 6G, the ITU has completed the initial phase of the process and is now defining relevant requirements and evaluation criteria for the radio interference technologies.

The three main outputs produced thus far were as follows:

- The Report on Future Technology Trends, which provides a broad view of future technical aspects of terrestrial IMT systems considering the timeframe up to 2030 and beyond.
- The Report on Feasibility of IMT above 100 GHz, which indicates that utilizing the bands above 92 GHz is feasible for the studied IMT deployment scenarios and could be considered for IMT-2030.
- The Recommendation on the Framework for IMT-2030, which describes the overall objectives and use cases for 6G technologies.

Regarding the satellite component of IMT, the ITU is developing a Recommendation with detailed specifications for the IMT-2020 satellite component and is conducting studies on the future development of the IMT-2030 component.

Dear friends,

Countries in the MENA region have been at the forefront of spectrum-related matters and global harmonization.

Egypt and the United Arab Emirates hosted the last two World Radiocommunication Conferences in 2019 and 2023, respectively, demonstrating the MENA region's strong commitment to global spectrum management.

Saudi Arabia has partnered with the ITU to deliver the Series Connecting the World from the Skies.

Qatar and Oman contribute to international spectrum monitoring systems that allow the ITU to detect and address cases of harmful interference, ensuring services comply with ITU Radio Regulations.

I am pleased to share that ITU is celebrating its 160th anniversary in May 2025. We call on all MENA countries to join this celebration and to help us seize this moment to shape a better digital future for all, connect the unconnected, fast-track sustainable digital development, and empower people to use digital technologies to drive meaningful change.

For those companies that are not yet part of the ITU, join us and become part of a community of 194 member states, 170 academia members, and over 1000 private sector organizations!

The MENA region has made significant strides in technological advancement. Effective spectrum management is key to unlocking its full potential. I am confident that this conference will foster productive discussions and valuable outcomes.

Thank you!