

Launch of the First Set of ATU Spectrum Recommendations

Virtual event

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Opening Remarks

Mario Maniewicz
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Excellency, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication of Cameroon
Excellency, African Union Commissioner
Chairman of ATU's first preparatory meeting for WRC-23
Secretary General of the African Telecommunication Union
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address you today, at the official launch of the first set of the African Telecommunication Union's Spectrum Recommendations.

I salute the ATU for the fulfillment of Africa's longstanding aspiration to develop regional recommendations and move towards harmonized telecommunications and ICT policies and regulatory frameworks.

The launch of this set of recommendations is a demonstration of the successful coordination carried out by the African Telecommunication Union. And it shows what can be achieved when African countries collaborate and unify their positions.

The work on connecting the unconnected has become essential not only for economic reasons, but also for public health. Throughout this pandemic situation, those that were connected, were able to access online services, and ensure the continuity of education and business. While those that did not have access to broadband connections, the other half of the world's population, were deprived

from working remotely and reducing their exposure to the virus. Thus, the importance of the work you have conducted.

Dear colleagues,

For over a century the International Telecommunication Union has reviewed and revised the Radio Regulations, the international treaty that governs the global use of radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite orbits.

The ITU also develops international standards that ensure radiocommunication services adhere to minimum technical requirements and operate without interference.

Implementing these regulations and standards at regional and national levels is critical to building robust digital ecosystems that promote access to next generation technologies.

Though the Radiocommunication Bureau and the ITU-R Study Groups were not directly involved in the development of this first set of ATU spectrum recommendations, we know that these recommendations were inspired by the ITU regulations and standards. And we trust that they will aid African administrations in fulfilling their international obligations under the Radio Regulations.

Dear Friends,

This first set of recommendations is surely an important step towards expanding broadband connectivity and implementing the digital transformation strategy of the African Union.

But to reduce the digital divide in Africa and achieve rural connectivity and universal access, we need to use all the means we have at hand and all technologies available – whether wired or wireless, fixed or mobile, terrestrial or satellite.

Therefore, while these first recommendations focus mostly on mobile broadband services, I am confident that the sets of recommendations that will follow will address the various communication platforms that provide broadband services. This will help address ATU's strategic plan and will facilitate the comparison of the economic aspects of different technology options for the provision of broadband connectivity, particularly in rural and historically underserved areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

ITU-R Study Group and Working Party meetings are being held virtually and the work continues apace. I reiterate my encouragement for African experts to actively participate in the ITU-R meetings.

As you know, remote participation has removed the costs incurred in coming to Geneva and offer a unique opportunity for all members to participate in our meetings. So far, we have seen a 100% increase in participants in virtual meetings as compared to physical meetings.

Since we have with us today the Minister of Posts and Telecommunication of Cameroon and the Chairman of ATU's first preparatory meeting for WRC-23, let me acknowledge the work that has been done under the auspices of the ATU.

Indeed, it is excellent to see that, despite the difficulties of this period of a global health crisis, ATU continues to progress steadily on the preparation of the region for WRC-23. We will soon have the exact dates and place of the WRC-23, which will be held according to plan.

Mr. Secretary General,

I could not end this speech without recognizing the successful collaboration of ITU's Radiocommunication Bureau with the African Telecommunications Union.

A recent example of it is the implementation of WRC-19 Resolution 559. We were very pleased to be able to assist the African region in this one-time opportunity for countries having degraded resources in the Broadcasting Satellite Service plan to regain a better reference situation. This work resulted in 45 countries of the region submitting their filings on time.

The BR is also delighted to collaborate with the ATU on the optimization of the GE84 Plan for African countries that aims at increasing the number of available channels for FM stations in the continent.

As you can see, we have worked very closely in the past, and we will be more than happy to continue our fruitful collaboration in the future. I reassure you that the Radiocommunications Bureau of the ITU is committed to support you in all radiocommunication related matters that would benefit the African countries.

I encourage the ATU to continue its good work on the development of regional spectrum recommendations and on the achievement of Africa's strategic objectives.

Thank you very much.