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WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION ASSEMBLY

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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>> PATRICIA BENOIT: Ladies and gentlemen, may I ask you to start taking your seats. We're going to begin the opening of WTSA in a few moments. If you can please use your headsets when the meeting begins. Today we have interpretation in all six languages of the United Nations: English on channel 1, French, channel 2, Spanish channel 3, Russian channel 4, Chinese channel 5, and Arabic on Channel 6.

Should you require assistance with the use of the Internet in this room, please call upon the staff wearing a blue cap, and they will be happy to sort out your problems. For any other issues, please do not hesitate to call upon the staff of the ITU.

This evening, all Delegates have been graciously invited by our hosts to a dinner at Jumeirah Beach Hotel. Transport will be available as of 18:30 at the main entrance, which is on your right. That is the entrance at the registration area.

Thank you. The conference will begin in a few minutes.

Excellencies, elected officials, Honorable guests, it is my great honor to welcome you all to the city of Dubai and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2012. To begin the proceedings today I have the very great pleasure of inviting His Excellency, Mr. Mohamed Al Ghanim, Director General of the telecommunications authority of the United Arab Emirates to make a speech of welcome. Mr. Al Ghanim, please.

[ Applause ]

>> MOHAMED AL GHANIM: In the name of God the merciful, the beneficent, I'm delivering the speech on behalf of the head of the Board of Directors of the TRA. It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the United Arab Emirates and also the TRA in the WTSA 2012 that's being held in the Emirate from the 20th to the 29th of November, for the first time in the Middle East and after four years of holding this WTSA in South Africa. At the outset, I'd like to thank the ITU and His Excellency Hamadoun Touré, the Secretary‑General, and the Member States for the confidence given to us to host one of the most important activities of the ITU and we always hope that they are at the utmost and upper level.

Ladies and gentlemen, the UAE is very proud to host this important event that expresses the role and place of the UAE at the regional level, and the global level, and reflects the importance given by the Government and the leadership of this country for this field, having understood the importance of ICTs in development.

The great initiatives taken by the State, the truest effort to build a country based on ICTs, and there are many examples that we can give, but I would like to say the infrastructure of ICTs, which are very modern and that are able to absorb all the changes and developments that can be witnessed by the ICT Sector which led in the end to creating or transforming our ICTs to the next generation in all facility.

The great developments requires that we be always ready to intervene at the appropriate time by coming up with recommendations that have to do with operational activities, and to put flexible basis to help all Member States to achieve compatibility and to achieve balance development.

On the other hand, our meeting today is specifically important because of the nature of the world's stage which requires that we give priority to policies and to face challenges and to overcome the financial crises that have hit the global market, especially since the ICT has entered into every field and activity of daily life.

And here I call upon everybody to undertake sincere efforts and to work with ITU in order to overcome all the challenges that might hinder creating a world in which prevails prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen, the WTSA of 2012 is the third step of a series of events that are organised by the ITU in collaboration with the UAE, and I wish this event all success in managing the obstacles that the Secretary might face, and changing these obstacles into incentives for development. And I am hopeful that this event will be a turning point and change in the path of the ICTs, a means by which people can enter into communication, thanks to the decisions that will be taken by this meeting.

I welcome you once again to the UAE, and God willing, we will be able to give you all the logistic help. And thank you. May God bless you.

[ Applause ]

>> PATRICIA BENOIT: Thank you, Chairperson. Secretary‑General of the International Telecommunication Union Dr. Hamadoun Touré to make his opening remarks to the Assembly. Dr. Touré, please.

[ Applause ]

>> HAMADOUN TOURÉ: Excellencies, Ministers, Chairman of TRA, members of Board of TRA, my good friend Mr. Mohamed Al Ghanim, Ambassadors, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the extraordinary city of Dubai for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2012. Dubai is one of the most modern cities in the world, a city which has risen from the sands of the Persian Gulf to become a magnificent symbol of Emirati culture and progress.

It has transformed itself into one of the Middle East's most important economic centers and one of the greatest symbols of human achievement in the modern world. Through visionary leadership and investment in high‑quality infrastructure, Dubai is the center of the region that has committed to harnessing the power and the use of Information and Communication technology in all facets of its development and vision for the future.

The United Arab Emirates is a great working example of the true power of ICTs for economic growth, social development, and modernization in the 21st century. ICTs have become a driving force for growth in the United Arab Emirates and it is a fundamental component used in creating employment, in attracting skilled labor into the region, and in transforming public services by increasingly taking advantage of new technologies.

We at ITU are proud to hold this World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly here in Dubai. This is the second of the series of large conferences we are holding here after a very successful ITU Telecom World 2012 here in Dubai, and of course, following ‑‑ followed next month by the World Conference on International Telecommunication Regulations.

And I would like to thank the Telecommunication Regulation Authority for the wonderful facilities and excellent support and efficient staff that has been provided to us.

Ladies and gentlemen, the ICT Sector is characterized by its fast‑paced nature, innovation, competition, collaboration, and dynamic change. And we all know that standards are at the heart of all ICTs. The mandate of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly which gathers every four years is set forth in Article 18 of the ITU Constitution.

This includes bearing in mind the particular needs of all its members, to fulfill the purposes of ITU relating to Telecommunication Standardization. This is achieved by studying technical, operating and tariff questions and adopting recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

Since the most recent WTSA held in Johannesburg in 2008, tremendous strides have been made towards the further development of the Information Society as we know it today. We have seen mobile telephony become almost ubiquitous, with over 6 billion mobile cellular subscriptions worldwide, and well over 100 countries today now have mobile penetration rates over 100%.

The next big challenge is clearly to replicate the mobile miracle for broadband, to ensure that all the world's people have affordable and equitable access to Advanced Communications systems.

This is why, ladies and gentlemen, ITU and UNESCO set up the broadband Commission for Digital Development to advocate for increased global broadband infrastructure rollout and access, and to help accelerate progress toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the key outcomes and procedures that have been implemented since WTSA 2008 have continued to reinforce the architecture of standards and regulations that underpin the world's communications networks.

As a result, ITU continues to be the leading global standardization body. 500 million customers around the world are now connected using broadband equipment based on the work of ITU's standardization Sector. And 95% of all international traffic runs over optical fiber, the standards for which are based the ITU's work.

Over the past four years, ITU has also strengthened its resolve to bridge the standardization gap. Ladies and gentlemen, standardization and interoperability are at the core of information communication technologies today. They are essential to ensure that the host of different devices, communication networks and protocols can communicate and work in parallel to deliver services to end users with reliability, affordability, and without delay no matter their circumstances.

In this regard, from a technical perspective, ITU has been the driving force pushing forward the frontiers of the future of ICT. These new frontiers of ICT include cloud computing, the Internet of Things, intelligent transport systems, the transition to IPv6, advanced multimedia and Internet Protocol TV, IPTV, taking into account the most important issues of our time: Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

Along with other technical institutions ITU's technical standardization work is helping to realize the vision of a fully networked society, as users expect to be able to access high‑speed services any time, anywhere, and over any device. Standards are also essential for international communications and global trade. Global Standards avoid costly market battles over preferred technologies, and for companies from emerging markets, they create a level playing field, providing equal access to markets for all.

They are also fundamental in assisting developing countries in rolling out infrastructure, and encouraging greater levels of social and Economic Development. And I'm very pleased to see so many developing countries joining this event, and yesterday's Symposium was another big step in moving us closer, and developing countries working hand in hand in the standardization Sector.

Standards can also reduce costs for manufacturers, operators and consumers through economies of scale. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, ITU has remained the leading Global Standards body for telecommunications, and now ICTs for over a century. To have maintained the level of credibility and importance that ITU has achieved over so many decades is an incredible feat. The challenge is to ensure that it remains this way.

I am confident that the decisions and the resolutions formulated at WTSA 2012 will be directed by the needs of the global community and steered by ITU's vision to connect the world.

I would like to welcome all participants here present today, including public and private sectors. We have a record participation to this Assembly, which signifies your commitment to work together, continuing the ITU spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and consensus.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a very successful Assembly. Thank you very much.

[ Applause ]

>> PATRICIA BENOIT: Thank you, Dr. Touré. The formalities of the inaugural ceremony have come to a close, and in a few moments, it will be the work of everyone in this room over the next two weeks to achieve the goals of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly.

I would now like to ask Dr. Hamadoun Touré to take the floor once again, and to begin the first Plenary session of WTSA 2012.

[ End of Opening Ceremony ]

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