**ITU Global Symposium for Regulators 2017**

**12 July 2017**

**Nassau, Bahamas**

**WELCOME REMARKS**

**By**

**Mr. Brahima Sanou**

**Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)**

**International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

Dr The Honourable Hubert A. Minnis, Prime Minister, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas;

All other high dignitaries of the Bahamas here present

M. Houlin Zhao Secretary General of ITU

Mr Randol Dorsett, Chairman, Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA);

Chairmen, Commissioners and CEOs of Regulatory Bodies,

Representatives of ITU-D Sector Members

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is a great pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the Global Symposium for Regulators, 2017.

I would like to echo the words of the Secretary-General in congratulating you for the celebration of your 44th independence day thanking you Mr. Prime Minister, the Government and the people of Bahamas for the very warm hospitality extended to all of us as well as the excellent facilities put at our disposal.

The Global Symposium presents us with an opportunity to continue – as we have done since the year 2000 - the dynamic global dialogue among regulators, policy-makers, industry leaders and other key ICT stakeholders.

The theme for GSR-17 is: “Living in a World of Digital Opportunities”, and it is more important today than ever to address such opportunities, and what we can do to foster the enabling environment to help people achieve such opportunities.

Today, we are very well aware that ICTs cut across each and every sector through e-education, e-health, e-agriculture, e-banking, smart cities and smart countries and we need to embrace emerging technologies such as Big data, open data, cloud computing Internet of Things and artificial intelligence to tap into the huge opportunities offered by ICT for achieving sustainable development.

**Ladies & Gentlemen;**

As the international community has embarked on the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, our actions need to go beyond the ICT sector to take into account the ICT ecosystem. A new ecosystem where ICTs are about streamlining Government processes, bringing education and health to the people in need in order to create national cohesion, inclusiveness and economic growth.

We are at a turning point of our sector and all stakeholders, governments, regulators, ICT service providers, academia, research community, consumers and civil society need to change the way they interact with each other in order to create this new enabling ecosystem. The GSR is a dedicated platform for such inclusive dialogue.

**Mr. Prime Minister**

I am happy to report that the activities GSR-17 started very well with the pre-events.

Yesterday we held the The Global Dialogue on Digital Financial Inclusion where we addressed the protection of e-transactions and explored the transformative impact of emerging technologies such as Block chain and Artificial intelligence.

This morning, the Regional Regulatory Associations Meeting (RA) addressed affordable access to ICTs, and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers Meeting continued its invaluable work on Digital Financial Services and discussed how the private sector can help create the enabling environment for investment and innovation to create digital opportunities for all.

The pre-events were a great success and I would like to thank all the participants for the lively discussions and their invaluable contributions.

Before concluding I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate our invitation to you to attend the World Telecommunication Development Conference that will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 9 to 20 October 2017 under the theme of ICT④SDGs. We will also celebrate the 25th anniversary on the ITU Telecommunication Development sector.

**Mr. Prime Minister,**

Your presence here today is a clear testimony of your strong commitment on using ICTs for development. I am also aware of your vision to make the Bahamas a smart island.

With such vision and commitment, GSR-17 can only be a great success under your blessing.

I thank you very much