

WSIS Forum 2016
ICT Applications and Services

Dear Excellent, **Mr Houlin Zhao,** (Secretary-General, ITU)

Dear Excellent, **Chairman: Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda,** (Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, United States of America)

Dear Excellent, **Ambassadors**

Dear participants,

I would like to take the opportunity, in the framework of the world summit on the Information Society Forum 2016 to present an overview of the situation and the steps being taken by the Albanian government, towards the development of an ICT Applications and Services.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a specific role in the development of a competitive economy based on knowledge and innovation. The development of ICT Applications and Services is a crucial element in the provision of healthcare services, education, government, business and trade to achieve sustainable economic and social growth.

The program views the ICT and e-services development as closely related to the economic and social development of the country. The government program has determined that the government will work on three main directions by setting out measurable objectives:

- **First,** in adding and promoting electronic services for citizens, businesses and administration. Increase of transparency and improvement of public administration services according to the Open Government Partnership initiative will remain a priority.
- **Second,** in using the ICT for the purposes of education in order to transcend the digital gap and to empower the youth. Policies will be oriented toward the improvement and expansion of human capacities in order to increase the number of consumers and to promote the development of e-service providers. Thus, the creation of youth jobs who can be employed in the Albanian and regional market and beyond that, will be encouraged.
- **Third,** in consolidating the digital infrastructure in the whole territory of the Republic of Albania, by strictly respecting the European principles of free and honest competition.

In recent years Albania has made considerable progress in developing ICT Applications and providing ICT services to subscribers of these networks. In this context the investments which amount to 345,595,726 ALL are focused on electronic systems integration within Interoperability Platform (Government Gateway) and the publishing of new online services in the governmental portal, e-albania.al. Up to now 37 institutions are connected to the governmental interoperability platform and exchange data in real time and by the end of 2016 it is expected that this number will be increased up to 42 institutions. This connection enables communication and data exchange between different institutions by creating the possibility of providing more electronic services for citizens, businesses and the government employees itself.

During December 2015 a new project “for adding 209 new e-services for 18 institutions in the e-Albania portal, according to the agreement made with the beneficiary institutions (Phase 1)” has started. The project, which amounts to 364 320 000 ALL is expected to be completed after 18 months. It aims to reduce the time for citizens and businesses in receiving the governmental services by reducing the manual work with papers (paperless) for all the involved institutions.

ICT are seen as a tool that changes the everyday life, transforms the work organization, changes the existing markets by creating new opportunities and businesses, changes participation, cooperation and interaction models with the Public Administration, for an open and transparent governance.

Over the past decade, millions of people around the world have installed broadband in their families, allowing them to download the information and use of sophisticated digital services. Access to Internet broadband is an essential component and families without access to this service are in danger of becoming marginalized by society and economic opportunity. The broadband access has grown in both its segments: from fixed and mobile networks.

During 2015, the electronic communications market has increased in terms of the use of mobile networks services and broadband Internet access. With the liberalization of the telecommunications market and after the privatization of the state owned companies, the development of ICT infrastructure was seen as closely related to private investments and stimulation of policies for private investments.

During the period of 2008-2015, a series of laws were drafted and adopted. The Albanian government has approved a number of laws and strategic documents, especially the:

- Law "On Electronic Communications";
- Law "On Electronic Signature"
- Law "On electronic document",

- Legislation "cybercrime",
- Digital Agenda of Albania 2015-2020,
- National Plan for the Development of Broadband,
- National Strategy for ICT development in Albania,

The Albanian legislation in force related to the electronic communications, information society and press, intends to:

- Eliminate the obstacles for the efficient functioning of the internal market in the networks and services of electronic communications;
- Promote competition in the internal market;
- Protect the consumer, etc...

Currently, there is a rich legal framework that directly and indirectly regulates ICT and information society. However, the amendment and improvement of ICT, e-governance and information society legislation is necessary in order to respond to the dynamic development of this field and the establishment of a single digital market integrated with that of the EU and beyond;

In the framework of the implementation of the Broadband National Plan 2013-2020, a few activities intending to fulfill the set objectives related to the regulatory and technical issues have been undertaken. These activities include the public consultations by AEPC related to the spectrum issue, the national conference on the broadband development by emphasizing the close public-private cooperation and the need for investments, the establishment of the Regional Development Fund to support the projects of rural and regional infrastructure development, ICT, e-governance, e-learning, etc...

To conclude, I can say that ICT Applications and Services are the future and a big challenge is awaiting us. Let's all get down to work to enable ICT to support sustainable development of our economy.

Albania Government is ready to be part of any initiative which requires coordination with Region and ITU as the leader of these processes.

Wishing this Forum success and thanks for the excellent organization.

Thank you for your attention