

6th Sub-Sahara Spectrum Management Conference

Online event

Opening Remarks

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Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to all participants.

I would like to start by thanking Dan and Forum Global for the invitation.

I would also like to recognize Mr. John Omo, Secretary General of the African Telecommunication Union, who is a friend and a great partner in the main activities we jointly carry out to assist our members in the African continent.

Dear friends,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you today.

This event comes in a time when we talk about digital as default. About digital transformation of our societies and economies. And about a fully connected society. But for this to become a reality, broadband connectivity needs to be made accessible to all, even in the most remote areas.

The ITU is working towards enabling the development of new radiocommunication technologies and the provision of services and applications that can expand broadband connectivity, for all people, wherever they live, and whatever their means.

In previous world radiocommunication conferences, the ITU identified globally harmonized spectrum for IMT that can be integrated in the national table of frequency allocation and used to expand mobile broadband coverage.

Moreover, the last Conference adopted decisions that support the deployment of other innovative systems, such as large satellite constellations and high-altitude platforms.

A combination of solutions could meet the urgent demand for coverage, especially in suburban, rural, and remote areas.

During the next days, this event will discuss topics in the agenda of the next WRC-23. It will also discuss the implications of a possible IMT identification in the UHF band, C-band and 6 GHz band. As well as the current decision of some Administrations to use the 6 GHz band to expand broadband connectivity using Wi-Fi.

Society's increasing need for of radio-based technologies and the tremendous opportunities for social development that these technologies provide, have elevated the importance of the radio-frequency spectrum and of national spectrum management. The increase in demand also calls for the management and coordination of spectrum policies across the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau, I have witnessed in the past years the great advancements of the African Region in terms of managing spectrum and orbital resources.

Under the auspices of the African Telecommunications Union, Africa has developed a set of regional spectrum recommendations. Thus, fulfilling a longstanding wish of African countries to build a more harmonized ICT market.

I recognize this initiative and highlight the importance of incorporating the international regulations and standards that our stakeholders jointly develop in ITU-R into the regional and national regulatory frameworks.

Towards this end, as I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, the ITU has joined efforts with the African region on several occasions.

During the last two weeks, the ITU held the Regional Radiocommunication Seminar for Africa. The first part of the Seminar focused on use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, and had a special emphasis on the application of the provisions of the Radio Regulations. The second part consisted of a Forum to discuss opportunities and challenges that new radiocommunication trends bring to the African Region.

Earlier on, during the first quarter of the year, the ITU participated in the Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa, PRIDA. We delivered a workshop on software and tools developed by the Radiocommunications Bureau to ease the navigation and analysis of regulatory and technical texts.

The RR5 Table of Frequency allocations Software and the Radio Regulations Navigation Tool allows African countries to extract their National Table of Frequency Allocations, based on the provisions of the Article 5 of the Radio Regulations. This facilitates the incorporation of the international regulations into the national framework after each World Radiocommunications Conference.

On another front, the ITU and the African Telecommunications Union are advancing the optimization of the GE84 Plan for African countries. The project aims to achieve an efficient and equitable use of the FM band for analogue sound broadcasting and to identify new frequencies to FM broadcasting. More than 45 African countries participated in our last meeting in the end of June.

Finally, during WRC-19, the ATU put considerable efforts to ensure a successful resolution of agenda item 1.4. The adoption of Resolution 559 offered a one-time opportunity for countries having degraded resources in the BSS Plan to regain a better reference situation. I commend the in-depth involvement of African countries in applying this Resolution. This is notably demonstrated by the fact that all eligible African countries submitted a request for application of the special procedure contained in this Resolution.

As far as the Bureau is concerned, I carefully follow the implementation of this Resolution and I am making sure that the Bureau provides all possible assistance to requesting Administrations. I am glad to note that coordination agreements enabling the successful application of the procedure of Resolution 559 have started to be exchanged. WRC-23 will soon be able to decide on the final inclusion of Resolution 559 submissions in the BSS Plan.

Dear friends,

As you can see, Africa is making considerable advancements in developing both terrestrial and satellite communications. In the ITU we are eager to support you in this path. Closing the digital divide and enabling broadband connectivity everywhere for everyone is a common goal, and you can count on us to achieve it.

Thank you very much.