

2nd series of GE84 Plan optimization for Africa Workshop

Virtual event

19 April 2021 (11h00- GVA time)

Opening Remarks

Mario Maniewicz
Director, Radiocommunication Bureau

Mr. John OMO, Secretary General of ATU,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you today and open our 2nd series of GE84 Plan optimization Workshop. I welcome all African countries as well as the countries outside Africa joining us for the 1st time.

Radio waves do not recognize country borders, and this phenomenon triggers the need for discussions and coordination with neighbouring countries. Our common goal is to ensure interference free operation of radiocommunication stations, to enable new FM frequency channels while protecting the existing and operating ones.

As you certainly know, the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau in collaboration with the African Telecommunications Union launched the optimization of the GE84 Plan for African countries in East London - South Africa, back in July 2019. The project aims to achieve an efficient and equitable use of the 87.5-108 MHz (FM) band for analogue sound broadcasting and to identify new FM broadcasting frequencies for African countries.

The ultimate objective is to meet the increasing needs for additional frequencies in African countries for sound radio, to be used for analogue or digital radio. Indeed, FM radio remains one of the most important media in Africa, for educational, informational and entertainment purposes.

In this framework, several workshops have been organized in 2020 and beginning of 2021, preceding the 1st frequency coordination meeting that took place in February 2021. This meeting was very successful gathering more than 200 participants from 46 administrations. It agreed on the coordination criteria and main future steps, including a very important aspect, which is the invitation of non-African neighbouring countries to the 2nd and 3rd frequency coordination meetings.

A similar approach was used in the past for African and Arab countries concerning GE06 replanning, which proved that these discussions and coordination platforms involving neighbouring countries are essential to protect all parties' interests.

I am very happy to see today such a high number of participants and countries joining this workshop in preparation to the coming coordination meetings. It once again shows the level of interest and awareness and the cooperation spirit that always prevails in ITU events.

Dear friends,

During these 3 days' workshop, presentations and practical sessions will be provided by BR experts to introduce you to the main lines of the project and to enable you to master the relevant BR software. This workshop may also be a first opportunity to start discussions between African and non-Africa countries, in preparation of the future coordination meetings, with the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that always prevails in our meetings.

I remain personally at your disposal, as well as all BR staff and experts, who are available to support and guide you all along the entire process.

I look forward to seeing you at future physical meetings!

Thank you very much.