6th Asia-Pacific Spectrum Management Conference

Virtual event

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Opening Remarks

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Mrs Areewan Haorangsi, Secretary General of the APT,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is a pleasure to be opening the 6th Asia Pacific Spectrum Management Conference today as we move into a new study cycle of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector. This event will provide a strategic assessment of where the Region stands and where it wants to go in terms of spectrum management and spectrum policies.

As you know, at the end of 2019, the last World Radiocommunication Conference brought together over 3'400 participants representing 163 Member States and 129 observer organizations. The decisions taken at WRC-19 will allow for new technologies and services to be deployed around the world, while protecting existing services.

One of the main outcomes of WRC-19 was the identification of additional frequencies for IMT, or 5G as it is popularly known, in the millimeter wave bands. And it is no surprise that APT was a protagonist in achieving these results. Over 120 operators around the world, many of which come from the Asia-Pacific region, have deployed 5G networks. Korea, China and Thailand will share with us how they are leading the way in the roll out of 5G networks.

However, as you know, the region has also a large sub-region composed by small and scattered islands where the deployment of 5G in millimeter wave bands may not be a priority. These nations consist of hundreds of islands, spread across an area equivalent to 15% of the earth's surface. Due to their geographical circumstances, they currently rely heavily on satellite connectivity, particularly in the C-band, as well as on connectivity via submarine cables. And they struggle to connect their smaller islands to and via the major island due to network deployment costs and the lack of viable business cases.

Taking these issues into account, WRC-19 defined a framework for regulating large constellations of non-geostationary orbit satellites and identified additional bands for high altitude platforms that promise to extend internet coverage to the most remote areas of the globe taking connectivity to the unconnected. Moreover, WRC-19 has modified the conditions applied to RLANs in the 5GHz band that should enable even greater utilization of the technology.

Looking ahead to the WRC-23, there are several agenda items of interest to the Region.

From the modernization of Global Maritime and Distress and Safety Systems (GMDSS) and the implementation of e-navigation, to the use of High Altitude Platform stations as IMT Base Stations (HIBS); and from the possible identification of additional mid-range frequency bands for IMT or the revision of the country footnote in the 4.9 GHz band, to addressing the spectrum needs of Sub-Orbital Vehicles. We will be hearing your perspectives on some of these topics on the days ahead.

If we now move from the global arena and look more closely into the Regional situation, we can observe that the Asia-Pacific region is a quite heterogeneous one.

Indeed, according to the ITU Report Facts and Figures, in the Asia-Pacific region less than half of the population (to be more precise 48.4 percent), is connected to the Internet. This is an average that includes countries with the highest

proportion of people using the internet worldwide as well as countries that, along with Africa, have the lowest proportions of connected people.

The statistics show that further work is required to ensure no country and no one is left behind.

To leverage the benefits of global and regional harmonization, National Administrations need to incorporate the international regulations to their national framework and utilize frequency bands allocated to the services that will best serve the interest of their population.

This includes, of course, assessing domestic requirements and utilizing spectrum allocated and, with respect to IMT, identified in previous conferences.

National Authorities need also to decide on their best means for frequency assignment and licensing (including making non-license allocations).

Each decision has a fundamental impact on the provision and adoption of telecommunication services.

We currently stand at the crossroads between an old reality and a new one that can be more inclusive and sustainable. The use of technology and connectivity can surely help build this new reality.

By providing broadband connectivity to all people, we can extend the benefits of advanced user applications, such as e-education and e-health services, to those living even in remote areas. And, by interconnecting things we may make it possible to build “greener” and “more intelligent” cities, and to improve the efficiency of industrial facilities.

I invite you to engage in the long-term cooperation among National Administrations, Regional and International organizations. It will help overcome the challenges of our times and leverage the opportunities that arise from the diversity and richness of the Asia-Pacific Region.

Thank you very much.