

Opening Remarks - John Visser, Chairman of the Forum

- Dr. José Rafael Vargas, President, INDOTEL
- Dr. Joelle Exarhakos Casasnovas, Executive Director, INDOTEL
- Dr. Juan Antonio Delgado, Council of Directors of INDOTEL
- Dr. Juan Zavattiero, Head, ITU Americas Regional Office
- Distinguished speakers and delegates
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon! It is an honour for me to it have been asked to be the Chairman of this ITU-D Regional Development Forum for the Americas Region here in the beautiful city of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. As you know, our subject is “Next Generation Networks and Broadband: Opportunities and Challenges.”

It is good to see the importance given to telecommunications here in the Dominican Republic. To echo Dr. Vargas’s remarks, telecommunications is a fundamental technology underpinning modern life. Where it is widely available, we cannot envisage being without it. Where it is just becoming available, we see incredible uptake. Where basic services are being supplemented by new data capabilities, we see an explosion of both applications and usage. People need to interact with each other. The telecommunications technologies and systems available today and becoming available tomorrow clearly fill a strong basic human need: to communicate with one another.

Over the next two and one half days, we will have many presentations from experts in the field. (I will also give a few presentations.) There will be plenty of opportunity for you to learn about what is happening in NGN and in Broadband. These two closely related topics are fundamental to the future of the information and computer telecommunications environment going forward. This Forum will give you insight into why we say this as well as the information on the technologies themselves. This Forum is also a key part of fulfilling one of the mandates of the ITU-Development Sector: to share information with you.

As just mentioned, this forum aims to make you aware of what is happening in the areas of NGN and Broadband. It is also intended to alert and stimulate you to take advantage of opportunities to become involved, and to provide you with a basis for further investigation in applying what you learn here to your specific work in your marketplace. Overall, we want to widen your horizons. To get the most value from these two and one half days, there is one thing you must do. You must take advantage of the presence of the experts here. Ask them questions. Engage them in conversation during coffee breaks. Take note of their contact information and engage them further after this forum.

We are in a location that is the envy of many. My colleagues are convinced that I am on vacation while I am here, and many of your colleagues may have the same view!

Let us be sure that we prove them both wrong and right. Let's work hard during the sessions and enjoy the rest of our time here!

Thank you!