



PLENARY MEETING

Document 7-E
11 October 2021
Original: English

Note by the Secretary-General

CANDIDACY FOR THE POST OF DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

Further to the information published in Document 3, I have the pleasure in transmitting to the Conference, in annex, the candidacy of:

Mr Tomas LAMANAUSKAS (Republic of Lithuania)

for the post of Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union.

Houlin ZHAO
Secretary-General

Annex: 1



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ
PRIE JUNGTINIŲ TAUTŲ BIURO
IR KITŲ TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ ŽENEVOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

No. (80.1.15.1)SN80-144

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and has the honour, with the reference to the Note Verbale No. (80.1.15.1)SN80-68 dated 7 May 2021, to confirm the decision of the Republic of Lithuania to nominate Mr Tomas Lamanauskas for the post of Deputy Secretary General of the ITU for the term 2023-2026 at the elections to be held during the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest, Romania on 26 September - 14 October 2022 and to submit requested documents.

Please find enclosed:

1. an electronic copy in Word format of Mr Lamanauskas' curriculum vitae;
2. a vision statement by Mr Lamanauskas in Word format;
3. a photo of Mr Lamanauskas in jpg format.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the International Telecommunication Union the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 11 October 2021

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Geneva



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ
PRIE JUNGTINIŲ TAUTŲ BIURO
IR KITŲ TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ ŽENEVOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

No. (80.1.15-1)SNR-69/2021

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and has the honour to communicate the decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to present the candidature of Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas for the post of Deputy Secretary General of the ITU for the term 2023-2026 at the elections to be held during the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest, Romania on 26 September - 14 October 2022.

Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, former Deputy Director of the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania, has over 20 years of international experience in structuring the policy of the telecommunications and information and communications technology (ICT) sector. He was the Head of the ITU's Corporate Strategy Division, while his latest functions at the ITU involved acting as a Special Advisor on crisis strategy (on COVID-19 matters) and partnership initiatives. Tomas Lamanauskas's experience also includes working as the Deputy General Director of the Kingdom of Bahrain Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, CEO and Board member of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of the British Virgin Islands, followed by the ICT Policy Advisor at the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer of Vanuatu. The Curriculum Vitae of Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas is attached to this Note.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the International Telecommunications Union the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 07 May 2021

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
Geneva

CURRICULUM VITAE – TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS

WORK EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

- Managing Partner
Envision Associates, London, UK
2019-Present
- Group Director Public Policy
VEON, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
2016-2019
- Head, Corporate Strategy Division
International Telecommunications Union
2013-2015
- ICT Policy Advisor
Prime Minister's Office, Vanuatu
2012-2013
- Chief Executive Officer and
Member of the Board
**Telecommunications Regulatory
Commission, British Virgin Islands**
2009-2011
- Deputy General Director
**Telecommunications Regulatory
Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain**
2007-2009
- Deputy General Director and
Member of the Board
**Communications Regulatory
Authority, Republic of Lithuania**
2004-2007
- Lecturer, Assistant Professor
Vilnius University
2002-2007
- Head of Legal
**Communications Regulatory
Authority, Republic of Lithuania**
2001-2004
- Legal Advisor
**Lithuanian Telecom Business
Solutions, JSC**
1999-2001
- Teacher of Computer Sciences
Vilnius Lyceum
1997-1998

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- LinkedIn: <http://linkedin.com/in/tlamanauskas>
- Twitter: @tlamanauskas
- Nationality: Lithuanian (EU)
- Languages: English (fluent), Russian (fluent), Lithuanian (native)

PROFILE

20+ years career in telecommunications and, broader, information and communications technologies strategy, public policy and regulation. Extensive international executive and board-level leadership experience. Adept at supporting and leading teams through major transformations in highly multicultural environments, having served as a head, deputy head or board member of national regulatory authorities in three different regions (Europe, the Middle East and Caribbean), senior government advisor in another (the Pacific), and having led corporate strategy at the International Telecommunication Union as well as public policy for VEON, a multinational technology and communications company. Experienced communicator and recognized thought leader as demonstrated by around 200 speaking roles at events held in more than 40 countries as well as online, and contributions to the UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, World Economic Forum and similar reports.

EDUCATION

- Sloan Master in Leadership and Strategy, 2019
London Business School, UK
- Master in Public Administration, 2011-2012
Harvard Kennedy School, USA
- Master in Telecommunications Regulation and Policy, 2004-2007
The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago
- Master of Laws, 1997-2002
Vilnius University, Lithuania

OTHER

- **Awards and Recognition:** Communications Regulatory Authority of Lithuania Award "For laying foundations for legal regulation of electronic communications"
- **ITU and similar processes:** ITU PP-06, PP-10 and PP-14; WTDC-06 and WTDC-14; WSIS Summit 2005; Internet Governance Forums 2006, 2013 and 2014; Steering Committee of the World Economic Forum's Internet for All project; UN Strategic Planning Network; Working Group on Mainstreaming the Rule of Law of the UN High Level Committee on Programmes; GSMA Connected Society Programme Leadership Group; coordinator of the Arab Regulators' Network Working Group on international mobile roaming regulation
- **Public speaking:** around 200 presentations and other speaking roles at various events (in more than 40 countries and online)
- **Academic experience:** Guest lecturer at London Business School, external examiner at the University of South Africa (UNISA), member of the Editorial Board of the "Telecommunications Policy" journal (published: Elsevier), and a lecturer-trainer at the Lithuanian Institute of Public Administration.
- **Publishing and research:** 20+ articles and co-author of three books on ICT regulation and policy

WORK EXPERIENCE

03/2019 – Present: **Envision Associates**, London, The United Kingdom

Advisory firm that aims to enable its clients to achieve their public affairs, public policy, regulatory and strategy goals in telecommunications and digital technology sectors – with a mission to contribute to creating and enhancing sustainable digital opportunities for everyone

Managing Partner

04/2020 – 03/2020: Key engagement – Special Advisor, Partnership Initiatives (initially - Crisis Strategy (COVID-19)) for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Selected achievements:

- Initiated and supported launching of the ITU Global Network Resiliency Platform (REG4COVID) to deal with the increased stress put on telecommunication networks during the COVID-19 pandemic, and enabling policy makers, regulators, and industry players to exchange experiences in ensuring that networks are kept resilient and telecoms services are available to all, to the maximum extent possible;
- Initiated and designed ITU's Connect2Recover initiative to reinforce digital infrastructures in the wake of COVID-19, with around \$2m raised;
- Facilitated the collaborative work of the ITU, EMEA Satellite Operators Association, Facebook, GSMA, Loon, Microsoft, SpaceX, UN Global Compact, UNICEF and World Economic Forum leading to the Partnership Dialogue for Connectivity;
- Launched a series of ITU Economic Experts Roundtables on the impact of COVID-19 on digital economy;
- Set up an ITU-wide governance framework for the organization's activities to support the industry in tackling COVID-19 crisis.

01/2016 – 03/2019: **VEON**, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

International communications and technology company (listed on NASDAQ and Euronext Amsterdam), at the time serving more than 210 million customers in 13 markets (Algeria, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Italy, Tajikistan and Laos), with \$9b+ turnover and \$4.5b+ market capitalisation

Group Director Public Policy

Responsible for the development and global implementation of government relations and public policy strategy, as well as acting as an interface with key forums for stakeholder engagement (such as the UN/ITU, World Economic Forum, and GSMA)

Selected achievements:

- Ensured coordination of the work of Chief Regulatory Officers of group operating companies;
- Built, upskilled and managed a virtual global digital public policy team;
- Cleared regulatory and policy hurdles presenting obstacles to launch VEON Personal Internet Platform (digital platform, integrating messaging, content, marketplace and self-care for telecommunications consumers) as well as implementation of a number of global business transformation projects (e.g., implementation of Digital Business Support System);
- Enabled smoother launch of digital products, digital transformation and stronger government advocacy by developing a group-wide digital policy strategy (including on data protection, cybersecurity, digital financial services), and disseminating the knowledge across operating companies.

06/2013 – 12/2015: **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**, Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Head, Corporate Strategy Division

Responsible for: (1) development of the corporate strategy and related policies and plans, and reaching consensus on them across different units of the organization and among the membership; coordinating the implementation, evaluation and reporting on these strategies policies and plans; (2) organization-wide programmes and representation on contentious topics for the organization such as Internet-related public policy matters and cybersecurity, in the wake of an unprecedented breakdown of consensus and trust among Member States at the World Conference at International Telecommunications in 2012 (WCIT-12), where 55 countries refused to sign the concluding treaty; (3) ensuring that organization was well informed about emerging policy, economic and technology trends and able to timely respond to them

Selected achievements:

- Achieved adoption at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 of Connect 2020 Agenda, the first inter-governmentally agreed agenda with tangible targets on global ICT development, with more than 100 countries setting out supporting national commitments;
- Spearheaded the development of the Strategic Plan of the ITU for 2016-2019 up to the successful adoption of a plan, implementing results-based management principles. The ITU's Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC) "noted the significant improvement made and expressed its support for the excellent and innovative approaches adopted, moving also risk management into strategic level" (8/1/2014). The approach was validated by the ITU's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 maintaining the same framework;
- Secured full Member States' consensus on the ITU's role and future activities on Internet-related matters and cybersecurity at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014, reversing the membership breakdown at WCIT-12;
- Designed and implemented an updated operational management framework, with updated KPIs, and instituted a risk management process, to support implementation of the Strategic Plan. IMAC commended the "impressive progress made in a short period of time" (22/1/2015);
- Dramatically improved ITU's compliance with the recommendations of the UN Joint Inspection Unit (ITU moved to the Top 5 of the compliant UN agencies from below 20th);
- Launched the "Young ICT Policy Leaders Programme", leading to stronger empowerment of the next generation of ICT policy makers;
- Enhanced openness and inclusiveness of ITU through: (a) public consultations on the Strategic Plan (the first time for a UN organization to consult the public on its strategy); (b) Secretary General's "Open Talks"; (c) enhanced stakeholder participation in ITU Council Working Group.

07/2012 – 05/2013: **Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Prime Minister's Office**, Port Vila, Vanuatu

National government agency, responsible for the overarching national information and communications technology (digital) policy and strategy, as well as development and government-wide implementation of e-government solutions

ICT Policy Advisor

In the wake of a destructive showdown between a regulator and a sector minister, was brought in by the Government to lead the development and implementation of a new information and communications technology sector policy, institutional structure, as well as implementation and monitoring plans, and to strengthen relevant capacity of senior government officials

Selected achievements:

- Negotiated, as part of a Government's negotiating team, with a private sector entity the deployment of the first international submarine cable for Vanuatu, which became operational in January 2014. In November 2014, the country's regulator reported a 70% decrease in Internet prices;
- Instituted an inclusive, pragmatic and collaborative multistakeholder-driven policy development and implementation process, greeted by external observers with such observations as: "Insights into [this] process offer a model of practice that will be very helpful to other Pacific nations who may wish to redevelop their own ICT policies" (Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society, 18/5/2013);
- Developed a National ICT Policy, guiding the sector development, which attracted comments like: (a) "I'm really thrilled to see such a substantial and thoroughgoing document [...] [T]his is a genuinely historic achievement." (Dan McGarry, Pacific Institute of Public Policy, 28/5/2013); (b) "I wish to congratulate OGCI on the quality and depth of the Policy. [...] It is excellent, well thought out, and covers all issues in a transparent manner." (Ron Box, Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator, 16/5/2013);
- Developed a Universal Access Policy, resulting in slashing of public financial contribution to setting up public Internet access points by more than 10 times per such point, strengthening sustainability of the programme, and strengthening education through digital tools;
- Strengthened support from development partners (including re-opening of a previously frozen AUS\$2.8M fund for ICT development).

06/2009 – 06/2011: Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of the Virgin Islands (British), Road Town, Tortola, BVI

National regulatory authority for telecommunications

Chief Executive Officer (and Member of the Board)

Led the organization, advised the sector minister and collaborated with foreign and international organizations

Selected achievements: conducted a market review, leading to strengthening of the competition in the sector; strengthened protection of consumers through a new consumer protection framework; strengthened preparedness of the sector to natural disasters through an industry framework for emergency management and response; increased efficiency of radio spectrum use by strengthening radio monitoring capabilities; allayed public concerns on electromagnetic radiation related to wireless infrastructure through a Territory-wide electromagnetic radiation measurement exercise conducted jointly with a regional university and an international standard-setting body; achieved setting up of an Internet Exchange Point and a private-sector-led ICT Data Center; strengthened operational capability of the organization through a new internal administration framework, structure and hires.

02/2007 – 06/2009: Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Manama, Bahrain

National regulatory authority for telecommunications

Deputy General Director

Led the organization as a 'second-in-command', with direct responsibility for the strategy of the authority, input into the overall sector policy and key strategic programmes

Recognition of achievements: SAMENA (South Asia, Middle East and North Africa) Telecommunications Council recognition of the authority as the "Most Progressive Regulator of the Year 2009"; and regional industry publication CommsMEA recognition as the Regulator of the Year for 2009.

10/2004 – 02/2007: Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania

National regulatory authority for electronic communications and post

Deputy General Director (and Member of the Board – from November 2005 to February 2007)

As part of the leadership team, was responsible for the authority's strategy, legal affairs, as well as the European and international cooperation

Selected achievements: Highest mobile telephony penetration in the world (Informa Telecoms & Media, 2005); among the lowest in Europe mobile telephony tariffs (European Commission, 2005); and lowest broadband tariffs in Europe (Finish Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2005).

09/2002 – 01/2007: Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

The oldest, largest and first in the national ranking Lithuanian higher education institution

Teaching Assistant, Lecturer, Assistant Professor

Designed and/or taught the following courses: "EU Competition Law", "International and EU Information Technology Law"; "Law of Informatics", "Legal Regulation of Electronic Commerce", "International Private Law", "Public International Law"

Selected achievements: As part of a small team of fellow lecturers at the Faculty of Law, introduced teaching of information and communication technology law subjects into the curricula of various divisions of Vilnius University and set up the Informatics Law Centre.

10/2001 – 10/2004: Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania

Head of Legal

Established and led the legal function for a newly established regulatory authority

Selected achievements: Successful liberalization of the Lithuanian telecommunications market; successful conclusion of the European Union accession negotiations with the European Commission on the telecommunications chapter; and setting up an effective legal function.

11/1999 – 10/2001: UAB "Lietuvos telekomo verslo sprendimai" (now integrated into AB "Telia Lietuva"), Vilnius, Lithuania

A subsidiary of the national fixed-telephony incumbent operator and largest internet service provider (controlled by Telia), responsible for servicing approx. 600 key business customers of the operator

Legal Adviser

Responsible for the full legal support to commercial and product functions of the organization

10/1997 – 06/1998: Vilnius Lyceum of Exact, Natural and Technical Sciences (now - Vilnius Lyceum), Vilnius, Lithuania

One of the leading secondary schools in Lithuania

Teacher of Computer Sciences

PERSONAL INTERESTS/HOBBIES

Love spending my holidays in the mountains (skiing, hiking), under water (PADI Divemaster), or discovering new places. Pre-COVID-19 used to pepper my city life with jazz and other music discoveries. De-stress by running (did a couple of half-marathons), gym or a book.



The ITU the world needs now

Vision Statement of Tomas Lamanauskas

*Candidate for the post of Deputy Secretary General,
International Telecommunication Union*

If I am given the mandate by Member States, I will work to ensure that the ITU fully leverages its experience, expertise and resources to help the world respond to the most pressing challenges, and to take advantage of the opportunities, by:

- 1) Building broad impact-oriented partnerships to bring everyone to the digital world;**
- 2) Raising ambition on sustainability as a key ITU-wide priority ensuring that every ITU initiative and activity includes a climate change perspective;**
- 3) Becoming an organization that is fit-for-the-times, further raising the bar on results-orientation, accountability and transparency, speed and efficiency, flexibility and agility, and utilisation of modern digital tools and working methods.**

Above all, I am committed to the ITU as a neutral venue, where everyone seeks mutual understanding, aims to deliver together on the most pressing issues of the day, and jointly works towards the common vision for a truly connected world.

At the start of the Covid pandemic, as countries around the world locked down, governments realised how reliant they are on technology to keep society and the economy functioning. But what, exactly, should they be doing? Every country was in an unprecedented situation, and many of the challenges they faced were the same.

We launched the [REG4COVID](#) platform in one week. It enabled governments, regulators and other stakeholders to share ideas and learn from each others' experiences.

As the first wave of the crisis began to ease, and governments started to ask themselves how technology could help them to build back better, some ITU Member States came to us and asked what we could do to help less well-connected countries to leverage the power of digital infrastructure in responding to and recovering from the pandemic, and how they could support this work. We created the [Connect2Recover](#) initiative.

These two initiatives, which were part of my recent work with the ITU as Special Advisor on Crisis Strategy and Partnership Initiatives, showcase what the ITU does best: bringing everyone together, enabling us to learn from each other and support each other, and helping to leverage digital connectivity and technologies to tackle the challenges the world faces and seize opportunities in front of us - as one. And it can be fast, agile, responsive, efficient and impactful. As one President of an ITU Member State famously used to say: "yes, we can".

I have been a proud member of the ITU community throughout my career. I have seen the value (and the shortcomings) of the ITU, as a staff member and adviser, and while representing Member States as well as the private sector. I have experienced the work of the ITU from the perspective of governments from four regions of the world, countries with very diverse levels of economic development, digital connectivity and income levels.

Based on my experience, I know we are capable of adapting to meet the new challenges that are coming our way and take advantage of the opportunities.

What do I think they are? What should we do to rise to the task? And what will I bring to the role?



**PARTNERSHIPS
FOR CONNECTIVITY**

First, we must build partnerships to bring high quality connectivity to everyone. The pandemic has been a huge call to action to accelerate our efforts to close the digital divide. We need to speed up progress, and governments cannot do it on their own.

The world enjoys unprecedented levels of connectivity. However, many people remain unconnected and [93% of them](#) live in lower and middle income countries. Significant investments in connectivity will be required to ensure everyone can benefit. The vast majority of these investments, an [estimated](#) 75%, will be from the private sector.

In an increasingly complex connectivity ecosystem, investments will come not just from telecommunications operators but also private equity, infrastructure funds, hyperscalers, tower companies, independent fibre companies and other new players.

The ITU has a critical role to play in bringing together all stakeholders to form impact-oriented partnerships for universal meaningful connectivity. We have the capacity to bring major players around the table and help create enabling environments to unlock the flow of investments, as well as to maximise the use of the connectivity deployed.

We must reach the poorest countries and the remotest communities with connectivity of high enough quality for people to do schoolwork, earn a livelihood, access health services, and achieve whatever their personal ambitions may be.

From my time advising the government of Vanuatu, I know what it takes to widen the reach of quality connectivity, rapidly and from a low base. We delivered a comprehensive National ICT Policy developed in a truly collaborative manner, negotiated the deployment of the country's first submarine cable - which [brought](#) an immediate 70% decrease in broadband internet prices and near doubling in subscriptions - and developed a universal access policy that the country's Prime Minister [recently credited](#) with providing 98.8% of the population with mobile coverage, and 86.2% with broadband coverage.

As governments increasingly prioritise digital connectivity in their Covid recovery plans, and diverse private sector actors are getting involved in rolling it out, I will work with the Secretary General and Bureau Directors to build cohesive and efficient partnerships that cut across the ITU, its sectors and bureaus. These partnerships must bring all the pieces of the puzzle together to get more people online, from community networks through mobile and fixed broadband to satellites, from supply side to demand side, from doing business to developing enabling policy and regulatory environments.



AMBITION
ON SUSTAINABILITY

Second, we must deliver on sustainability as an organization and a sector – and give others the technological tools to meet their own climate change commitments. The survival of humanity is at stake. If we lose the planet, nothing else will matter.

The most fundamental assumption of our age – that the world will keep on getting better – is under serious threat. Climate change is looming. Net Zero by 2050 is an absolute minimum. A number of companies in our sector are leading by example in committing to Net Zero by 2030. It is crucial to make this goal as universal as possible.

The ITU should also retain its focus on such challenges as reducing e-waste.

Sustainability and climate change must be a priority for the ITU across every sector, initiative and activity. We must help our industry play its part in helping humanity to overcome the existential challenge of today – by truly going “green” itself, as well as maximising the role of technology in helping others reduce emissions.

We should also support industry in ensuring that it plays its rightful role in the broader sustainability agenda. The ITU should be a key and willing partner for everyone working on this critical mission.



ORGANIZATION –
FIT FOR THE TIMES
WE LIVE IN

Third, we must make the ITU an organization fit for the times we live in: agile, responsive, results-based, transparent and accountable. We are one of the smallest UN agencies. We have to be fast-moving, efficient and flexible in the ways we do business. It is crucial that we leverage the rich experience and expertise of our members in achieving this.

I know that my own sense of pride in being part of the ITU community is widely shared. We are blessed with staff who are loyal, committed and believe in our mission. We need to unleash the spirit of service

and drive for achievement by empowering our staff to take the initiative and deliver to our members and the world. Full transparency and accountability are an imperative. These should be achieved not through box-ticking procedures, but meaningful risk-based frameworks encouraging individual responsibility and ownership, with pragmatic organisational controls.

The ITU needs to complete the integration of a results-based management approach in all its strategic, operational and financial management processes. Our business processes, operations and work platforms should reflect state-of-the-art practices to serve our members and the world in the best possible way. We must set an example for the UN family in leveraging digital tools and working methods and adapting to the 'new normal', including the economic environment.

Finally, it is also crucial that the ITU at all levels works closely with its members – Member States, Sector Members and academia – recognising their vast experience and expertise, and their role in building an ITU that would truly serve them. The organization should also fully embrace a collaborative approach and work with others to maximise the common good.

These ambitions mean nothing if we cannot work together. From connectivity to climate to Covid, the challenges of today and tomorrow do not stop at borders. We need to bring everyone on board – find out where we agree, make tangible progress in such areas together, and keep engaging where sufficient agreement is not possible yet.

When I joined the ITU as Head of Corporate Strategy, the previous year had seen an unprecedented breakdown of consensus and trust at WCIT-12. We responded by shifting focus from what divided us to what united us. The result was the Connect 2020 agenda (now Connect 2030), with more than 100 countries making tangible national commitments to support its implementation: when we looked for common ground, it turned out that we could agree on quite a bit.

Since 1865, the ITU has been the place where the world comes together to agree on how to communicate. Through the two World Wars, the rise of independent countries, and the Cold War, the ITU has kept the conversation going. We have always been a place where everyone can come to the table. That has never been more important than in today's uncertain, tense and rapidly changing world.

Whatever the coming years bring, as Deputy Secretary General I will work tirelessly to find agreement on addressing the biggest challenges we face and seizing the opportunities of the day. Not just aiming for agreement, but to make tangible progress – together. And when we disagree – as we will – I firmly believe that the ITU must remain a place where we will always be able to keep on engaging with each other.

We managed to help the world communicate for 156 years. With the right energy and determination, the aim for a joint vision for a truly connected world, and a spirit of understanding, I am convinced we will be able to continue delivering on this in the future. The world – more than ever – depends on us succeeding.