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Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

26 February 2018

ITU Headquarters, Geneva

*Welcome Remarks*

Malcolm Johnson

Deputy Secretary-General   
International Telecommunication Union

Director of TSB, Chaesub Lee

Director of BDT, Brahima Sanou

Chairman of TSAG, Bruce Gracie

Distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends,

Good morning and on behalf of the Secretary-General welcome to this second TSAG meeting of the 2017 to 2020 study period. And Happy New Year of the Dog!

I am pleased to have this opportunity to commend ITU-T for the significant contribution it makes to the work of ITU with its particular focus on innovation and future technological developments.

ITU-T’s standardization of broadband access networks and ultra-high speed transport is well recognized with good take up of its standards such as G.fast.

And it is good to see so much effort taking place in ITU-T to develop the standards necessary to meet the challenges that 5G will place on the network, and the Sector’s close cooperation with the 5G work in ITU-R.

In 2008, I was honoured to travel to Hollywood to receive the PrimeTime Emmy award for the H.264 video compression standard, so it is nice to see ITU’s continued leadership in this area with my successor Chaesub Lee receiving another PrimeTime Emmy its successor H.265 last October! With video accounting for over 80% of Internet traffic the increase in efficiency offered by this new standard will greatly help meet the rising demand for network capacity.

The widening diversity of activities in ITU-T has resulted in new sector memberships from industry sectors that had little historic connection with ITU, such as the motor, healthcare, energy and financial sectors.

I also congratulate ITU-T for its outstanding efforts to build new collaborative frameworks with many other standardization bodies, such as OneM2M. In today’s diversified world where ICTs play such a significant role in so many different sectors, collaboration is ever more important.

ITU-T Focus Groups are an excellent means of increasing this collaboration especially with those new to ITU. The Focus Groups on data management, digital fiat currency, distributed ledger technology and machine learning are proving their benefit in bringing together diverse groups to define new directions to ITU-T standardization.

The collaboration initiated by the Focus Group on Digital Financial Services has given rise to the ‘Financial Inclusion Global Initiative’ led by ITU, the World Bank Group and Committee on Payments and market Infrastructure (CPMI) with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We are very grateful to India for hosting the first FIGI symposium last November. This collaboration will accelerate digital financial inclusion in developing countries, and I am pleased to see the continuing active participation of delegates from developing countries in ITU-T, now over 60% of delegates to ITU-T meetings.

The ‘United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative’ is another excellent example of collaboration with 17 UN bodies advocating for ICT standards for smart cities. The collaboration has resulted in over 50 cities trialing the Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities.

Collaboration will also be important to ensure the success of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Dubai beginning at the end of October this year.

National and regional preparations are well underway, and collaboration between the regional organizations will be essential to explain different positions and hopefully achieve some consensus on key proposals ahead of the conference. The secretariat will do all it can to help this process.

Now turning to a more practical issue, but an important one, you may have noticed that the Tower entrance is currently closed due to the installation of new security airlock systems (SASs). The Varembé entrance is also closed as work will start there this week.

Your current delegate badge will only allow you to enter and leave through the Montbrillant entrance, however, you will be able to enter and leave through the Tower temporary entrance until Wednesday after which the gates become operational and you will then only be able to exit through the gates not enter.

This is the start of the implementation of the new security modernisation project which will enhance security of staff, delegates, visitors, and buildings.

In the coming months, the Montbrillant Building will have new Speedgates installed, X-ray machines for bags and self-help kiosks for issuing the new biometric badges which will operate the new gates.

So, I am sorry for the inconvenience this week, but as you can appreciate we need to considerably improve the physical security in ITU in the face of increased terrorist threats.

Thank you for your understanding and I wish a very productive meeting and enjoyable stay in Geneva despite the weather!

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