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Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

10 February 2020

Popov, ITU Headquarters, Geneva

*Welcome Remarks*

Houlin Zhao

Secretary-General  
International Telecommunication Union

TSAG Chairman Bruce Gracie

TSB Director Chaesub Lee

BDT Director Doreen Bogdan-Martin

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

Good morning and welcome to this meeting of TSAG. It is a pleasure to be here with you. Each time I attend TSAG it reminds me of the many good moments that we have shared in our work together over the last 20 years.

I would like to take a moment to reassure you that ITU is taking every necessary precaution in relation to coronavirus, in the interests of our delegates and staff. We are also offering online remote participation to the maximum extent possible, including for this meeting of TSAG, to support the participation of Chinese delegates unable to travel to Geneva.

Now let me begin by wishing you a very happy year 2020.

2020 is an important milestone for the ICT industry and equally important milestone for the work of ITU-T.

Ten years remain to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and ICTs are expected to provide an enabling platform for the considerable innovation required to achieve these goals.

2020 will welcome the beginning of the 5G era. The Internet of Things is maturing, stimulating efforts to build Smart Sustainable Cities. We see great optimism surrounding Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

ICTs have become all-pervasive. They are enabling innovation in every industry and public-sector body.

Our work is evolving in reflection of the changing technology landscape and associated changes in business dynamics.

This is of course very important for ITU-T in view of the upcoming WTSA-20.

ITU standardization is now supporting digital transformation in areas ranging from energy and transport to financial services, agriculture, healthcare and smart cities.

We are supporting new partnerships between the ICT industry and vertical markets.

We are making considerable progress in our efforts to accommodate SMEs and startups.

We are building a strong understanding of how standardization and open-source communities can collaborate to their mutual benefit.

ITU is providing the technical basis for new partnerships with international standards, and we are also providing a neutral platform for industry to consider evolving business dynamics.

Here we receive valuable support from open platforms such as Focus Groups and collaboration initiatives like the AI for Good Global Summit, the Financial Inclusion Global Initiative, and the United for Smart Sustainable Cities Initiative.

These platforms bring together a wide range of stakeholders to understand their respective roles in supporting emerging ICT innovation – they have helped to clarify the contributions expected of ITU standardization.

In the highly diverse modern ICT environment, this inclusive dialogue is indispensable. It is an essential complement to our standardization work.

I have no doubt that this dialogue has contributed to the strong growth that we have seen in ITU-T membership.

ITU-T welcomed 54 new members in 2019, following 45 new members in 2018.

What is particularly noteworthy is the diversity of these new members.

Our new members include companies in energy and utilities, shipping and logistics, mobile payments, over-the-top applications, automotive, visible light communication, blockchain, artificial intelligence and quantum information technology.

It is against this backdrop that we approach WTSA-20.

We will consider the changing dynamics of ICT innovation. We will consider the progress achieved in ITU-T’s support for various vertical markets. And we will consider the many new communities joining ITU-T.

WTSA-20 is a key opportunity to ensure that ITU-T remains well positioned to serve emerging standardization demands – it is a key opportunity to ensure that this platform continues to meet your needs.

It promises to be a pivotal WTSA, and I wish you every success in your preparations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank India, our generous host for WTSA-20. ITU highly appreciates your support. It will certainly be a WTSA to be remembered, and I am looking forward to joining you in Hyderabad in November. Hyderabad is not a new city to ITU. We held WTDC-10 in Hyderabad and we know the city to be very dynamic, with a strong ICT industry presence.

Let me conclude with a word of thanks to TSAG’s Chairman Bruce Gracie, his management team and all of TSAG’s participants. We very much appreciate your great dedication to the work of ITU-T.

I would also like to invite TSAG to consider reviewing the planned date for your next meeting. September is a busy month for ITU. It will begin with ITU Digital World, followed by meetings of TSAG and Council Working Groups. If there is any possibility that TSAG could hold its next meeting in late August, it would assist us a great deal in ensuring that there is no overlap between meetings of TSAG and Council Working Groups.

Thank you.

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