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ITU Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

21-25 September 2020

*Welcome Remarks*

Chaesub Lee

Director of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau  
International Telecommunication Union

ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao

TSAG Chairman Bruce Gracie

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this first virtual meeting of TSAG.

Let me begin by thanking our members for their excellent spirit of collaboration and unfailing dedication to ITU’s work throughout 2020.

Our commitment to virtual meetings took considerable courage. But in committing to virtual meetings, ITU members have brought far more certainty to these uncertain times.

I am very pleased to highlight that, with over 240 new or revised ITU standards approved this year, ITU-T looks certain to meet its targets for 2020.

ITU-T has welcomed around 45 new members each year, for the past three years. This strong upward trend has sustained through 2020, with ITU-T welcoming 30 new members this year.

We have also seen encouraging developments in open ITU-T events. All online, these open events are welcoming a greater number and diversity of participants than ever.

We have learnt lessons in 2020 that will benefit us for years to come.

Working together with our staff, study group experts have become highly proficient users of MyWorkspace and MyMeetings. These experts have also become highly adept at working with the efficiency necessary to reach consensus in virtual meetings.

We continue to improve our virtual meetings facilities with the help of the experience gained by our study groups. Your feedback on your experience of this first virtual meeting of TSAG will make another important contribution to this work.

Distinguished colleagues,

COVID-19 has proved a powerful reminder of ICTs’ critical importance to the economy and society. ICTs have enabled life to go on during the pandemic, but this has also highlighted ICTs’ importance to our future.

We have had a glimpse of the future in innovative applications of AI to combat COVID-19 and this has sparked renewed interest in debates around data processing and management.

The pressures placed on ICT services and applications have highlighted the importance of continued investment in ICT infrastructure. The pandemic has resulted in global awareness of the importance of 5G, IoT, smart cities, digital health, digital finance, and smart mobility.

All industries and public-sector bodies are innovating with ICTs. Digital transformation is accelerating. And we should keep this top of mind in our preparations for WTSA.

We approach every WTSA with one fundamental goal in mind.

The task of WTSA is to ensure that ITU remains the world’s best venue to develop international standards.

Our work should meet the needs of a wide variety of industry sectors. And our work should bridge development divides as well as gender divides.

Our ultimate aim is to develop high-quality international standards. We achieve that with an efficient, inclusive standardization process. Valuable ITU standards result from a valuable ITU platform.

In the years following 2020, this platform will need to deliver value to an increasing variety of ICT stakeholders.

2020 has offered yet more evidence of the enduring importance of ITU’s work to connect the world, and yet more evidence of ITU members’ dedication to this work.

I hope to see WTSA setting goals for 2024 with a view to supporting ICT innovation through 2030 and beyond.

Consider the acceleration in digital transformation across our economies. Consider the changing dynamics of ICT innovation. Consider the many new communities joining ITU.

Now more than ever, we see the need to achieve a trusted ICT environment able to support social and economic development in all regions of the world.

WTSA is a key opportunity to ensure that ITU remains well positioned to support the emergence of this trusted ICT environment.

I would like to join Secretary-General Zhao in highlighting my gratitude to India, our generous host for WTSA. It will certainly be a WTSA to be remembered and, working together, I am confident that we will find a solution for WTSA able to position the Assembly for success.

I would like to thank TSAG Chairman Bruce Gracie and all TSAG participants for your work in preparation for this meeting and I wish you every success in your efforts to achieve consensus on the matters to be discussed.

We will need to move through our agenda as efficiently as possible, but knowing TSAG’s management, we know that we are in safe hands.

Thank you.

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