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**ITU Secretary-General’s Opening Remarks to the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group**

**Geneva**

**22 January 2024**

**Doreen Bogdan-Martin**

**Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union**

Good morning,

Mr Chair

DSG,

TSB Director Onoe-San, BR Director Maniewicz, BDT Director Zavazava

Colleagues and friends,

As we are still in January, let me start by wishing you all a very happy new year.

2024 is a big year for ITU, and in particular for the ITU-T.

We have 267 days to go!

The moment we’ve all been preparing for is just around the corner.

WTSA-24 will be unlike any other.

As I told Prime Minister Modi at the inauguration of our Area Office and Innovation Centre in New Delhi last year, India is a role model for digital transformation.

It’s fitting that India should be the host of the first World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly ever held in Asia.

WTSA-24 also comes at a time when standards are on everyone’s lips.

I was in Davos last week for the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, where it was all about AI.

One big takeaway from all the AI discussions I engaged in was the crucial role of standards in developing and deploying safe and responsible AI for all.

This is true for all the emerging technologies that are reshaping our world before our very eyes.

Just look at quantum information tech, one of the topics on your agenda this week.

That’s why standards are gaining increasing attention from all communities in government, industry, academia, and civil society — and in all areas, from AI to human rights.

Collaborative efforts on AI and other emerging technologies are crucial, as no one standards body can address these complex challenges alone.

This shared commitment, a commitment to collaboration, has been a priority of our TSB Director.

And will be on display on 14 October at our Global Standards Symposium when we join IEC, ISO and other standards development organizations in celebration of World Standards Day.

Our common objective is clear: to ensure standards are the result of a process that is inclusive, transparent, and aligned with our ambitions for a better world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

ITU doesn’t just aspire to set the bar high;

we’re living by these principles.

Our platform gives rise to trusted standards, in a world where trust is in high demand.

TSAG and WTSA are the guardians of this platform.

And as you review our strategy, structure and working methods in preparation for WTSA, let’s remember that we have an opportunity to show international cooperation in action.

ITU standards come from a collective will to forge consensus on the most inclusive, innovative, and sustainable path forward.

That’s what our standardization platform has to offer to standards developers everywhere.

For this, we must continue to build bridges between different areas of expertise to help everyone influence our work.

This includes young people… which has been a priority of this leadership team.

Kaleidoscope, ITU’s academic conference, will have an important focus on youth engagement at WTSA-24, reflecting the shared ambition of ITU and the Government of India.

I’m pleased to see that contributions to this meeting highlight the importance of standards in engaging the next generation in building consensus, as well as supporting human rights and effectively communicating the value of our platform.

These are all steps in the right direction.

Colleagues,

As our societies and economies become more and more interconnected, we are reminded of our differences and the divides we have yet to bridge.

I’m looking forward to joining you tomorrow morning (bright and early) for the launch of the Network of Women for WTSA-24​​ campaign.

Standards are for all humanity.

And we won’t succeed if we leave out half of the population...

Let me take this opportunity to thank Onoe-san for his commitment to gender equality.

I also want to commend his leadership in addressing the standardization gap.

It’s an area where ITU is in a position to drive meaningful, inclusive progress — with the strong support of countries like Japan.

Before I conclude, let me acknowledge the presence of two senior officials from India’s Department of Telecommunications:

* Shri Ritu Ranjan Mittur, who is designated by India to chair WTSA-24 — and
* Shri Ajay Kumar Sahu, as registration is expected to open this week.

Finally, Mr Chair, our TSAG vice chairs with you at the helm

TSAG is in very good hands.

Together, let’s continue to grow our platform in value and stakeholders.

Let’s make new technologies:

* safer,
* more accessible,
* more affordable,
* more sustainable.

Let’s lead the charge in shaping a future where standards serve all humanity.

This is our moment.

Thank you.

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