

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY WEEK

5 JULY 2021

WELCOME REMARKS

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**DIRECTOR OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION BUREAU
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION**

Excellencies, colleagues, and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this Emerging Technology Week, and I hope that you and your families are all in good health and good spirits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of our digital infrastructure and the need for severe improvements of ICTs services and applications. But, unfortunately, infrastructures are not yet reaching everywhere (in particular LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS), and services/applications are still too difficult for everyone (such as aged people and people who need special assistance). One thing I wish to share with you is that year 2020, during the pandemic, ITU-T increased overall 80% of participation to our events comparing with 2019, except decreasing 5% only from LDCs.

The ICT industry continues to transform at an extraordinary pace. And all sectors are now transforming with the help of ICTs. For example, ITU standards currently support the digital transformation from energy and transportation to healthcare, financial services, education, agriculture, and smart cities.

And in our standards development collaboration platform, we support equitable access to the new capabilities and associated benefits introduced by advances in emerging technology such as Giga level broadband connectivity over legacy telephone lines, lightweight Optical Fibers, e-services like e-health, Technology for Financial Inclusion, and Artificial Intelligence.

Inclusive standardization processes help us to move forward together. With international standards, innovation can be shared worldwide.

Working together in ITU standardization, we are reinforcing the new partnerships essential to our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we continue working to bridge the so-called 'standardization gap' to ensure that all countries share in the benefits of inclusive standardization processes.

And we continue to grow in inclusivity. Last year ITU introduced reduced membership fees for start-ups and SMEs following the reduced fees for academia introduced in

2011, and companies of all sizes in developing countries also benefit from reduced membership fees.

Our world is highly diverse in culture, language, and levels of economic development. But we convene at ITU in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect. Together we can build consensus on how we want emerging technologies to factor into our future.

I look forward to our continued work together to ensure that our many interconnections help us to care for each other better and build a better future for all.

Thank you.