

World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium

Opening Ceremony

Tuesday 14 November 2017

Hammamet, Tunisia

Opening Speech

Brahima Sanou

Director

ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

- Mr Mohamed Anouar Maarouf, Minister of Communication Technologies and Digital Economy;
- Mr Habib Debbabi, Secretary of State for the Digital Economy, Chairman of WTIS-17;
- Mr Adel Chelioui, Governor of Sousse;
- Honourable Ministers and high officials;
- Directors-General of regulatory agencies;
- Representatives of ITU-D Sector Members;
- Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen;

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the 15th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium here in Hammamet. On behalf of ITU and all those taking part here, I would like to thank the Government of Tunisia, and especially my dear friend Mohamed Anouar Maarouf, for hosting this Symposium and for the kind and warm hospitality extended to all of us.

Tunisia has developed one of the most modern telecommunication and broadband infrastructures, with penetration rates for mobile and Internet services that are among the highest in Africa. Given this remarkable progress, I am certain that the Digital Tunisia 2020 Strategic Plan will make ICTs an important tool for accelerating socio-economic development, and will transform Tunisia into an international digital hub. This makes Tunisia a very attractive and good host for WTIS-17.

Ladies and gentlemen,

WTIS has evolved to become the main global forum for telecommunication and information society measurement. Data and indicators are important, as they allow us to benchmark ourselves against our peers and track progress over time.

I am pleased to note that, at this Symposium, we have managed to bring together the producers and the users of the data. We also have decision-makers among us, who will take part in the high-level panel later this morning.

As in past WTIS events, we will tomorrow launch the Measuring the Information Society Report 2017. The report is the most authoritative source for ICT data and for monitoring the development of the global information society.

During the launch we will also announce the results of the latest ICT Development Index (IDI). This year, the report will include for the first time country profiles of ICT development. This is aimed at capturing the progress that each country is making, independently of its IDI ranking.

As you can see, we continue to improve the report and the IDI to ensure that they reflect the real effort made by countries, going beyond the IDI ranking. In 2015 we asked an independent body to evaluate the IDI methodology; the conclusion was very clearly that the methodology is very rigorous and very transparent.

In 2016, we established a process for reviewing the indicators used in calculating the IDI. The extraordinary meeting of the Expert Groups in March 2017 reviewed the indicators in the light of developments in the sector. The meeting adopted 14 indicators, instead of the 11 currently used. The 2018 IDI will thus be calculated on the basis of these 14 indicators.

I would like to thank the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators, which bring to bear the essential specialized technical expertise for defining new indicators and new methods. I invite you all to participate, as it is in those groups that all decisions on the indicators are taken.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are at a turning point in our industry, one that is characterized by an acceleration and convergence that make high-quality, instantly available data more necessary than ever for decision-makers. That is why the theme of this year's symposium is: "Transforming emerging technologies into economic opportunities with better data".

In particular, we will be exploring the interrelated trends of artificial intelligence, big data, the Internet of things, and cloud computing, and will discuss the statistical challenges related to monitoring their development.

I take this opportunity to thank all the Member States, international organizations, industry, and experts that support the work of ITU in this area.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, let me just say that WTIS is special for two reasons. **First**, I would recall – as this goes back some time – that the idea of holding a World Summit on the Information Society was proposed by Tunisia at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis in 1998. Tunisia subsequently organized the second phase of WSIS in 2005, and since then has organized the annual ICT Forum for All. It is thus only natural that a meeting and the launch of the "Measuring the Information Society Report" should be held in Tunisia.

Second, WTIS-2017 is special because it is the final major event celebrating ITU-D's 25th anniversary, and we are happy to conclude our anniversary celebrations here in Hammamet.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.