



### **Press release – Launch of the Radio Spectrum management component of the PRIDA**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Africa have evolved significantly during recent decades. Still, in comparison with other continents Africa lags behind, for example in terms of widely available and affordable broadband access. Generally affordable and accessible ICT services have the potential to generate tremendous benefits such as more competitive markets, social inclusive growth and more equitable development. This is the context in which the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Union (EU) launched on 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana, the ITU-managed component of the “PRIDA” (“Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa”) related to radio spectrum management. This official launch took place in the margins of the [“4<sup>th</sup> Annual Sub-Saharan African spectrum management conference”](#), with the participation of a wide range of participants including representatives of Ministries, regulators, telecoms operators and private companies, regional, continental and international organisations. Through this initiative, ITU will work with the relevant African stakeholders on predictable spectrum allocation, licensing, management (including the treatment of harmful interferences) and pricing based on international best practices with a forward-looking approach towards the Internet of Things (IoT).

In his opening remarks, the ITU Regional Director for Africa, Mr. Andrew RUGEGE, highlighted that: *“In this context, all African countries must take measures to address the important issues of radio frequency spectrum, its timely assignment, harmonization of its use and its availability to promote the adoption and deployment of mobile broadband”*.

On behalf of the EU, H.E. Ambassador Jan SADEK, Head of the European Union Delegation to Botswana and SADC, stressed that *“Digital transformation is on top of the agenda of the EU-AU cooperation. We are therefore working on a number of initiatives strengthening and enhancing our cooperation in the digital sector. The PRIDA is a key flagship initiative in that scope”*.

On behalf of the African Union, the Senior Policy Officer Ms Souhila Amazouz emphasised the importance of the PRIDA initiative and said that *“African leaders position Digital Transformation among the top priorities of African Union Agenda 2063 and the African Union Commission with partners have engaged in developing a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy to serve as a blue-print to transform all sectors”*.

The “PRIDA” stands for “Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa”. It is a joint initiative of the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and aims at enabling the African continent to reap the benefits of digitalization, by addressing various dimensions of broadband demand and supply in Africa and by building the capacities of African stakeholders in the Internet Governance space. The initiative is supported by the EU-funded Pan African Programme, with a specific envelope of 7.5 Mo€, and a contribution to the African Union Budget to the level of up to 1 Mo€ per year. ITU is bringing a contribution of 500.000 EUR to the initiative, which runs during the period end of 2018 to 2022.