ACMA-ITU Asia-Pacific Regulators' Roundtable
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Honourable Mr. Chris Chapman, Chairman, ACMA,

Honourable Chairmen,

Board Members and Head of Regulatory Authorities,

Policy Makers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

It is an honour and privilege to welcome you to the 4th Asia-Pacific Regulators' Roundtable jointly organized by the Australian Communications and Media Authority and the International Telecommunication Union with support from the Department of Communications, Government of Australia. In this august gathering, we have the honor of the presence of top regulatory decision makers from around 25 countries from Asia-Pacific region. This has been made possible only through your support and I thank you all for your personal presence despite your very busy schedule.

On behalf of ITU, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Chris Chapman, Chairman, ACMA for hosting this roundtable once again in Australia!

On this occasion, I would like to take you through the origin and the history of this Roundtable with all of you today.

It all started with a discussion with Mr. Chapman three years ago on sidelines of the International Training Program, where he has raised the need for having a Regulators' meet at decision making level to discuss freely and frankly the challenges and solutions on issues that the regulatory fraternity in the region faces in this continuously evolving telecom/ICT sector. With this concept, the 1st Regulators Roundtable was hosted by the ACMA in 2011, which was then followed by

TRAI, India in 2012 and KCC, R O Korea in 2013. It gives me great pleasure to see all the previous hosts ACMA Chairman, TRAI Board Member and KCC Chairman here today. Please accept our gratitude and we look forward to continuing the endeavor.

Let me now turn to the theme of the roundtable.

"Beyond Convergence– the Networked Society"

The term "Convergence" has been around for over two decades now. I recall that the topics for our prestigious "Trends in Telecommunication Reform" publication was "Convergence and Regulation" as early as 1999 while several countries; for example; Malaysia adopted a converged regulatory legislation 1998. Over the decade that followed, a number of countries in the Asia and also the Pacific adopted Converged Regulatory Institutions and Frameworks. I am pleased to say that a number of them are present in this room today. In its earlier manifestation, we were discussing convergence of telecommunication, broadcasting and information technology.

Times have changed and for good.

Broadband is becoming pervasive and mobile broadband, which is estimated to reach 32% global penetration by the end of this year – a number that will have almost doubled since the end of 2011, and quadrupled since the end of 2009. And yet there is still so much to do, with more than four billion people still offline – without access to the extraordinary benefits of the online world. Broadband policies are also becoming universal. Representing the ITU, I have been involved in assisting 17 Asia-Pacific countries in the areas of broadband policies and master plans.

Let us look at some of the latest trends in ICT growth

- By end 2014, the number of Internet users globally will have reached almost 3 billion. Two thirds of the world's Internet users are from the developing world.
- One third of the population in Asia-Pacific will be online by end 2014 and around 45% of the world's Internet users will be from the Asia- Pacific region.
- Smartphones are leading the way in drawing consumers online, but tablets are showing very healthy shipment growth rates, as well, with more than 263 million tablets expected to be sold in 2014. It was 179 million just a year ago.
- The apps market saw the addition of millions of users per month to reach more than 100 billion downloads in 2013.

Asia-Pacific is a truly diverse region and this is also reflected in the ITU ICT Development Index that ranks economies each year on the basis of their ICT Development. In 2013 IDI, some of the world's top IDI performers with the Republic of Korea ranking 1st globally, were from Asia-Pacific. However, there are only seven economies from the region   (R.O. Korea, Hong Kong (China), Australia, Japan, Macao (China), Singapore and New Zealand) in the top 50. This reflects the new form of ICT Development gap that we need to address collectively.

Another important issue is affordability. The ITU Index IPB (ICT Price Basket) which is a unique global benchmarking tool that provides insightful information on the cost and affordability of telecommunication and information and communication technology (ICT) services.

Given the strong link between broadband uptake and the price and affordability of broadband services, the Broadband Commission for Digital Development identified a specific target on broadband affordability: *"By 2015, entry-level broadband services should be made affordable in developing countries through adequate regulation and market forces (amounting to less than 5% of average monthly income)".* As per MIS Report 2013, One-third of developing countries offer fixed broadband services at prices below 5 per cent of GNI per capita. In developing countries, mobile broadband is more affordable than fixed broadband, but still much less affordable than in developed countries.

For the first time, ITU has developed a model to estimate the size of the digital native population worldwide. The model defines digital natives as the population of networked youth – aged 15-24 years – with five or more years of online experience. According to the model, in 2012 there were around 363 million digital natives out of a world population of around 7 billion – or 5.2 per cent.

Convergence is real and has moved on from a couple of sectors, viz. telecommunication/ICT and Broadcasting, to the entire ICT embedded society. The users of telecommunication/ICT services, whom we called telephone subscribers, have now become the citizens in the Digital era.

There is a need for close collaboration and 'smart' partnerships amongst regulators at international, regional and national level across sectors. In an ICT embedded society, the efficiency, productivity and security of citizens necessitate cross-sectoral collaboration mechanisms to reap the full benefits of ICTs in areas such as health, education, agriculture, electricity, transport etc.

Let me give you some examples of ITU collaboration with our sister UN agencies:

- ITU and WHO have developed a national e-health strategy that we work together to adapt at national level in order to facilitate ICT adoption in the health sector; ITU-T recently came up with Focus Group output on M2M communication for the health sector.
- ITU and FAO are currently working on an e-Agriculture toolkit.

There are numerous such examples happening at the national level in the areas such as banking, security, climate change and green technologies amongst others. So much so that we witness the rise of smart sustainable cities; another theme of an ITU-T Focus Group (22-26 September this year we have ITU's Green Standards Week with focus on Smart Sustainable Cities). The World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014 and the World Summit on Information Society +10 High Level Segment also echoed similar sentiments.

We live in a truly ICT embedded society!

With the Information and Communications Technologies foraying into other areas of the society, our roles and accordingly responsibilities have also expanded, leading us into sectors where we

need to work with our other fellow regulators and assist them in better addressing their concerns while learning from experience of each other to address our concerns.

"Today, access to online services is vital in order to find a job, receive a salary, pay bills and taxes, vote, learn and make individual and business decisions. Governments throughout the world are striving to bring ICTs to everyone. Their goal is to spearhead innovation and investment and to protect the rights of users by encouraging the development of modern and effective regulatory tools. ICT regulators recognize that in such a fast-changing and dynamic environment, new regulatory paradigms – a fourth generation of regulation – are essential to drive digital communications forward.

The fourth-generation regulators differ from previous generations of regulators in the emphasis they place on the pursuit of government social and economic policy goals, as well as on the need for improved consumer protection and access to broadband networks. The digital ecosystem enabled by smart phones, high-speed networks, convergence, cloud computing, over-the-top services and massive data manipulation (i.e., "big data"), as well as the "Internet of things" – all of these trends and innovations provide challenges and opportunities to advance regulatory practices and goals. Through effective cooperation among all stakeholders – and with the right balance of regulation – regulators can combat the negative activities occurring in the digital ecosystem and maximize the immense benefits it can bring to people around the world. "- Trends in Telecommunication reform 2014

Achieving these outcomes is not without challenges. They range from

- Type of institutional set up required;
- Need for established coordination mechanisms, making the infrastructure and spectrum for broadband available;
- Creating an enabling environment promoting investment in infrastructure;
- Managing international competition from OTT like services where current legal jurisdictions remain national;
- Privacy and security issues; and
- Meeting consumer expectations in an increasingly complex mix of services.

I can go on but I know that an august gathering like this can share and find solutions while as a keen learner, I myself look forward to learn more from decision makers like you.

Before concluding, I would like to mention that this year, we have the Plenipotentiary Conference in Busan, Republic of Korea, starting on 20 October, and running through until 7 November. As the Union's highest decision-making body, the conference will set the Union's general policies; adopt four-year strategic and financial plans; and elect the senior management team of the Union, the Members of Council, and the Members of the Radio Regulations Board. We look forward immensely to welcoming you all to PP-14 – and count on your support and active participation at the conference.

I wish you a very successful, interactive and engaging meeting with a productive outcome!