

**ITU-EC Regional Conference for Europe in Partnership with the Office of Electronic Communications
of Republic of Poland**

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OPENING REMARKS

By

Mr. Brahima SANOU

Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

**ITU-EC Regional Conference for Europe in Partnership with the Office of Electronic Communications
of Republic of Poland**

on

“Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping”

11-12 April 2016, Warsaw, Poland

Your Excellency Magdalena Gaj, President of the Office of Electronic Communications of Republic of Poland,

Excellences, all high dignitaries here present

Mr. Guido Acchioni, Policy Officer, Broadband Unit, DG CONNECT, European Commission

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and privilege to join host country in welcoming you at the opening of this Regional Conference for Europe jointly organized by ITU and the European Commission in partnership with the Office of Electronic Communications of Republic of Poland.

On behalf of International Telecommunication Union, and on behalf of all the participants I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Government of Poland for hosting this regional conference. Let me also thank the National Regulatory Authority, and personally to its President, Her Excellency Ms Magdalena Gaj, for the usual and kind hospitality extended to all of us and for her longstanding commitment to foster regional and global cooperation in the field of ICT.

Let me congratulate the Government of Poland for the continued support and commitment to the cause of building inclusive information society. According to the newest data released in the Measuring Information Society Report 2015 and ICT Development Index 2015 released in December, Poland is amongst leading broadband economies in central and eastern Europe, with robust and well developed backbone infrastructure, more than 150% mobile penetration rate and currently with the 4G infrastructure covering almost 90% of the population. Congratulations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Europe is one of the most dynamic and fast moving regions of the world in terms of ICT development. With an Internet penetration of 80% by the end 2015, Europe has the highest Internet penetration rate worldwide. In 2015 fixed broadband penetration rate ~~has, in 2015~~ exceeded 30% and mobile broadband penetration rate in the region ~~has~~ reached 80%.

Even though Europe leads in the broadband challenge in the world, there are still significant differences at the regional level. Still a lot remains to be done in order to make the provision of fast and ultra-fast Internet access, universal across the region.

This is also the reason why in 2014 European Administrations identified broadband as one of the five regional initiatives adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014 in Dubai. While designing its objectives, the mapping of broadband infrastructure across the region and monitoring of the quality of services were put high on the political agenda.

Thus, it is my great pleasure to see here so many stakeholders engaged in making a real change at the regional level, sharing your national practices and heading towards harmonized mapping and monitoring for the region.

We are all convinced that ICT sector has become the main driver for sustainable development and the attainment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ~~which~~ will rely heavily on the digital ecosystem. Broadband has therefore become critical infrastructure because it is the essential backbone for delivering e-Health, e-education, e-Governance and e-Commerce just to name a few.

It is estimated that the Internet of Things will have a total potential economic impact up to \$11.1 trillion per year in 2025, which would represent ~~11% per cent~~ of the world global GDP. Internet of things will require more broadband infrastructure.

It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that this infrastructure is robust, accessible and affordable to everyone. This is the reason why the mapping exercise of physical infrastructure as well as the quality of services provided over the networks is so essential for policy makers, regulators, service providers and investors.

As Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, mapping of broadband infrastructure is one of my top priorities. I ~~have~~ launched the Global Interactive Transmission Map programme ~~which that~~ thanks to the engagement of several stakeholders became ~~a~~ unique global mapping platform that takes stock of national backbone connectivity (optical fibers, microwaves and satellite Earth stations) as well as of other key metrics of the ICT sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you all to join this global effort to ensure that information on your countries is reflected accordingly. The Global Interactive Transmission Map is your tool to help you

make informed decisions. Let us build it and maintain together. My colleague will present the tool in details during the first session.

Distinguished participants, speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to thank all of you for engaging in this important activity and for your presence here today.

Let me also recognize and commend the European Commission for the great cooperation with ITU in creating synergies between different actions undertaken at the regional level with a common goal of building global ICT ecosystem and an inclusive information society.

I look forward to very fruitful discussions and tangible outcomes.

I thank you.