

Global Symposium for Regulators, 2024

Kampala, Uganda

2 July 2024

Opening Remarks by Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava

Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU

H.E. Ms. Jessica Alupo, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda,

Honorable Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, Minister of ICT and National Guidance of Uganda,

Honorable Mr George William Nyombi Thembo, Executive Director of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and GSR-24 Chair,

Excellencies,

ITU Secretary-General, Doreen Bogdan-Martin,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honor to welcome you at the 23rd Global Symposium for Regulators, our unique platform for regulatory dialogue to fast-track universal sustainable digital transformation.

I am pleased and energized to see you all here today. We look forward to tapping into your collective wisdom, experience, and inputs as we craft regulatory solutions to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of this decade.

I would like to thank our host, the Government of Uganda, for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to all of us. To our friends at the Uganda Communications Commission, happy silver jubilee as you celebrate 25 years of success, growth and resilience.

Why GSR?

For more than two decades, the Global Symposium for Regulators, or GSR, as popularly known, has been the global platform for exchange of best regulatory practices for ICT and digital regulation. It is the cradle of innovative approaches to extending universal and meaningful access to digital technologies for all, and to strengthening markets. This is why we are here today. GSR provides a platform for sharing good practices and advancing the global regulatory agenda. From the oldest to the youngest regulatory agencies, over the years under one roof, GSR has been a formidable bedrock for shaping the landscape of the sector.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is traditionally a getting together of ICT Regulators. But regulation does not operate in a vacuum. We recognize the role of policy, and that is why we also have Ministers here to contribute to the conversation. We recognize the critical role of the private sector and industry. And that is why we also have the captains of industry here with us.

We need sound regulatory frameworks, well-functioning markets for related services, and continued investment in resilient and diverse connectivity options.

Focus of the 2024 GSR

This edition is about, more than ever, charting new pathways towards regulatory agility, collaborative practices and excellence so that we can keep up with the fast pace of change and make impact on people's lives through digital. I have no doubt that together we can craft regulatory solutions for impact.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

For the next 3 days, Kampala will be the capital for the global dialogue on governance of transformative technologies, a topic at the heart of national and UN development agendas.

Transformative technologies are all around us offering a renewed promise to accelerate progress towards SDGs while driving change across the board. Crafting open, agile, and risk-based governance frameworks for transformative technologies has become a policy imperative and a stepping stone towards building inclusive digital economies.

This year at this GSR we have brought before you two important topics so that we together explore the challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence, and the nascent space economy.

You will also explore how regulation can keep pace with innovation, how regulators and regulation can become more agile and unlock the potential of emerging, transformative technologies for development while minimizing associated risks.

This year's GSR Best Practice Guidelines informed by your wisdom and experience provide a blueprint for 'charting the course of transformative technologies for positive impact. The Guidelines will be instrumental to the global regulatory community to build successful governance initiatives and amplify the positive impact of digital.

I want to thank all the Regulators for contributing to the GSR-24 Best Practice Guidelines consultations and the GSR Chair, Mr Thembo for his leadership.

Before concluding, I want to thank all of you who participated yesterday at the following events:

- The annual **Regional Regulatory Associations (RA) / Digital Regulation Network (DRN) meeting** looking at exchanges among the Associations and indeed on the DRN, which I launched last year. During this event, approaches to harmonized broadband mapping systems across Sub-Saharan Africa, were also presented. I will make an exciting announcement about a great project that we are launching on broadband mapping systems later this afternoon.
- The **Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers' meeting** offered perspectives of industry to regulators. We look forward to their outcome statement which will be presented at the closing of this GSR.
- The **Heads of Regulators Executive Roundtable** by decision makers on reimagining regulation for positive social and economic impact building inspired by this year's GSR consultation. The meeting adopted the 2024 GSR Best Practice Guidelines, a tool for regulators to unleash the power of transformative technologies for positive impact.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

GSR-24 will bring the global community of regulators even closer together and united, we will stand ready to address the challenges ahead and capitalize on digital technologies to shape a resilient future for all. This premier event will be rich in exchanges, learnings, networking and hopefully the beginning of lasting connections.

The pace of technological change is much faster now than it has been in the past. Policy, regulations, and legislative frameworks struggle to keep up! That remains a challenge for all of us. But I have unwavering confidence in our readiness to conquer these obstacles. **We can and will** rise to these challenges. We are ready to continue to dive into this journey and emerge even stronger on the other side!

I thank you.