

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF ICT AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE HON. DR. CHRIS BARYOMUNSI AT THE OPENING OF THE 2023 INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION-GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM OF REGULATORS ON JULY 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024, AT SPEKE RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER, MUNYONYO,**

Our Chief Guest, The Vice President of the Republic of Uganda,

The ITU Secretary General,

The Director, ITU Development Bureau,

Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors present,

Your Excellencies, the Heads of UN bodies in Uganda

Honourable Ministers responsible for ICT,

Heads of Regulatory bodies,

Industry Leaders,

Distinguished Delegates, in your respective capacities.

I am honored and privileged to welcome you to Uganda on behalf of the Government of Uganda, and the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

Uganda is honoured to host the 2024 International Telecommunications Union Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR24). We thank the ITU family for recognizing Uganda's credentials as a reliable partner in the development of ICTs and allowing us host GSR-24.

Uganda has been a committed member of the ITU since 1963 and has actively participated in various activities of the Union at technical, policy and governance levels.

As we all know, ICTs have demonstrated their capacity to accelerate socio-economic transformation. They have a huge potential to boost productivity, make Governments more efficient, businesses more competitive, and institutions effective.

The overall theme of this year's GSR is, "**Charting the course of transformative technologies for positive impact**". This aligns very well with the global desire to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through ICTs. Uganda's national strategy is similarly focused on achieving our socio-economic development goals through leveraging on technology.

We recognize that the digital landscape has evolved rapidly, largely driven by the innovative technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, blockchain, and virtual reality, among others. These technologies have transformed the digital ecosystem, affecting the way businesses are conducted, how services are delivered, as well as consumer patterns. While we celebrate this transformation, we are also cognizant of the challenges it places on the regulatory landscape.

The need to have a futuristic, relevant and responsive regulatory environment is growing by the day- largely driven by the fusion with non- ICT sectors. We are required to rethink our traditional regulatory models, address coordination problems within and outside the ICT sector, reduce policy fragmentation, and collaborate towards addressing sector and jurisdictional overlaps.

Distinguished delegates, we are excited that the GSR provides a platform where all thought leaders, regulators, industry players and other key ICT stakeholders converge to dialogue and set the policy and regulatory agenda that will guide the global digital industry over the near future. Under this platform, Governments are called upon to quickly adopt policies that leverage new technologies, hence ensuring that regulations remain relevant and effective without stifling innovation. Best practice now calls for a coordinated and collaborative approach that is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders – if we are to achieve the impact that we all desire.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Government of Uganda prioritized Digital Transformation as expressed in the Third National Development Plan (NDP III). My Ministry is implementing our Digital Transformation Roadmap that is hinged on five pillars i.e. 1) Digital Infrastructure & Connectivity, 2) Digital Services, and Cyber Security, 3) Data Protection & Privacy, 4) Digital Skills and 5) Innovation & Entrepreneurship. This roadmap seeks to guide the digital transformation efforts of Uganda, enabling us to capitalize on emerging technologies, enhance economic competitiveness, and improve the lives of our citizens. We plan to achieve this through: (a) Increasing the national ICT infrastructure coverage; b) Enhancing usage of ICT in national development and service delivery; c) Promoting ICT research, innovation, and commercialization of indigenous

knowledge products; d) Increasing the ICT human resource capital; e) Strengthening the policy, legal and regulatory framework.

We look forward to this year's set of Best Practice Guidelines. I am aware that various contributions have been received from several countries, regional regulatory bodies, industry players, the academia and various key stakeholders.

We thank every participant for partnering with the ITU to build onto this body of knowledge that continues to define the way countries set up their digital regulatory environment. These Guidelines provide recommendations on regulatory approaches and strategies, having taken into consideration emerging trends, best practice and contributions from various spheres of knowledge. We commit to align our national policies and regulatory frameworks around these well thought out guidelines to encourage investment, innovation, and growth in the ICT sector.

Allow me also thank the ITU Secretariat, our host country sponsors and partners, that have worked tirelessly with my Ministry and the Uganda Communications Commission, to ensure that this Symposium is well organized and provides a conducive environment for delegates to dialogue.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

**For God and my Country.**