

Speech by Bishar A. Hussein, Director General of the UPU International Bureau

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the UPU, I wish to join the eminent leaders who spoke before me in emphasizing the important role of information and communication technology in the social and economic transformation of the lives of the citizens of the world.

ICT has, in the recent past, created many opportunities as well as challenges for societies. The use of ICT has enabled the growth of international trade and commerce, and transformed the lives of millions of people around the world. ICT and social networking platforms have also changed the political and social order of societies in many countries. ICT is therefore a powerful tool that should be developed and harnessed carefully for the good of humanity in the post-2015 development agenda.

I believe that ICT can be used for bringing about social and economic equilibrium in society and advancing the Millennium Development Goals of the national governments and the United Nations. As we look forward to a new era of sustainable development in the coming years, ICT will continue to play a defining role in societal transformation and achievement of human prosperity.

The UPU has been, and still remains, an important stakeholder in the development of the information society since the first WSIS in 2003. Over the past 10 years, we have represented the sector in policy debates, and participated in activities related to the development of e-business and co-facilitated the C 7 e-business action line along with UNCTAD and ITC. We have not only played an advocacy role for an all-inclusive society, but have made concrete efforts to achieve these objectives in our policy decisions and in our work.

The UPU is fully dedicated to this WSIS+10 multi-stakeholder review process. We have recently decided to prioritize our own activities in relation to e-commerce, financial inclusion and trade facilitation, all of which are closely related to information society development. We have dedicated enormous resources to developing a technological solution aimed at enhancing the quality of services provided to our customers and to the citizens of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to emphasize that Posts are important national infrastructures for social, economic and digital inclusion. The UPU represents an industry that employs over six million people around the world. With a network of over 650,000 post offices in urban, rural and remote communities, we provide, on a daily basis, access to physical, financial and digital communication services to billions of people around the world who would otherwise be excluded from the world information society.

However, more needs to be done if we are to achieve the goals of the WSIS. Lack of Internet connectivity is hampering the development of rural communities in many parts of the world. Although the UPU is taking necessary steps to advance the use of ICT in many rural parts of the world, I call upon all governments represented here to provide the necessary support for postal transformation and modernization of the ICT infrastructure in their countries. This will no doubt assist in the realization of the inclusive development agendas in your countries.

The UPU, in collaboration with governments, other UN agencies, international organizations and the private sector, is doing everything possible to assist in the realization of the MDGs and development of the SDGs. The UPU is now developing a Vision 2020, which will promote all the comprehensive themes of innovation, integration and inclusion, where ICT will be the driving force and game changer for the future.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, the UPU will remain engaged in the noble cause of the WSIS goals and objectives. Thank you for your attention.