

**Speech by Mr. Anshu Prakash,  
Secretary (Telecom), Government of India**

<b>Engagement</b>	Closing ceremony of the <b>17th Virtual ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS)</b> Geneva. [Duration: <b>5 minutes</b> ]
<b>Theme</b>	Towards an inclusive Digital Society
<b>Date</b>	Thursday, December 3, 2020
<b>Time</b>	08:15 – 08:30 pm (IST), [15:45 to 16:00 (Geneva time) (GMT+1)]
<b>Venue</b>	Virtual Mode, Committee Room, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sanchar Bhawan, DoT, New Delhi
<b>Contact</b>	Mr V. Raghunandan, DDG (IR) DoT, Mob- +91 9447003456

- **Session Moderator Ms Eun Ju Kim**
- **Excellency Ms. Doreen Bogdan Martin, Director BDT, ITU**

**Excellencies, Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, Session Interpreters**

**My Greetings and Namaste to all of you**

1. It has been a privilege and an honour to chair the 17<sup>th</sup> Virtual ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium. I am really impressed, by the richness of, debates and discussions, that took place during this symposium. These were thought provoking, and had in abundance, very stimulating yet pragmatic ideas. The theme of the symposium, “Towards an inclusive digital society”, was no doubt very timely and extremely relevant, as highlighted in the policy session. The deliberations were centered around number of people digitally connected, but more importantly, on the number of people not connected. The need for inclusion was felt and emphasized by all of us.

2. We know that certain groups are more disadvantaged than others. Rural areas, low-income groups, marginalized communities, physically challenged persons-for whom we have a special day today will fall in this category. To alter the situation, and connect the unconnected, policy makers need to act. Any action on this matter will require data, to take informed decisions, and arrive at appropriate policy interventions.

3. In the 3 days, this symposium has provided a platform, not only to the users of ICT data, but also to the aggregators of data, who compile and collate data for

meaningful conclusions. It is heartening to note, that the symposium has created an enabling environment, where the stakeholders met virtually, exchanged ideas, and gained from experiences of each other. The organizers have done a wonderful job and the participants have been indeed enthusiastic.

4. I am sure that our interactions will be instrumental, in refining the measurement methodologies, and development of appropriate and relevant indicators. The testimonies, the country experiences, the best practices shared by the participants, have brought in fresh insights in critical policy areas. A broad framework, which does not emphasize competitive ranking, yet recognizes efforts by each country, can be worked out to gauge the progress in development of ICT.

5. It is also important that we look for alternative data sources to complement our traditional indicators. I am happy that the Symposium deliberated on the opportunity offered by big data analytics and other emerging techniques of getting useful information. I congratulate all the participants who actively contributed in the symposium.

6. I also congratulate the ITU team for releasing "*Measuring Digital Development -Fact and Figures 2020*" which give deep insight into the World's ICT scenario and will help in evidence based policy making. Good work has also been accomplished by the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ ICT Indicators and Expert Group On Households and their team members. The chairs of the group deserve all praise. This will help refine the collection of data for evidence based policy making. The resolve and commitment of ITU and Member States to create an inclusive digital society and thereby bridge the digital divide and work towards meeting SDGs-2030 objectives is indeed commendable.

7. Digital Societies, smart and connected are the future. Hence inclusion of all is very important. I once again thank ITU for this opportunity to chair the symposium and address this august gathering. **UN SG's Roadmap for Digital cooperation outlines that effective digital cooperation is instrumental in achieving the "future we want" and the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** India continues to be an active partner of ITU and UN along with member states in this journey towards an inclusive digital society. Now I officially close this symposium.

Thank you, Namaste and happy holidays ahead.