S*peaker’s name*: **Mr. Albert Medrán**

*Speaker’s title*, **Chief of Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Digital Advance**

*Name of the Member State of the speaker*,  **SPAIN**

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D*ession of the Plenary at which the statement is to be delivered,*  **Thursday morning 1 November**

O*riginal language of text*. **Spanish**

Nombre del ponente: **D. Albert Medrán**

*Puesto del ponente*, **Director del Gabinete de la Secretaría de Estado para el Avance Digital**

*Nombre del país del ponente*,  **ESPAÑA**

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Sesión en la que el ponente formulará la declaración*,*  **jueves por la mañana 1 de noviembre**

Texto original. **Español**

**SPEECH AT 2018 ITU CONFERENCE, DUBAI**

Chairman of the Conference, Excellencies and Fellow Delegates, on behalf of the Spanish Administration please allow me to express my thanks to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for the organization of this important Conference in the vibrant and friendly city of Dubai.

I would like to begin my remarks at this International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference by offering my thanks for the opportunity given to the Kingdom of Spain to continue participating fully in the Union's activities and projects, and to present the reasons why we have put forward a Spanish candidacy for the ITU Council.

As a founding member of the Union, Spain has always appreciated the importance of the activities that brought our States together, to form an organization based on cooperation and mutual assistance. And, far from decreasing, the importance of these activities has only increased; they have become fundamental to economic and social development, affecting the areas of politics and security.

We therefore share the Union's vision of the importance of connectivity, and its value as a factor for economic growth, and we consider policies based on connectivity to be drivers of development as regards the digitalization of economies and societies.

The cross-cutting natures of digitalization and connectivity make them a prime responsibility for governments in their efforts to guarantee citizens' digital inclusion. That is why we must combat the vulnerabilities, inequalities, gaps and new forms of poverty that digitalization may bring. We must leave no one behind.

Periods of transition to a new economic and social paradigm are also times of great vulnerability for disadvantaged groups. We therefore want to underscore and affirm the gender gap as a priority in our vision and in the projects that the Union implements.

Spain is considered a pioneer in terms of connectivity policy, not only because of the extent and quality of its experience, but also because of the excellent industrial fabric that underpins its connectivity-based initiatives, as well as the technical regulations it has established, which have formed the basis of international recommendations from global organizations such as the ITU.

The issue of connectivity is key to achieving the global goals for sustainable growth set down in the Connect 2020 Agenda for Telecommunication Development​, established as proposed by the government of Korea and supported unreservedly by Spain, given their impact on fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, I would like to highlight that Spain has met the penetration rate targets set by the Union, as well as undertaking and planning infrastructure initiatives, including the roll-out of ultrafast networks. I would also like to stress that Spain's telecommunication plans for the coming four years are aligned with and in harmony with the goals of the strategic plan that the ITU will foreseeably adopt at this Conference.

In this respect, Spain's goals include openness to talent and international investment to foster the digital services that will be developed using this infrastructure.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Spain's full commitment to the Union's activities, its active participation in key meetings and conferences, its joint chairmanship of “United for Smart Sustainable Cities”, and its deputy chairmanship of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group.

The Government that I represent here today relishes the challenge of submitting our candidacy. With your trust and support, Spain can continue cooperating, continue strengthening our close ties with the ITU and its Member States, and continue undertaking projects that are deeply intertwined with economic and social progress and with the advancement of our citizens, in inclusive and plural societies.