



16th Global Symposium for Regulators (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2016)

Be Empowered, Be Included!

Building Blocks for Smart Societies in a Connected World

Speeches

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Global Symposium for Regulators 2016 *(GSR-16)*



Speech by ITU Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao

GSR-16 : Opening Remarks

12 May 2016, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

His Excellency Yasser Elkady, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Chairman of the Board of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and GSR-16 Chairman;

Eng. Mustafa Abdul Wahed, **Acting** Executive President of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Egypt;

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to the 2016 Global Symposium for Regulators.

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Egypt and the National Telecommunication Authority of Egypt (NTRA) for hosting this edition of GSR, held under the auspices of H.E. Abdel Fatah El Sisi, President of the Republic of Egypt. With GSR-16 we are celebrating our long standing cooperation.

GSR has become the world's largest platform for the ICT regulatory community where, every year since 2000, we have come together to discuss policy and regulatory challenges, opportunities and best practices.

As you know, there are many ways in which ICTs can make the world a better place. In today's world creating the conditions for a data-driven economy to flourish is a must, so getting the regulatory environment right is absolutely vital.

GSR-16 is of particular importance as it is the first Symposium since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise referred to as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ICTs are the foundation upon which economic and social development can grow.

ICTs have incredible potential to improve development outcomes in both the developing and the developed world. All three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection – need ICTs as key catalysts, and ICTs will be absolutely crucial for achieving the SDGs.

This GSR will allow regulators, policy makers, industry leaders and other key ICT stakeholders to share their views, engage in interactive discussions and identify best practices moving forward, not only in the ICT/telecommunications sector, but also in terms of how ICT/telecommunications interacts with other regulation.

There is no doubt that GSR-16 is the place where we can hold an inclusive dialogue, develop innovative solutions and foster an enabling environment to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The successful Global Dialogue on Digital Financial Inclusion held yesterday confirms today's need for collaboration across the sectors.

ITU is expanding its horizons to support the timely attainment of the SDGs and this is why the topical subject of digital financial inclusion has been included in the agenda of this year's Symposium.

I would also like to congratulate the Telecommunication Development Bureau. Under the Director of the Bureau, Mr Brahima Sanou, this event continues to grow in influence worldwide and has become the unmissable annual gathering of the global policy and regulatory community.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Before I conclude, let me invite you to three important gatherings, organized by ITU, taking place this year:

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly will meet in Yasmine Hammamet, Tunisia, from 25 October to 3 November to define the next period of study for ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T). WTSA-16 will be preceded by the Global Standards Symposium on 24 October 2016.

ITU Telecom World 2016 takes place from 14 to 17 November in Bangkok, Thailand. Telecom World is the global platform to accelerate ICT innovations for social and economic development, where policy makers and regulators meet industry experts, investors, SME's, entrepreneurs and innovators.

The World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (**WTIS**) will be in Botswana from 21 to 23 November 2016. WTIS has evolved to become the main global forum for telecommunications and information society measurement. The event provides a unique platform for ICT data users and producers to meet and share knowledge and best practices, identify business opportunities and enhance cooperation.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful GSR: be empowered, be included!

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BDT Director's Speeches



Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-16)

Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt 12 May 2016

GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS

Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 12 May 2016

Opening Speech by Brahima Sanou

Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

His Excellency Engineer Yasser ElKady, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Chairman of the Board of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and Chairman of GSR-16

Eng. Mustafa Abdul Wahed, Acting Executive President of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Egypt;

Mr. Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary General

Mr. Abdoukarim Soumaila, Secretary General of African Telecommunications Unions ATU;

CEOs of National and regional regulatory agencies;

All other High Dignitaries here present;

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the 16th annual Global Symposium for Regulators, here in this beautiful city of Sharm el-Sheikh held under the auspices of H.E. Abdel Fatah El Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

I would like first and foremost to thank His Excellency Engineer Yasser Al Kadi for his usual strong support to the ITU and for having honored us with his presence here.

I thanks also go to Eng. Mustafa Abdul Wahed, acting Executive President, National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Egypt, and his whole team for making this event possible.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Ten years ago, Broadband, Convergence of Networks and Services and Next-Generation Networks were already at the center of our discussions.

Today, our world is still evolving, and telecommunications and ICTS are increasingly recognized as the foundation of economic and social development.

Our digital connected world is changing faster and faster– some even call it the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Innovation is taking place everywhere and at all levels. Driverless cars are a reality. So are mobile applications, smart grid, smart water and smart cities just to name a few.

New players and new stakeholders are changing the **ICT sector** to an **ICT ecosystem**. Consumers are becoming active players in this ecosystem and becoming themselves entrepreneurs, content producers, and investors.

We are witnessing impressive growth in infrastructure and connectivity globally. More than 140 countries have deployed 4G networks, and 5G promises to open new opportunities and boost the commoditization of the Internet of Things and cloud services.

The deployment of fiber backbones and developments in satellite technologies, solar powered drones and balloon technology represent further opportunities to connect people around the world.

We are very happy to be here in Egypt, where the national ICT strategy, under the High patronage of H.E. President Al-Sisi, provides that **access** to information and telecommunications services at **affordable** prices is a right for all citizens, including Persons with Disabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What **is** absolutely true today is that no one and no sector can imagine life without ICTs. Just think of health, finance, education, electricity, and transportation as well as tourism, music, media, and sports!

All the untapped potential that is still to be discovered and the brilliant young minds, the digital natives, are our main assets.

In building smart societies, policy makers, regulators, private sector and all stakeholders need to establish an inclusive dialogue to foster an enabling regulatory environment across all sectors in order to put a human face on ICTs and tap into their potential for sustainable development.

We need to move from vertical policies and regulations to collaborative policy and regulation to build smart societies.

This year GSR will shed light on financial inclusion. It is estimated that more than 2 billion adults - mostly in developing countries - are considered "financially excluded".

On the other hand we have more than 7.2 billion mobile subscriptions. So the critical mass of infrastructure is there and the platforms are up and running.

What is needed is **collaborative regulation** between the ICT sector and financial and banking systems as we discussed yesterday during the pre-event on Global Dialogue on Digital Financial Inclusion.

The Global Symposium for Regulators is helping us create the building blocks of this smart society we all want to live in during our lifetimes and sustain for future generations.

This reminds me of an old proverb that says "**We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children**".

Let us play our part to facilitate the attainment of the Sustainable Development and build a better future for our people.

I thank you very much.

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