



17th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (Virtual Event, 2020)

Towards an Inclusive Digital Society

Speeches

This PDF is provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Library & Archives Service from an officially produced electronic file.

Ce PDF a été élaboré par le Service de la bibliothèque et des archives de l'Union internationale des télécommunications (UIT) à partir d'une publication officielle sous forme électronique.

Este documento PDF lo facilita el Servicio de Biblioteca y Archivos de la Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones (UIT) a partir de un archivo electrónico producido oficialmente.

یجر ی نور کتالافمل نم ٲنخوما ی هو تاطوفحموال ٲمکتبال قسم ، (ITU) تصالالائلی لوالد ادحتالانم ٲممقد PDF قسنٲٲخسنال هذه امیرسٲٲدادهعإ

本PDF版本由国际电信联盟（ITU）图书馆和档案服务室提供。来源为正式出版的电子文件。

Настоящий файл в формате PDF предоставлен библиотечно-архивной службой Международного союза электросвязи (МСЭ) на основе официально созданного электронного файла.

Address by Mr. Anshu Prakash, Chairman, Digital Communications Commission and Secretary, Telecommunications, Government of India at 17th World Telecom Indicators Symposium (WTIS), Geneva on 1st Dec 2020.

- Excellency Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary General, ITU
 - Excellency Ms. Doreen Bogdan Martin, Director, BDT, ITU
- Excellencies, Distinguished Members, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My greetings and Namaste to all of you.

I deem it a great privilege and honour, to chair and address the Opening Session, of the World Telecom Indicators Symposium.

2. Excellencies, the theme of the symposium is “towards an inclusive Digital Society”. Each word in this phrase is significant. Our goal is Digital Society.

But what kind of digital society are we seeking? An inclusive society.

The benefits of digital society should be universal. All countries, All states, All persons.

And the word “towards”, signifies that work is in progress: That we have to make efforts to reach our goal.

3. Excellencies, the global pandemic faced today, further highlights, the role of inclusive digital society. In situations of lockdowns, curfews, restrictions on national and international travel, quarantine, hospitalization, etc., it is the digital

communication networks, which are connecting all countries, organizations and families. In fact, it would be impossible, to fight the Pandemic and the virus, without the strength and artillery, which digital communications places at our disposal. Even for vaccine distribution and administration, digital communications and networks, will play a key role. In the coming years, with Industry 4.0, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Machine to Machine communication, Robotics, etc., the concept of digital society will gain even more prominence.

4. Inclusive digital society must bridge various gaps and divides. These include, the divide between the rich and the poor, haves and have-nots, rural and urban areas, inter-country and intra-country disparities, among others. Deficiencies of access to technology; equipment and smart devices; content and carriage networks also exist. We also face issues of, lack of digital literacy and skills, problems faced by geriatric population, requirements of persons with special needs, and reaching out to marginalized groups and communities. I trust you will all agree, that above challenges, inter-alia, must be addressed by this World Telecom Body to achieve the goal, of an inclusive digital society.

5. I submit that all organs of ITU, and all pillars of this esteemed global organization, will need to contribute in this endeavor. Hence, the T or Technical Sector, will come up with technologies which are affordable, accessible and can be adopted by all Member States. Similarly, the standards approved by ITU, must be

such that they are conducive to meet the challenges already listed by me. In the same manner, the Radio Sector, must also leverage the strengths of spectrum, a valuable natural resource at our disposal, to facilitate that benefits of digital society, reach those who need them most.

6. Furthermore, we must recognize, that Governments alone, may not be able to achieve our objective, in the desired time frame. Hence, active collaboration and partnership is required, with business, academia, scientists, innovators and the civil society.

7. Excellencies, ICT indicators are an important tool, available to us, to measure and monitor progress, identify actionable items and guide policies to be formulated and adopted for transiting to a digital society. We must, however, ensure that these indicators are realistic, focus on outcomes, are flexible, and recognize the existing base from which each country is attempting to achieve progress. The Start line of each country is different. Hence, inter se efforts and resources required, will also differ. This should be duly factored in.

8. Excellencies, we have a packed agenda, which is both comprehensive and meaningful. We look forward to considerable value addition from all distinguished speakers and participants.

9. While physical person to person meeting would have been wonderful, in the given current circumstances, I again congratulate and thank ITU D Sector and all concerned Units and Departments responsible for organizing this virtual symposium. Their efforts have enabled us to come together, to be connected, and to work towards our objective, of an inclusive digital society.

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

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