REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

ITU 150th CELEBRATION SPEECH

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@ APT PRF-15, SINGAPORE

IOANE KOROIVUKI

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Ms Areewan Haorangsi, Secretary General, APT

Mr.Leong Keng Thai, Chairman, PRF

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed an honour and privilege to be in Singapore today for the 15th Policy and Regulatory Forum and to also commemorate ITU's 150th anniversary. The ITU is grateful to the APT, especially Ms. Areewan Haorangsi, for facilitating this celebration here today.

On behalf of the ITU Secretary-General, Mr. Houlin Zhao and the ITU Elected Officials, l would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the APT, the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), Singapore for hosting the 15th PRF, and I would also like to acknowledge the ASP Member States, officials and regulators, private sector and other representatives present here today.

Ladies and gentlemen

One Hundred and Fifty Years ago, on the morning of 17 May 1865, the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris, bringing into existence the International Telegraph Union, the first manifestation of ITU.

Sixty Seven years later in 1932, at the Fifth Conference of the Plenipotentiaries in Madrid, ITU's Founding Charter was signed – changing the name from the International Telegraph Union to what it is known today, the **International Telecommunication Union**.

On 15 November 1947 in recognition of the central role that ITU had played in the development of ICTs for over 80 years, and its increasing importance to governments and industry, ITU became the specialised United Nations agency for telecommunications.

Telecommunication, information and communication technologies have certainly evolved over these past 150 years – from the simple dash and dots of telegraphy, to strings of ones and zeros of digital data streams that now govern our modes of communications today.

Our lives have become so dependent on ICTs that for many of us it has become very difficult to imagine a life without the Internet, without access to email and without social media, and for some of us it would be almost chaotic or even catastrophic to be without it.

We have indeed come a long way, and, as we commemorate ITU's 150th year of existence, we also take note that today, there are more than seven billion mobile phone subscriptions globally, 3.2 billion people will be using the Internet by end this year, and almost two thirds of that number are from developing countries.

Mobile broadband has become the most dynamic market segment globally, with penetration reaching 47% in 2015, a value that increased 12 times since 2007. 3G global population coverage is expected to reach 69% by population this year;

The proportion of households with Internet access at home increased from 18% in 2005 to 46% in 2015

Recently released the ITU ICT Facts and Figures featuring the end-2015 estimates for key telecommunication/ICT indicators show that broadband is now affordable

in 111 countries, with the cost of a basic (fixed or mobile) broadband plan corresponding to less than five per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, thus meeting the target set by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development.

There has also been rapid extension of 3G mobile broadband into rural areas, and ITU estimates that 29 per cent of the 3.4 billion people worldwide living in rural areas will be covered by 3G mobile broadband by the end of 2015. Among the four billion people living in urban areas, 89 per cent will have access to 3G mobile broadband.

Fixed-broadband uptake is growing but at a slower pace with a seven per cent annual increase over the past three years. While the prices of fixed-broadband services dropped sharply in the three years to 2011 in developing countries, they have been stagnating since then and even increased slightly in LDCs.

We all now recognize the vital importance of ICT as a social and economic development tool, as it enables high-speed, evidence-based, allowing remote decision-making and bringing efficiencies to all sectors, and enhancing possibilities for cross-sectoral collaboration. More than 190 countries have either adopted or in the process of adopting a national broadband plan, policy or strategy.

That ICT has manifested itself in all parts of the society with a wide range of applications running over broadband and more importantly wireless broadband. It has become a critical infrastructure not only for ICT services but also for agriculture, health, finance and commerce, education, transport, electricity and governance, amongst others. So much so that Smart Cities and Smart Societies are being created to leverage the potential of ICTs.

The ITU has been working with sister UN agencies and partners in areas of cross-sector ICT applications. Together with WHO, the ITU developed an e-health strategy guide, which is now the being adopted in several countries. With FAO, we have developed an e-Agriculture strategy, which is being piloted in Bhutan and Sri Lanka. However, cross-sectoral collaboration is not without its challenges, as it involves players from completely different disciplines for example health and ICT, agriculture and ICT, social behaviour and ICT, and automobiles and ICT. All this generates Big Data and requires strategies to manage the data, to analyse it and to also respond to the analysis; smartly. There are also the important issues of security, privacy and interoperability.

The term "big data", is used to define high-volume, high-velocity and high-variety information assets that demand cost-effective and innovative forms of information processing for enhanced insight and decision making. It is estimated that 40 Zettabytes (10^21 bytes) of data will be created by 2020, an increase of 300 times from 2005.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is rapidly is becoming a reality, and machine-to-machine (M2M) communications are expected to grow significantly in the near future.

Today, increasingly we are talking more and more about big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Everything, and where we expect to be connected everywhere and at all times, it is incredible how much progress has been made.

ITU is proud of the huge impact telecom/ICT development has contributed to the improvement of humanity, contributing to changes in our economies, our cultures and our lives.

ITU has played its part through the coordination of global resources, including spectrum and satellite orbital resources; through its international standards; and the development of an enabling environment and encouragement of innovation, but it was through the support of our members, partners, and all related stakeholders that ITU has been able to achieve in the last 150 years what it has been able to do successfully.

I would like to thank APT, IDA, ASP members, partners, and related stakeholders for all the valuable support especially in the region and your contributions to the success of ITU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this note I would like to thank you as we commemorate today ITUs 150th Anniversary.

Happy 150th Birthday ITU!