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| APTlogogreen3 | ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY | **Document No.:**  **SATRC-18/OUT-02** |
| **18th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council (SATRC-18)** |
| 19-21 December 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal | 31 January 2018 |

Secretary General

**summary record OF THE 18th MEETING OF THE SOUTH ASIAN TELECOMMUNICATION REGULATORS’ COUNCIL**

1. INTRODUCTION

The 18th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council (SARTC-18) was held from 19-21 December 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The meeting was hosted by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA).

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss key policy and regulatory issues and way forward for the regulators through the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI and to share experience among the regulators. Meeting also included regulatory roundtable sessions, industry-regulatory dialog, and industry session. The meeting was attended by 82 delegates representing SATRC Members, Affiliate Members, telecom industry representatives of the host country, and APT Secretariat.

1. OPENING SESSION *(Tuesday, 19 December 2017, 10:00 – 11:00 hrs.)*
   1. **Welcome Address by Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman, Nepal Telecommunications Authority**

Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman, Nepal Telecommunications Authority, delivered a Welcome Address. The full text of the address is provided in Document SATRC-18/INP-01.

* 1. **Welcome Address by Ms. Areewan Haorangsi, Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity**

Ms. Areewan Haorangsi, Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), delivered a Welcome Address. The full text of the address is provided in Document SATRC-18/INP-02

* 1. **Address by Mr. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications, Nepal**

Mr. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications Nepal delivered an address.

* 1. **Address by Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman, SATRC**

Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman of SATRC and Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) delivered his address. The full text of the address is provided in Document SATRC-18/INP-03.

* 1. **Inaugural Address by H.E. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Information and Communications, Nepal**

His Excellency Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Information and Communications Nepal, delivered his address. The full text of his address is provided in Document SATRC-18/INP-04.

1. SESSION 1: PLENARY *(Tuesday, 19 December 2017, 11:30 – 12:30 hrs.)*

The first session of the Plenary was chaired by Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman, SATRC.

* 1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Chairman introduced the Provisional Agenda of SATRC-18 (Document SATRC-18/ADM-01) and sought for comments. As there was no comment, the Agenda was adopted.

* 1. **Election of the Chairman of SATRC**

Chairman mentioned that according to the Working Methods of SATRC, the Chairman will be nominated by the country hosting the SATRC meeting. Secretary General informed that Nepal nominated Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman of Nepal Telecommunications Authority as the Chairman of SATRC. The meeting elected Mr. Jha the new chairman of SATRC by acclamation.

Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, the outgoing Chairman of SATRC congratulated Mr. Digambar Jha, the new Chairman of SATRC. He also thanked SATRC members and the APT secretariat for supporting the activities of SATRC throughout the period of his chairmanship of SATRC.

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| **Decision No. 1 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council elected Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman of Nepal Telecommunications Authority as the Chairman of SATRC until the next SATRC meeting. |

Mr. Digambar Jha thanked the meeting for electing him as new chairman of SATRC and thanked Dr. Mahmood for the leadership of SATRC for the last year. He expected wider and deeper engagement among SATRC Members in activities of SATRC in coming years.

* 1. **Outcomes of the 14th Session of the General Assembly and the 41st Session of the Management Committee relevant to SATRC** *(Document No.: SATRC-18/INP-05)*

Secretary General presented the outcomes of the 14th Session of the General Assembly of APT (GA-14) and the 41st Session of Management Committee of APT (MC-41) as contained in document SATRC-18/INP-05. She informed the decisions and actions of the GA-14 and MC-41 which were relevant to the activities of SATRC.

* 1. **The Strategic Plan of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity for 2018-2020** *(Document No.: SATRC-18/INP-05)*

APT Secretariat presented the Strategic Plan of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity for 2018-2020 as contained in document SATRC-18/INP-06. He highlighted overall objective of the Strategic Plan and explained the five Strategic Pillars as well as relevant objectives and action items.

Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director General, BICMA, queried on the human resource development plan for regulators since most of the time they were referred to the Ministry who was a focal point. Secretary General replied that the Strategic Plan mentioned the capacity building in general. She further emphasized the internal coordination in each member country for attending the activities of APT. She further mentioned the effort of APT Secretariat to organize local training programmes requested by APT Members where all local organizations can participate.

1. SESSION 2: REGULATORS’ ROUNDTABLE: SDG2030 AND DEVELOPING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE *(Tuesday, 19 December 2017, 14:00 – 15:30 hrs.)*

The Regulators’ Roundtable was organized in order to facilitate discussion among the Regulators on their common issues on interest. The roundtable was moderated by Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman of SATRC. The theme of the roundtable was “SDG2030 and developing digital infrastructure”. The head of regulators or the heads of delegation of seven SATRC Members who attended SATRC-18 were invited as panelists in the discussion.

The focus of this session was for the regulators to exchange their views and share experience on the role of telecom regulators to achieve SDG2030 as well as the critical issues related to developing digital infrastructure including last mile access for providing affordable broadband services for all.

Mr. Anil Kaushal, Member, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India made a key note presentation as contained in document SATRC-18/INP-09. He highlighted the ICTs role in achieving SDGs 2030 such as ICTs role in agriculture, education, healthcare, etc. He also discussed the role of governments and telecom regulator and things that need to be done including digital infrastructure development, security, affordability, digital literacy and awareness. He then explained “Digital India” initiative and relevant priority areas for making Digital India happen. He mentioned that robust infrastructure and capacity building are important issues to attain SDG2030.

Chairman thanked Mr. Kaushal for his presentation and he added that Right of Way was a critical issue in Nepal for developing infrastructure for ICT. He mentioned that Rural Telecom Development Fund (RTDF) was used through operators for the development of backbone which have to be shared and the East-West optical fibre was under construction.

Following points were some key highlights from the distinguished panelists.

* Mr. Ilyas Ahmed, CEO of CAM, Maldives highlighted that ICTs were enabler to achieve SDG2030 and government alone could not do by itself. Partnership was the way to go forward. Hence, CAM as government entity collaborated with industry and operators and came up with national broadband policy. Key policies toward provision of broadband included a policy to provide basic broadband services to all part of the country which include multiple initiatives such as providing broadband service using 3G, building digital infrastructure to enhance broadband services by laying additional submarine network. Another policy was to provide world class broadband services to most part of the country using 4G. The remaining to do was to encourage other parties to take advantage of these infrastructure as well as to create awareness among people.
* H.E. Hossein Fallah Joshagani, Deputy Minister and President of CRA Iran highlighted that there had been a lot of development in telecom sectors in Iran in the past 10 years and he provided some statistical figure. There were special programs to develop and provide ICT service to remote areas such as e-government, e-agriculture, etc. There were also programs for market liberalization, special program to support national content provider, startup, application provider, etc. There were also focus on IoT, Big Data, Cloud, frequency re-farming, etc. H.E. mentioned that ICTs was a good enabler to achieve SDG2030 and Iran hoped to achieve the goal before 2030.
* Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director General, BICMA Bhutan highlighted that it had placed important for rural connectivity and achieved 93% of population covered by mobile connectivity. It also provided subsidy to telecom service provider for providing service to rural areas. The project was at the fifth phase targeting herding places where people keep their kettle and go for medicinal plant collection. It also targeted to enhance quality of service to rural schools and basic health unit. It also tried to work on mobile financial service.
* Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman, BTRC highlighted that ICT is the key enabler for all SDG and four most important SDG are Education (SDG4), Gender Equality (SDG5), Infrastructure (SDG9), and Partnership (SDG17). In 2008, Bangladesh adopted Digital Bangladesh program with the goal to digitize every sectors by 2021. Those goals in Digital Bangladesh were complimented to SDG2030. There would be tower sharing company in Bangladesh in near future.

Mr. Jayatilake, Director General of TRCSL highlighted the programmes initiated by TRCSL to address SDG2030. They included the development of an e-agriculture strategy, own radio station, promotion of entrepreneurship using ICT among farmers, training on the use of ICTs. There were also e-health initiative, encouragement of operators to develop infrastructure in rural areas through Telecom Development Fund, and connectivity to SEA ME WE5 submarine cable. NTA queried India and Maldives on status of 4G rollout and initiative to expedite 5G policy formulation to deploy 5G as soon as possible. Mr. Kaushal replied that the common thing between 4G and 5G is backhaul. It’s needed to make policy so simple to lay optical fibre to provide high capacity backhaul which will be key for 4G and 5G deployment. Mr. Ahmed replied that one operator had nationwide coverage and the other would have it by end of the year. The strategy was to make the spectrum assignment technology neutral. The other enabler was that the nationwide fiber network to support 4G. There was a plan for 5G trial sometime in 2018.

The meeting also discussed about the cooperation with health, transport, finance, education regulators. It was highlighted that 5G is the utilization of all verticals. It was mentioned that telecom regulators need to take a approach to talk with those regulators? It was emphasized that there should be joint regulation by telco and banking for the mobile financial services.

1. SESSION 3: REGULATORS’ ROUNDTABLE (CONTINUE): PROMOTE CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR INNOVATIVE AND VALUE CREATION IN ICTs *(Tuesday, 19 December 2017, 15:45 – 17:15 hrs.)*

This session was the continuity from the previous session of Regulators’ Roundtable. The roundtable was moderated by Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). The theme of the roundtable was “Promote Conducive Environment for Innovation and Value Creation in ICTs”. The head of regulators or the heads of delegation of seven SATRC Members who attended SATRC-18 were invited as panelists in the roundtable discussion.

The focus of this session was for the regulators to exchange their views and share experience to develop policy and regulatory environments that enable them to effectively harness the benefits of telecommunication/ICT innovation.

H. E. Hossein Fallah Joshaghani, Deputy Minister and President of Communication Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Islamic Republic of Iran made a key note presentation as contained in document SATRC-18/INP-10. He highlighted the concept and definition of digital economy and described four key knowledge players in ICT ecosystem. Challenges of innovation in ICT are for example innovation inefficiencies, security and privacy, intellectual property, etc. Guiding principles of ICT-centric innovation policy includes user centric, common language, private sector led, etc. Finally he presented four implications for government policy-makers and 3 implications for regulators.

Chairman thanked His Excellency for his presentation and noted that policy maker and regulator were different entity in Iran, while in some country such as Bangladesh they are the same. He also noted that Iran had local OTT.

Following points were some key highlights from the distinguished panelists.

* Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director General, BICMA Bhutan highlighted that Bhutan just amended the Bhutan Infocom Act to cope with changing technologies and to facilitate service providers with diversity in technology. That had been done with extensive consultation with stakeholders and public via website, which made them feelings that they were the part of the Act. Collaborative regulation was important to involve not only stakeholders but also co-regulators so they had strong ties with financial regulator. Tax exemption for all communication equipment was another initiative. Another important initiative was to provide free access to national fiber and cheap spectrum so the operators also have to provide cheap affordable rate to the people. It also developed guideline for infrastructure sharing. For any new service to be introduced, there must be enough amount of advocacy to the public.
* Chairman queried India on how licensing regime could be conducive to innovation. Mr. Kaushal commented that India had come a long path to unified licensing that the service providers did not need to have multiple licenses for different services. India also opened for consultation to public and get their comment, and the policy is formulated based on their comments.
* Chairman asked how to encourage development and proliferation of useful content. Mr. Jayatilake from TRCSL replied that telecom project done through BOI will be tax free. TRCSL also provided assistance in R&D with Universities. TRCSL also conduct training programs on ICT entrepreneurship for youth and SMEs and obtained assistance from ITU on some of the training programs.
* The participant asked on the local content development such as local OTT and suggested SATRC countries to help each other by promoting local OTT to protect personal data. His Excellency replied that OTT and contents are much related to the culture of the countries. Some countries may have different culture. There were some challenges for local OTT i.e. trust of the people. People trust foreign company rather than domestic company.
* Mr. Digambar Jha further added telecom law had been formulated long time back and no amendment had been made since then. As a Regulator, it faced stepwise problem to address the issue since the technology change every 3-4 years.

* Chairman asked how to suggest enhancement of trust among regulators, service providers and users. Mr. Ilyas added that there were reasons that people trust foreign OTT more than local. One such as afraid of interception by the local authorities. For local OTT, the chance are that the other party may not have that application installed. Preferential treatment to the newcomer would create a way to get them on board and become popular. Trust cannot be done overnight. He further highlighted some initiative completed in Maldives such as nominal license fee of 5% of the revenue, tax free equipment for network expansion, spectrum totally free of charge with technology neutral. Those factors helped to reduce the price for mobile broadband service. There is funding program for startup and mobile number portability facilitate higher level of competition. Light touch regulation is used to create more flexibility for operator to provide the service.

Chairman thanked all panelists for their participation. He further commented that the Telecom Act should be reviewed to adapt technology change. Trust is also a serious thing to get from customer.

There was a question from Cellular Operators’ Association of India on how to usage of local equipment. H.E. replied that there was committee to evaluate the local company. Then they officially introduce the company to the operator. Based on license agreement, they should use the equipment that had been introduced.

NTA commented that to promote conducive environment for innovation and value creation ICT, regulators require a paradigm shift in their thinking process. When the regulator does a study with consultation with stakeholders and come up with recommendation, the decision are not made in time. He asked if other regulators had the same problems. Dr. Mahmood replied that most of the country are bureaucracy and regulators are part of bureaucracy and it need to pass through bureaucracy to get approval. Some country maybe fast and some maybe slow.

1. SESSION 4: INDUSTRY – REGULATOR DIALOGUE *(Wednesday, 20 December 2017, 10:00 – 11:30hrs.)*

This session was moderated by Mr. S.K. Gupta, Secretary, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. The dialogue was to identify the current challenging issues and how to enhance cooperation between regulator and industry to address the current challenges. The topics that included in the discussion covered:

* the initiatives that need to be taken collectively to ensure to quality and speed on broadband services including investments in network development;
* the enhanced collective measures that need to be taken to ensure consumer protection.

Six high level executives from regulators and telecom industry were invited as panelists at this session to express their views on the theme of the discussion. Among them were:

* Mr. Ilyas Ahmed, Chief Executive, Communication Authority of Maldives
* Mr. Ravinath Jayatilake, Director General, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka
* Ms. Kamini Rajbhandari, Managing Director, Nepal Telecom
* Mr. Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, Managing Director and CEO, Robi-Axiata Limited, Bangladesh
* Mr. Vikram Tiwathia, Deputy Director General, Cellular Operators’ Association of India (COAI)
* Mr. Deelip Agrawal, President, ISP Association of Nepal

The dialogue followed the keynote presentation from Mr. Mahtab Uddin Ahmed from Robi-Axiata. He mentioned that broadband is the key driver for socio-economic development. Mobile is contributing 6.2% in Bangladesh national GDP and has potential to contribute to 8% by 2020. It also enabling other sectors growth. He highlighted that increasing demand, low ARPU and high taxation beckoning uncertain future. Some externalities leading to market failure. Tax is one of the biggest killer in Bangladesh in term of sustainable of the operators. High price of spectrum, licensing fragmentation, negative ROI, and quality of service are also challenges for operators. Regional collaboration is essential to serve the people and regulatory reforms are required. Consumer protection is also a challenge for the security and privacy of personal information. Regional agreement of data sharing may speed up IOT adaptation.

Regulators and industry expressed their views after the keynote presentation. A number of key issues were identified:

* Since telecom network is for everything including banking, education, etc. The whole country is run on ICT network. Provision of ICT service should be the responsibility of everyone in the country. Challenges include spectrum, consumer awareness and consumer protection, quality of service.
* Customer demand is shifting every day and it is a big challenge for operator.
* Most of the broadband connection in Nepal are via optical fiber. OTT is welcomed since it generates more demand for bandwidth. High quality WiFi router is the biggest challenge to improve customer experience. There should be regional Internet exchange.
* User can complain to TRCSL when they are not satisfy with the speed. Since broadband is going to be a dominant tool in the process of social economy development, it’s been made sure that overall quality of broadband service are in a satisfactory level to meet demand of customers. Operators are entitle for tax free equipment importation. There is an establishment of a committee to resolve customer complaints.
* Regulators duty is to balance between the health of the telecom industry and the consumer protection which need to go hand in hand.
* There is a need for Regulators to address the issue of EMF exposure.
* The impact of device and network for Customer experience is very important aspect for public awareness and consumer education.
* Five important issues are broadband, spectrum, infrastructure, investments, and device quality.
* Quality of service and quality of experience is an important issue.

Nepal commented that the industry was not in the good shape in SATRC Region due to high tax and asked whether all regulators were convinced that they had to rethink and recommend the government that unless the sector not only survive then sustainable development goal can be achieved. Chairman commented that originally service provider and network provider are the same entity and they should be taxed. With the development of technology, the revenue has gone to service provider and not network provider and they are not taxed at all while the network provider are charged. The time has come to tax content provider who are actual beneficiary and not the network provider who provide only the pipe for someone else to ride. The responsibility of enhancement of infrastructure and coverage no longer remain only of telecom service provider. Taxation structure need to be revisited.

1. SESSION 5: INDUSTRY SESSION *(Wednesday, 20 December 2017, 11:45 – 13:00 hrs.)*

This industry session was chaired by Mr. Ilyas Ahmed, Chief Executive, Communication Authority of Maldives. This session provided an opportunity to telecom/ICT industry in SATRC to raise the critical issues regarding regulatory environment and perspective of the industry on those issues.

Mr. Paul Ulrich, Senior Policy Manager, Asia-Pacific, GSMA presented on Regulatory Issues for Mobile Network Operators in South Asia *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-12)*. Fist issue is taxation where a number of South Asian countries have multiple taxes and fees on consumers’ mobile usage. Variability and frequent changes of various taxes on operators creates uncertainty that raises risk premiums on investment and discourages their parent companies from investing. Modernizing regulations is another issue. MNOs are now operate in a broadening ecosystem and sometimes compete against non-traditional competitors. For policy to expand rural mobile-broadband services, it can enable supply with investment-friendly regulations, and enable demand by removing barriers to access. Three consumer IoT categories are smart person (wearable devices), smart cars, and smart homes where each category presents complex issues of data privacy, protection, and cross border transfer. To ensure successful IoT deployments, GSMA has 3 key messages i.e. interoperability, flexibility, and self-regulation. Finally he presented GSMA’s spectrum recommendations including spectrum pricing, spectrum roadmap, spectrum for IoT, and Liceses.

Ms. Adilah Junid, Assistant Vice-President, Axiata Group Berhad presented on Unlocking Benefits of a Digital Economy in South Asia *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-14)*. Two key levers which are benefit to South Asian countries are the need for infrastructure to enable access to the digital world and an enabling regulatory environment that can enable the players in the digital economy to participate and compete in the environment to bring the best possible outcomes to all stakeholders. Spectrum is part of infrastructure and the issues are availability and affordable price, technology neutrality, and optimal use of spectrum. Another element of infrastructure is tower sharing. New Regulatory framework should be functionality based, dynamic, and bottom up approach. It should be certain and transparent and consistency across function and should focus on dynamic, principle-driven regulation.

Mr. Naveed Haq, Regional Development Manager, Internet Society presented on A User-Centric Approach to Secure the Internet of Tomorrow *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-13)*. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) will transform economies and societies, removing the separation between the Internet and physical world. The Internet will be used to control objects, infrastructure and much of environment. There is a need to think about security, data protection, human values, and investments. Human values must drive technical development and use. It is needed to put user’s interests first with respect to their own data, make the Internet economy work for everyone, take a collaborative approach to security, and increase accountability for data handlers.

Mr. Bashir Patel, Regional Director - Regulatory & Business Development, Inmarsat presented on Advanced in Satellite Technologies – Its Impact on Capacity, Costs and Spectrum *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-23)*. He focused on the advances in satellite technology which make dramatic decrease in price/MB.. He mentioned that would be satellite integration in 5G ecosystem.

1. SESSION 6: SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND REGULATORY EXPERIENCES *(Wednesday, 20 December 2017, 14:00 – 15:30 hrs.)*

This session was chaired by Mr. C. Mani Chaulagain, Member of NTA. The objective of the session was to discuss and share policy and regulatory best practices and experiences on aspects new and emerging technologies to support the growth of the digital economy. Three presentations were delivered at this session.

Brig. Gen. Mohammad Nasim Parvez, Director General, Spectrum Division, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission presented on Bio-metric Verification of Mobile Phone Users and National/Central Equipment Identity Register (NEIR/CEIR) System *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-16).* He explained 3 phases of implementation. The first phase is biometric verification of mobile phone users. Effective verification of identity was a necessity to issue SIM. In absence of a verifiable ID, real-time biometric verification with National ID Database (NIDDB) was a natural choice. The second phase is NOC Automation & IMEI Database. Handset importers need to receive NOC from BTRC to import. Automation is requirement for speedy issuance of NOC. The IMEI data of all imported handsets will be entered in the common IMEI database electronically. Citizen will be able to check the originality of their handsets while purchasing from the market. Third phase is the introduction of National/Central Equipment Identity Register (NEIR/CIER) system. The SIM registration can then be linked up with the mobile handset registration allowing only valid mobile users with handsets having valid IMEIs to remain active in the network.

Mr. Wangay Dorji, Chief Communication Officer, Bhutan Infocomm and Media Authority presented on Collaborative Regulation - The Next Generation Regulation *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-17).* ICT sector has been emerged from analogue era to smart society and there are transformation from command and control regulation to partner regulation which are fifth generation of regulation. BICMA has initiated 3 levels of collaboration i.e. service providers/stakeholders level, government agencies level, and other regulators level. Benefits of collaboration include transparency and harmonized regulations between different entities within the country, enhances the role of ICTs for development and enrich the social and economic wellbeing of consumers, beneficial to completion and the economy, good platform for sharing of knowledge, experience, and resources. Stronger collaboration within SATRC can be done with harmonization of regulations, stronger regional alliance, and promotion of ICT market integration.

Mr. S K Gupta, Secretary, Telecomm Regulatory Authority of India presented on Over-the-Top (OTT) Services in India *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-18).* OTT is generally application and services riding on operator’s networks and available through the Internet and can be communications related and non-communication related service. Growth of OTT services has impact to other services such as international voice and SMS. Challenges in OTT includes regulatory imbalance, impact on infrastructure, impact on economy, and security issues. In India, OTT related to communication services has become very popular and is serious concern to telecom service providers. OTT apps play a vital role in Digital India. India-specific OTTs will grow having localized content in various Indian languages. Finally he presented some international scenario from Europe and Asia.

1. SESSION 7: SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND REGULATORY EXPERIENCES *(Wednesday, 20 December 2017, 15:45 – 17:15 hrs.)*

This session was chaired by Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director General, Bhutan Infocomm and Media Authority. This is the continuity of the previous session on sharing best practices and regulatory experiences. Three presentations were delivered at this session.

Mrs. Nastaran Mohseni, General Director of Economic and Technical Studies Bureau, Communications Regulatory Authority, Iran presented on Sharing Best Practices and Regulatory Experiences to Support the Growth of the Digital Economy. Digital Economy is the economy activity resulting from online connections among 5 elements i.e. people, business, data, devices, and processes. Digital economy goes beyond traditional concept of e-commerce. The main role of ICT/Telecom is to provide the connectivity. Users expected the best Quality of Service and Quality of Experience and regulatory should provide broad policy guidance on cross-cutting policy areas. Key technologies underpinning the digital economy are for example advanced robotics, AI, IoT, OTT, Fintech, etc. In Iran, there are sufficient competitive market and there are upgrading mobile operator licenses from 2G to 3G and 4G. Also there are collaborative with other sector such as banking regulatory and minimized intervention.

Mr. Ananda Raj Khanal, Senior Director, Nepal Telecommunications Authority presented on Sharing Best Practices and Regulatory Experiences *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-19).* He focused on three issues i.e. policy, legal and regulatory initiatives, activities carried out, and facilitating digital economy. Policy initiatives includes broadband policy, ICT policy, new revised spectrum policy, QoS regulation, merge and acquisition regulation, etc. Activities carried out included technology neutrality, utilization of RTDF, utilization of orbital slot allocated by ITU, implementing EIR, implementing MNP, undergrounding of the overhead cables-creating common duct, etc. In facilitating digital economy, the issues include digital inclusion, bridging the gender digital divide by celebrating girls in ICT day, work with central bank on providing financial inclusion using mobile and ICT, etc.

Mr. Lingarajah Ganeshamoorthy, Deputy Director, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka presented on Sri Lanka National Broadband Development Planning and Policy Strategy *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-20).* ICT sector in Sri Lanka become the fifth largest revenue earning. Increase in broadband penetration has impact of GDP growth. Sri Lanka has substantial growth in broadband. 2G is decreasing and 3G and 4G are increasing toward 2020. National connectivity are mainly optical fiber and microwave connection, and International connectivity include SEA-ME-WE5, FLAG, BBG, Satellite, etc. Broadband development challenges includes stagnant growth in fixed access coverage, ROI, cross industry cooperation, etc. The challenges can also be grouped as demand side and supply side challenges. Broadband initiatives includes NGN policy, new licensing framework, frequency refarming, etc.

1. SESSION 8: PLENARY *(Thursday, 21 December 2017, 10:00 – 11:30 hrs.)*

This session was chaired by Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman of SATRC. The objective of the session was to report the status of implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI and allow SATRC Members to discuss the mechanism and ways to enhance the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI.

* 1. **Report of the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI**

APT Secretariat presented the Report of the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI *(Document. SATRC-18/INP-07)*. SATRC Action Plan Phase VI was adopted at the 17th Meeting of SATRC held in Dhaka, Bangladesh for the implementation period of 2017-2018. It included the WG activities and capacity building workshops. Each of the WGs were assigned with a number of work items and WG meetings were held as planned to discuss those work items. A number of experts nominated by SATRC Members are involved in the WG activities.

One SATRC Workshop on Spectrum was held as planned in August 2017 in Pakistan. The planned activities were implemented according to the timeline approved by the SATRC-17. APT Secretariat thanked all Chairs and experts of the working groups as well as SATRC Members for their continuous efforts and contribution to the implementation of the activities under the Action Plan. Member regulators contributed not only by means of the financial resources but also provided a number of working experts and by providing facilities for hosting the events. It was expected that similar cooperative approach would make it easy for the APT secretariat to implement the remaining activities of Action Plan Phase VI effectively and efficiently in 2018.

Chairman thanked APT Secretariat to present the report of implementation of Action Plan Phase VI. The report was approved by the meeting.

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| **Decision No. 2 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved the report of the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI. |

* 1. **Report of the Financial Status of the SATRC Fund**

Secretary General of the APT presented the Report of the Financial Status of the SATRC Fund *(Document. SATRC-18/INP-08).* The total estimated expenses for implementation of Action Plan Phase VI was USD 163,270. The estimated grand total income was USD 187,936. As of the meeting date, the total income was USD 163,039 and total expenditures was USD 51,348.96. The obligatory expenses for the implementation of Action Plan Phase VI in 2018 was USD 111,309. The balance remaining at the Fund is USD 111,690.

Apart from contribution in cash, there were also contribution in kind from SATRC. A number of SATRC Members have support in kind to host the meetings. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan hosted the events in 2017 as planned and Nepal also hosted the current SATRC. They provided support with extra expenses from the SARC Fund. She extended heartfelt gratitude for those Members who have provided contribution in kind. She also thanked Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and experts of SATRC in conducting activities with limited budget.

Chairman thanked Secretary General to present report of the Financial Status of the SATRC Fund. The report was approved by the meeting.

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| **Decision no. 3 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved the report of the Financial Status of the SATRC Fund. |

* 1. **Report of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services**

Mr. Wangay Dorji, Chairman of SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services (WG PRS) presented report of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services *(Doc. SATRC-18/INP-21).* The WG PRS was chaired by Bhutan and has two Vice-Chairmen from Pakistan and Afghanistan. It consisted of 25 experts from all SATRC Members. Five work items were assigned to the working group under the Action Plan Phase VI.

1. ICT regulatory framework for M2M communications and IoT for the SATRC countries
2. Regulatory approaches to enhance broadband experiences
3. Regulatory framework for Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO)
4. Policy and Regulatory Aspects of Infrastructure Sharing
5. Enhanced consumer protection in digital economy(taking into account the issues of Cyber security, Big Data and Data sovereignty)

The 1st meeting of WG PRS was held from 18 to 19 April 2017 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The meeting was attended by the nominated lead experts from Member countries. The meeting discussed, reviewed and finalized the scope and objectives of the work items. The meeting formulated, reviewed and adopted the first preliminarily questionnaires for the study for circulation to member countries. The meeting also finalized the time frame for carrying out the work items and the format of the report.

Chairman thanked Chairman of WG PRS to present report of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services. The report was approved by the meeting.

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| **Decision No. 3 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved the report of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services. |

* 1. **Report of SATRC Working Group on Spectrum**

Mr. Asit Kadayan, Chairman of SATRC Working Group on Spectrum (WG Spec) presented report of the SATRC Working Group on Spectrum (Doc. SATRC-18/INP-22). The WG Spec was chaired by India and has two Vice-Chairmen from Bangladesh and Islamic Republic of Iran. It consisted of experts from all SATRC Members. Four work items were assigned to the working group under the Action Plan Phase VI.

1. Proliferation of Wi-Fi network in SATRC
2. Wireless backhaul – Spectrum, technology and policy considerations
3. Developing spectrum roadmap in SATRC countries for future mobile broadband
4. Spectrum management for the deployment of Internet of Things (IoT)

The 1st meeting of WG Spec was held from 16 to 17 May 2017 in New Delhi, India. The meeting appointed lead experts for each work item. WG has finalized Questionnaire on the WI and circulated to experts of WG framed for inputs and responses. The meeting also finalized the time frame for carrying out the work plan.

Chairman thanked Chairman of WG Spec to present report of the SATRC Working Group on Spectrum.

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| **Decision no. 4 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved the report of the SATRC Working Group on Spectrum. |

* 1. **General discussion on implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI**

Chairman of WG PRS commented whether it was possible to have the workshop earlier since during the workshop time, there would be a lot of insight that could be captured and included in the report.

APT Secretariat clarified that it basically depended on the SATRC meeting. Since SATRC-19 was expected to be held in the last quarter of 2018 and there would be SATRC Workshop on Policy, Regulation and Services in August or September, so working group would have more time to finalize the report.

Secretary General commented that the Secretariat would need to take into account the time frame for other meetings as well especially the preparatory meeting for PP-18. However, the Secretariat would try to adjust the schedule of the events to respond to the request.

Chairman of BTRC commented that BTRC has prepared several guidelines such as infrastructure sharing and other guidelines, and expert group are also doing the same thing. Since the guidelines at SATRC level are prepared by experts from region and it must be with higher quality than report prepared by individual country. He suggested to enhance the process of utilization of the report by individual country.

India commented that the meeting could discuss the issue relating to WRC-19. APT Secretariat commented that APT has APG which deals with the preparation for WRC and Members should contribute in that group to avoid overlapping of the issues. India clarified that if more preparatory work of WRC-19 can be done on SATRC and all Members are on the same level of understanding, then it will be better to project requirement from SATRC countries.

Nepal commented that the consultant can be utilized to prepare quality report that would be applicable for all member countries for common interest. APT Secretariat commented that it should have a mechanism to encourage expert to contribute more. Head of Delegation (HoD) meeting discussed on the appointment of focal point to enhance communication among SATRC Members. HoD meeting in Dhaka suggested to have e-meeting frequently and it had already been implemented. Remote participation can be organize if the expert could not travel to the meeting. Chairman of WG PRS also added that the commitment from member countries was more important thing and recruiting consultant should be the last resource.

1. SESSION 9: PLENARY AND CLOSING *(Thursday, 21 December 2017, 11:45 – 12:15 hrs.)*
   1. **Way forward on further cooperation in SATRC**

APT Secretariat informed that the web portal can be used to share latest regulatory information among SATRC Members. However, APT Secretariat has not received any related information and document from the Members. HoD meeting decided to have a focal point who will share those information to Secretariat. APT Secretariat requested the HoD to send the information on focal point for SATRC activity.

Chairman requested the Members to provide the name of focal point with whom APT Secretariat can communicate on various development.

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| **Decision No. 5 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council agreed that each member appointed a focal point to share latest regulatory information among members via APT Secretariat. |

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| **Action No. 1 (SATRC-18)** |
| APT Secretariat to receive from the SATRC members the name of focal point with whom Secretariat can communicate on various activities of SATRC. |

* 1. **Adoption of Output Documents**

Secretary General presented the SATRC Action Plan Phase VI Implementation Calendar which showed the calendar for activities in 2017 and 2018. She explained the tentative schedule for the activities in 2018. She mentioned that the meetings of the two working groups are tentatively to be in May and SATRC-19 will be in Q4.

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| **Decision No. 6 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved the SATRC Action Plan Phase VI Implementation Calendar. |

* 1. **Date and Venue of SATRC-19**

Chairman mentioned that the previous SATRC meeting had agreed to give opportunity to Pakistan to host the SATRC-19. If there would be any circumstances, APT Secretariat would coordinate as in the case of the SATRC-18.

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| **Decision No. 7 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council approved that the 19th meeting of SATRC would be hosted by Pakistan in 2018. |

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| **Action No. 2 (SATRC-18)** |
| APT Secretariat to confirm with Pakistan as the host of SATRC-19. |

* 1. **Election of the Vice-Chairman of SATRC**

Secretariat mentioned that normally the meeting would elect Vice-Chairman according to the next host of SATRC. Since the next host would be Pakistan so the Vice-Chairman would be nominated by Pakistan. However, there was no representative from Pakistan at this meeting.

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| **Decision No. 8 (SATRC-18)** |
| Council agreed that Pakistan would be elected as the Vice-Chairman of SATRC. |

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| **Action No. 3 (SATRC-18)** |
| APT Secretariat to coordinate with Pakistan to nominate the Vice-Chairman of SATRC. |

* 1. **Any other matters**

There is no other matters.

* 1. **Adoption of Summary Records of the SATRC-18**

Secretary informed that as a practice in previous meeting, the draft of summary record of the SATRC will be done by APT Secretariat and will be consulted with Chairman for any comment. Then it will be uploaded on SATRC website for one month for comment, and it will be considered adopted at referendum by the meeting.

* 1. **Closing**
     1. Secretary General expressed appreciation to all delegates for actively taking part in the discussion during SATRC-18. She thanked Nepal Telecommunications Authority and staff members for hosting the meeting. She also thanked Nepal Telecom and Smart Telecom for hosting lunches and thanked Ncell for hosting dinner.
     2. Chairman mentioned that SATRC is a good platform to learn from each other and the practice will be continued. He thanked all heads of delegation, all delegates and experts for their attendance and contribution. He thanked all relevant parties including staffs and sponsors. He then declared SATRC-18 closed.

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