



Secretary General

WELCOME ADDRESS

His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka,

Mr. Austin Fernando, Secretary to the President & Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka,

Mr. M. Kingsly Fernando, Director General of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka,

Mr. Seiji Takagi, Director General for International Affairs, Global ICT Strategy Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan, and Representative of Mr. Yasuhiko Taniwaki, Chairman of the APT Policy and Regulatory Forum,

Mr. Charles Chew, Mrs. Tharalika Livera, Mr. Kila Gulo-Vui, and Ms. Seonmin Mina Jun, Vice-Chairmen of the APT Policy and Regulatory Forum,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 17th APT Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF-17) here in beautiful city of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

First of all, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and all delegates to this forum, may I express my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for graciously presiding over the opening ceremony of the PRF-17. It is indeed a great honour and privilege for us all for his presence this morning.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation to Mr. Austin Fernando, Secretary to the President & Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka, for kindly accepting to inaugurate the 17th APT Policy and Regulatory Forum.

My sincere appreciation and thanks go to the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL), for hosting this important forum and for the excellent coordination and hospitality extended to us all from TRCSL officials.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The PRF is one of the important annual events of the APT where high level delegates from the policy makers and regulators meet together to discuss on policy and regulatory issues that are of common interest to the region. This is also a Forum for the industry to bring issues of their concern to the attention of the regulators.

As we are all aware, the 5th Generation Regulation and the 4th Industry Revolution are on everyone's lips nowadays. The 5th Generation Regulation would be defined as collaborative regulation, with the need to define the foundation, platforms and mechanisms for working with other sector regulators to help achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The trend will force ICT policy makers and regulators to work with other sectors including finance, agriculture, health, environment, education, and so forth.

Moreover, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is marked by emerging technology breakthroughs in a number of fields, including robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, biotechnology, the Internet of Things, 3D printing and autonomous vehicles. All these are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, and impacting all disciplines, economies and industries.

In order to assist APT Members to properly address these trends, APT has been working on the draft of the new Strategic Plan for the period of 2018 – 2020 which will be adopted at the 14th Session of General Assembly to be held in November this year. The draft Strategic Plan comprises 5 Strategic Pillars, namely Connectivity, Innovation, Trust, Capacity Building and Partnership. As you may notice, the sessions at this PRF have been also drawn up with these 5 Strategic Pillars in order to solicit the advice of APT Members for further discussion at the 2nd Meeting of Correspondence Group on the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020 which will be held right after this PRF on Thursday, 27 July.

As physical connectivity still remains as an overwhelming challenge in the Asia-Pacific region, to maximize the usage of the connection to Internet is another area to be underlined. Under the Innovation Strategic Pillar, APT plans to enhance the capability to assist our members through a number of technical guidelines and recommendations to cope with the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Cyber threats are pandemic around the globe and many APT Members are prone to natural disasters which make APT to engage in more on these areas. APT will also play a vital role in terms of capacity building of APT Members in innovative ways. In addition, APT also values the partnership with interested parties in order to stand still as a prominent ICT organization in this region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The programme of PRF-17 will not cover all the aspects of the draft Strategic Plan due to time constraints. However, the programme will touch upon emerging and high demanding areas, such as free flow of data across the border, mobile financial services, cyber threats including ransomware, and so on.

In addition, the last PRF in Tokyo introduced the Roundtable on ICT Policy and Regulatory Trends and Updates which was very successful. This year, APT continues the Roundtable on ICT Policy and Regulatory Trends where high-level representatives of governments are invited to address regional ICT policy and regulatory challenges and opportunities. Prior to the

discussion, there will be a Keynote Address on ICT Trends and Developments in Asia and the Pacific by International Telecommunication Union.

This year's PRF will also include a Business Dialogue where high-level representatives from the industry including Mobile, Internet, and Satellite will discuss their roles in building Digital society.

At the closing of this forum on Wednesday, I would like to encourage all delegates to provide your thoughts, once again, when we discuss issues to be included in the new Strategic Plan of the APT 2018-2020.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my heartfelt gratefulness to His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for his kind presence today.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Austin Fernando, Secretary to the President & Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka for being with us, and to our host for the excellent preparations and for the warm hospitality extended to all of us.

I wish you all a successful forum.

Thank you very much.