



Secretary General

WELCOME ADDRESS

His Excellency Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Pakistan,
Mr. Digambar Jha, Chairman of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council, and Chairman of Nepal Telecommunications Authority,
Mr. Muhammad Naveed, Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunications Authority,
His Excellency Mr. Hossein Fallah Joshaghani, Deputy Minister and President of Communications Regulatory Authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
Distinguished Members of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests and delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all.

It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome you to the 19th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-19) here in Islamabad, Pakistan.

On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and all delegates, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Pakistan for graciously agreeing to preside over the opening ceremony of this SATRC-19 to inaugurate the meeting. It is indeed a great honour for all of us.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) in particular Mr. Muhammad Naveed, Chairman of PTA, for hosting this important event and making all the excellent arrangements.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) has been an important sub-regional programme of the APT since its inception in 1997. It has been a platform for the Head of telecommunication regulatory bodies from nine South Asian countries to discuss, network and cooperate on important telecommunications and ICT related issues. The discussion and decisions made by the Council has made significant impacts on telecommunication and ICT sector in the South Asian countries.

Activities of SATRC have been conducted through different phases of SATRC Action Plans. This concept of developing SATRC Action Plan could address the common issues of member countries in a tangible manner with reports. To date, five phases of SATRC Action Plan had

been completed and their outputs of each Work Item are available on the APT website. Whilst I am pleased to note good progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan, I would like to emphasize that the successful implementation of the Action Plan depends greatly on the interest, commitment and support of all SATRC members.

Distinguished delegates,

At the 17th Meeting of SATRC held in 2016 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Council adopted the Action Plan Phase VI for the implementation period of 2017–2018. Under this Phase VI, two Working Groups, namely, Working Group on Policy, Regulation and Services; and Working Group on Spectrum had been assigned to continue working on relevant work items, five work items were assigned to the Policy, Regulation and Services Working Group while four work items were assigned to the Spectrum Working Group. In addition, three capacity building Workshops were planned to be held during this 2-year period.

I am pleased to report that currently, the implementation of Phase VI of the Action Plan has been completed. Hence, this council meeting will review the outcomes of the Action Plan Phase VI. Both Working Groups have submitted their reports of activities for approval by the Council.

For the activities in 2018, I would like to report that the two Working Groups had convened two physical meetings and several online meetings to work on their Work Items. Two workshops were also held for capacity development, namely, Recent Trends and Technologies (5G & IoT) in Tehran, Iran, and Policy and Regulation Services in Kathmandu, Nepal. The details of all activities in 2017 and 2018 will be presented for consideration by the Council.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the host countries that had facilitated those events in 2018. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Chairmen and the experts of the Working Groups for their excellent efforts in producing good outcomes and contributing to the work on a voluntary basis.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

During these three-day meeting, the Council will review and adopt the reports of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI and also adopt SATRC Action Plan Phase VII for implementing during 2019 and 2020. This meeting will also look into ways to improve the work of SATRC.

There will be a Roundtable session among the Council's members, the Head of Regulators of SATRC, to exchange their views and share experience on the role of telecommunication regulators. The discussion will also focus on how to promote conducive environment for innovation and value creation in ICT industry including cross-sectoral collaboration due to the emergence of crosscutting services.

Similar to the previous Council's meetings, the programme for this year also includes the Industry-Regulator Dialogue to identify the current challenging issues and how to enhance cooperation between regulator and industry to address those challenges. The industry session will provide an opportunity for telecom/ICT industry in SATRC countries to raise the critical issues regarding regulatory environment and their perspectives on those issues. Some of the common issues in the industry include quality of service, privacy, data protection and data sovereignty. I hope you all will have a very fruitful discussion on the subjects and share some initiatives taken within the SATRC region.

This year, the Council's meeting is the last activity of the APT. Therefore, during the 42nd Session of the Management Committee of the APT (MC-42) held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in early October, the activities of SATRC Action Plan Phase VI was reported to the Management Committee including the planned activities of this three-day meeting. I wish to take this opportunity to inform you some important information that is relevant to SATRC.

I am pleased to inform you that the 42nd Session of the Management Committee approved all planned activities of SATRC for the year 2019.

In addition, MC-42 approved the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting, which would be held in Singapore in June 2019. The Ministerial Meeting will provide high-level policy guidelines on the development of telecommunication and ICT in the Asia-Pacific region for the next five years. This important meeting will also commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the APT and its role in the regional cooperation on telecommunications. More details on those issues will be presented to the plenary.

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, I would like to once again express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui for taking time to be with us at this opening ceremony, and also to our host, PTA, for their excellent preparations and warm hospitality extended to all of us.

APT Secretariat will do our best to provide support to all participants that require assistance during the meeting. Please do not hesitate to ask us for any assistance that you may need.

I wish you all a successful meeting and a happy stay in Islamabad.

Thank you very much.
