



ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY

The 17th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication
Regulators' Council (SATRC-17)

4 – 6 October 2016, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Areewan Haorangsi, Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity

WELCOME ADDRESS

His Excellency Mr. Anisul Huq, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, People's Republic of Bangladesh,

His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Shahriar Alam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of Bangladesh,

Mr. Mohammed Faizur Rahman Chowdhury, Secretary, Posts and Telecommunications Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, People's Republic of Bangladesh,

Dr. Shahjahan Mahmood, Chairman, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission,

Mr. R S Sharma, Chairman, SATRC and Chairman of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 17th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-17) held in this historical city of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

We are greatly honoured to have Honourable Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and State Minister of Foreign Affairs to grace this opening ceremony. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and all the participants, I would like to convey my profound gratitude and appreciation to Your Excellencies for taking time to be with us today.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), particularly to the Chairman of BTRC, for hosting this important event and making all the arrangements.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) has been an important sub-regional programme of the APT for 17 years since its establishment in 1997.

It is a platform for regulators from nine South Asian Countries to discuss, network and cooperate on important telecommunications and ICT related issues in the South Asian region.

The South Asian region has seen rapid development of telecommunication network and services and the soaring consumer demand for broadband is well understood.

Broadband access, especially access using mobile devices, has increased and changed the regulatory and business scenario. However, limited resources in providing broadband communication have led to many constraints.

We have also heard of some of the pressing issues by the industry in the region. Some of these include unpredictability of licence renewal, equitable access to the scarce resources, taxation, and equal regulatory treatment for similar services and many others. During this meeting we will hear further regulatory issues and challenges as well as initiatives taken by the regulators to improve the telecom environment in the region.

With the wide deployment of broadband technologies and services, regulating the sector in any one country is no more feasible. Many of the recent issues for the regulators can only be solved through bi-lateral or multilateral cooperation.

It is important to learn the best practices and discuss and cooperate on policy and regulatory issues that are common to the region. For the South Asian countries, I believe SATRC is a good platform for sub-regional cooperation.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fostering Regional Cooperation for ICT Development is one of the important priority areas identified in the Brunei Darussalam Statement adopted at the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting on "***Building Smart Digital Economy through ICT***" held in 2014 in Brunei Darussalam.

In order to encourage regional cooperation, Asia-Pacific Ministers agreed to share best practices, skills, regulation and technologies to reduce the ICT development gap and to further develop ICT infrastructure so as to promote the innovative growth in the region.

SATRC activities, particularly the implementation of SATRC Action Plans are providing a good mechanism for fostering cooperation in the region as guided by the Brunei Darussalam Statement.

Distinguished delegates,

As you may recall, the 15th SATRC Meeting in Paro, Bhutan in 2014 adopted the Action Plan Phase V for the implementation period of 2015–2016. The implementation of such Phase V of the Action Plan has been completed so this meeting will review the outcomes of Action Plan Phase V.

I am pleased to note that the SATRC Working Groups have been very active and have developed good outcomes on the work items to be approved by this meeting as well.

In this regard, I would 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.

I would also like to thank the host countries of the meetings of Working Groups and SATRC workshops that facilitated the work during the implementation period of Action Plan Phase V.

Whilst I am pleased to note the good outcomes of the Action Plan Phase V, I still feel there are areas that we could improve when we continue our work in the SATRC.

This SATRC meeting will adopt a new Action Plan Phase VI for the implementation period of 2017 – 2018. We will need to have a further look on how to improve the work of the SATRC.

The success will depend definitely on the commitment and interest received by the members. I expect your continuous support for the future activities of SATRC.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the SATRC Members for their mutual cooperation and commitment towards SATRC activities including the provision of financial contributions, experts and logistic support. SATRC is indeed a unique sub-regional programme of the APT. I wish it will continue to flourish for the benefit of this region.

May I once again express my sincere gratitude to Honourable Ministers for being with us today and also to our host for the excellent preparations.

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

Thank you.
