

New Year Message from ITU



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It is an honour for me to greet ITU's Japanese community via the ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ), which continues to be a key partner in enhancing and promoting ITU's work in technical standardization, radiocommunications management, and information and communication technology (ICT) penetration in developing countries.

Looking back at the events of 2017, we find that ITU and the world have made great strides towards improving the lives of millions of people through the use of innovative ICTs to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In February, ITU members agreed on key performance requirements for IMT-2020 that will position 5G mobile systems to provide lightning speed ultra-reliable communications. ITU brought together the world's top minds in Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the *AI for Good Global Summit* in June, to identify opportunities for AI solutions to address global challenges such as poverty, hunger, health and education.

The ITU Focus Group on Digital Financial Services published 85 policy recommendations to drive greater financial inclusion for the estimated two billion unbanked people around the world. In July, the *ITU Global Symposium for Regulators* focused on the security of digital financial services, while the *Financial Inclusion Global Initiative* was launched targeting developing countries.

Gender equality in tech was advanced in 2017 through hundreds of events around the globe on Girls in ICT Day, while ITU and UN Women joined hands to launch the EQUALS digital gender equality network together with more than 50 partners.

In June, more than 2,000 ICT stakeholders met at the *World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2017*, where they announced new ICTs for SDGs tools and initiatives. *ITU Telecom World 2017*, in Busan, brought together over 9,000 stakeholders to foster innovation and business partnerships. At the *World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017* in Buenos Aires, a forward-looking four-year Telecommunication Development Sector agenda was agreed upon, designed to leverage ICTs for the SDGs.

Innovative partnerships within our UN family were

realized this year. ITU and ILO launched a campaign to train five million young people with job-ready digital skills by 2030. ITU and FAO agreed to work together to advance e-agriculture. ITU and WMO advanced the use of radio-based systems for life-saving weather prediction. ITU and WHO partnered to strengthen the delivery of public healthcare services in Africa with digital technology.

ITU released the first-ever report tracking ICT regulatory trends and their economic implications, *Global ICT Regulatory Outlook 2017*; and ITU's annual *Global Cybersecurity Index* provided countries with the information needed to make strategic decisions in developing and strengthening their cybersecurity capacities.

This year marked several historic milestones for ITU, including the 25th anniversary of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector and the 90th anniversary of the CCIR/ITU-R Study Groups.

I am also excited to share with you the launch of the new *ITU Journal: ICT Discoveries* – and the win by ITU and its partners of a Primetime Emmy Award for outstanding achievement in engineering for 'High Efficiency Video Coding' (ITU-T H.265 | ISO/IEC 23008-2), which has emerged as the primary coding format for Ultra-High Definition TV.

It was also a great personal pleasure for me this year to have met with His Holiness Pope Francis, who expressed his support for ICTs and the role they play in providing the World's poorest with access to socio-economic resources, as well as the valuable role of ITU in bringing these to the world.

In all these activities, ITU recognizes the active participation of Japan, including its government, industry, academia and ITU-AJ. I am confident that Japan will continue to contribute actively to all of ITU's activities, and I would like to thank Japan for its continuous support of ITU since joining the Union in 1879.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to wish all Japanese friends and partners, as well as your families, a peaceful and prosperous 2018.