

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Ministry of Communications and IT

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of Afghan Nation and Afghan ICT sector it is honor to be part of such significant event. It is important for me to be here and discuss issues related to ICT within bilateral cooperation in great details.

ICT in Afghanistan is in its maturing stage and it has shown very rapid growth, especially in Telecommunication sector. With existing capacity and geographic specifications Afghanistan can be the center of digital activities in Asia connecting regional countries.

During the last decades Afghanistan has made considerable progress in the field of ICT. From almost total absence of internet in 2002 the country has now registered internet service providers (ISP), with an internet subscribers of nearly 8 million and Mobile subscribers of around 23m.

6 Telecoms and 60 ISPs invested around 3b Dollars as a result 89% of Afghans are enabled to get access to telecommunication services.

Several strategic ICT programmes have been pursued to bring transparency and efficiency in the working environment and delivery of public services through eGovernment platforms.

Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT) initiated the constructions of Afghanistan National Fiber Backbone Ring in April 2007. Afghanistan fiber network has been extended to 25 provinces with total length of 4700 KM.

Afghanistan Fiber is connected to Pakistan through Torkham and Speenboldak, Iran through Islam Qala, Turkmenistan through Torboni and Aaqena, Uzbekistan through Hairtan, and Tajikistan through Shirkhan bander and recently it will establish connection with China through Wakhan Corridor and Digital silk way which will stabilized regional connectivity through two separate MoU for further joint cooperation.

MCIT and ICT authority in China have common views on priority tasks in development of technical capacities and interconnectivities. We have agreed to build up infrastructure and extend further to Middle East and Europe with first route of Silk Road Cable System with alternative route of bilateral cross border cable system near Wakhan Corridor. Afghan ICT authority will consider all possibilities for cooperation in the field of Telecommunication and Information service, cross border connectivity, cloud computing, vertical applications and many other areas.

Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT) work on many priority issues with different directions which lead to development of ICT environment and standard services in Afghanistan as part of regional ICT network.

Government recently approved Open Access Policy (OAP) which will encourage the private sector to invest in Fiber Optics, bringing strong competition among the operators on the service quality and tariffs.

With support of World Bank, initiated Digital CASA project, will implement a regional cross-border approach to improve broadband connectivity by catalyzing private sector investment in infrastructure, and modernizing relevant policies and regulatory framework which will have huge impact in Afghanistan's ICT development.

MCIT built National Data Center which is centralized secured Data Center and hosts Government IT platforms with high standards, further it will provide virtual cloud platform within Afghan-Cloud services.

Through eGovernment platform Electronic ID will be issued which simplifies digital access and identity. In addition will promote the importance of inclusiveness and human rights in global cyber policy, to defend the status of an open, interoperable and unregimented cyberspace with development of security solutions and infrastructure.

Afghanistan can be considered as the connecting and data transit center for entire region. MCIT is in close contacts with regional countries and we are considering multiple options of redundant routes for any kind of disasters. For this reasons MCIT has obtained the permanent membership of RCC (Regional Commonwealth for Communications) at the steering committee and operator's board.

Parallel to the development of ICT in Afghanistan we are focusing not only on quantity but on quality too. Just recently we have upgraded our OFC in all our borders to DWDM and soon internet with high quality will reach Afghanistan major cities and Districts. recently established Asan Khedmat "a one stop shop for public services". The idea behind this concept is to bring all public services under one roof, simplifies process and pave the way for e-services. Asan Khedmat digitize/computerized passport system, work permit for foreign/local and creating a centralized solution for Traffic Police Department.

MCIT has developed a road map for activities under E-Governance program. By the end of 2018 almost 70% of procedures should be available electronically.

As part of open access policy we are actively working to create much better environment for private sector and private investors which would include regulations, upgrade to international standards and shared infrastructure.

MCIT technical team developed a plan of technical discussions with the most advanced countries in the field of Satellite. We have ambitious plans for 48 degree East and 50 degree East orbital locations.

Ministry of Communications and Information technologies of Afghanistan is committed to put efforts and contribute strongly to development of ICT in Central Asian Region which leads to new opportunities, multi point connectivity, latest standards and better ICT services.

Thank you