

ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar for the Americas

RRS-20-Americas

Virtual event

13-24 July 2020

Opening Remarks

Mario Maniewicz

Director, Radiocommunication Bureau

Bernadette Lewis – Secretary General, Caribbean Telecommunications Union

Bruno Ramos, ITU Regional Director for the Americas,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar for the Americas Region, which is being held in collaboration with the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU).

I am pleased to note that more than 300 participants coming from 38 countries, including 28 countries from the Americas Region as well as 6 international organizations, will be joining us during the next two weeks to discuss various aspects of radiocommunications and their impact on the Americas Region.

As you know, the Americas region continues to make great strides in expanding access to and use of ICTs:

- The number of individuals using the internet has grown from 43 per cent to over 77 per cent over the past 10 years
- More than 90 per cent of the population in the region is covered by a 4G or higher network. Active mobile subscriptions stand at over 104 per cent

- The Americas is the only ITU region where the number of men and women using the Internet is near parity

However, more work is still needed to bring accessible and affordable telecommunications to all countries across the Region.

Indeed, from North to South America, passing through Central America and the Caribbean, the Americas encompasses countries very different in size, economy, geopolitics and social reality. And this is reflected, of course, in the peculiarities of the ICT sector in each sub-region.

If we look more closely into the Caribbean, for example, we see that:

- Aeronautical and maritime services are of very high importance to the economy and to the safety of those travelling.
- The region has a historical vulnerability to extreme weather events that makes it more dependent on accurate weather forecasting and atmospheric measurements.
- One cannot overstate the importance of understanding and addressing the overall impact of climate change for this region. In this context, the variety of applications within the science services provide knowledge essential for the Caribbean's near and longer-term survival.

We can also observe that:

- There are portions of available spectrum referred to as “digital assets” that can be used to increase broadband connectivity in the region.
- Frequency coordination brings to the table the complexities of harmonization between territories, including overseas territories.

During the past four months, we have all been living, learning, and working under exceptional circumstances as a result of the COVID19 global health emergency.

During the current pandemic, digital technologies have become a critical lifeline for economies, societies, and individuals around the world. They are keeping business open, enabling people to work from home, helping children stay in school through e-learning tools and assisting people to access critical services such as health care and financial services.

I acknowledge the great initiative of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union in assisting People with Disabilities during COVID-19 and Beyond. These are special times and technology can be fundamental to support those that need assistive services.

At ITU we are also making full use of technology to ensure our key meetings and events (such as this one) go virtual and we continue delivering to meet the expectations of our Members.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The main objective of this seminar is to extend assistance to Member States in spectrum management activities and in the application of the Radio Regulations, with special attention to developing countries.

To this end, we will provide the basic concepts of spectrum management at national and international levels, the ITU Radio Regulations (RR), ITU and ITU-R structures and functions, including the ITU-R Study Groups and BR departments, and the ITU's basic texts.

The first part of the seminar will also cover the regulatory framework for both terrestrial and space services and the procedures for recording of frequency assignments in the Master International Frequency Register (MIFR). This will include basic training on ICT tools developed by the BR for frequency notifications and technical examinations.

The second part of the seminar consists of tutorials on the use of these tools. This will enable the participants to get experience with ITU notification procedures, as well as with the software and electronic publications made available by the BR.

The Seminar will conclude with a Forum on: *“WRC-19 Outcomes: Challenges and opportunities for the Region”*. As you know, WRC-19 opened up the opportunity for introducing innovative and advanced services in the field of telecommunications that have the potential to accelerate the digital transformation in the Caribbean, the Americas, and throughout the world.

Finally, there will also be a session dedicated to Emergency Communications that is especially relevant to this Region.

Dear colleagues,

Having come from Uruguay, the Americas Region is very dear to my heart. And especially the beautiful region of Central America and the Caribbean.

As you surely remember, we have very recently worked with the Central America and Caribbean Region to facilitate the process of transition from Analog to Digital Television and allocation of the Digital Dividend.

After such a positive experience, we look forward to continuing working with the Region. Whether to support you in the implementation of the decisions of WRC-19 or to assist you in the preparation process towards WRC-23, rest assured that the ITU is ready to provide any technical assistance you may require.

I am personally looking forward to being with you in person very soon, and to further strengthen our bonds with the Region.

Having said that, I note that you have a very heavy agenda before you. So, let me conclude by thanking the CTU once again for collaborating with ITU in organizing this virtual Regional Radiocommunication Seminar.

I wish you a very fruitful seminar.

Thank you.