



**KEYNOTE REMARKS
BY**

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MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**AT THE AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ATU) MEETING: 1ST
AFRICAN PREPARATORY MEETING (APM26-1) FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU) PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE 2026
(PP-26); AND 2ND AFRICAN PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE WORLD
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2025 (WTDC-25)**

DATE: Monday, 15 July 2024
VENUE: Droombos Estate, Windhoek
TIME: 08h00

- Dr Audrin Mathe, Executive Director in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT),
- MICT Executive Management and team,
- CRAN Board of Directors and Executive Management and team,,
- Mr. John OMO, ATU Secretary General,
- ATU Secretariat,
- Mr. Emmanuel Mansseh, Acting Regional Officer Director: ITU Regional Office for Africa, (online),
- Distinguished Delegates from various African countries, participating physically and online,
- Regional Telecommunications Organizations (RTOs) present (physically & online),

- We also wish to recognize in absentia (Pre-recorded speeches)
 - Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary General
 - Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, BDT Director
- Esteemed stakeholders,
- Members of the Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Director of Ceremonies,

Good morning!

It is an honour for me to stand here before you and I am encouraged to see you all here this morning as we at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) welcome you all at for the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) Meeting: 1st African Preparatory Meeting (APM26-1) for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26); and 2nd African Preparatory Meeting for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25).

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference and the World Telecommunication Development Conference are important events as they provide a platform for Member States to come together and make decisions on important issues related to telecommunications and information technology.

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, held every four (4) years, is the highest decision-making body of the ITU and is responsible for setting the Union's strategic goals and priorities. It also elects the members of the ITU Council and the Secretary-General. The decisions made at the Plenipotentiary Conference have a significant impact on the future direction of telecommunications policy and regulation at a global level.

The World Telecommunication Development Conference, also held every four (4) years, focuses specifically on issues related to the development of telecommunications in developing countries. It provides a forum for Member States to share best practices, discuss challenges, and develop strategies for bridging the digital divide and promoting the use of ICTs for sustainable development.

Overall, these conferences play a crucial role in shaping the future of telecommunications and information and communication technologies on a global scale. By bringing together key stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society, they help to foster collaboration, cooperation, and innovation in the telecommunications sector.

These meetings provide African countries with the opportunity to have their voices heard and perspectives considered in the development of global Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policies. This ensures that the unique challenges and opportunities facing the continent are taken into account in the formulation of regulatory frameworks.

Additionally, by participating in these meetings, African countries can collaborate with other nations and stakeholders to share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions to common ICT issues. This collaboration helps to foster a culture of knowledge sharing and cooperation in the global ICT community.

Furthermore, the preparatory meetings provide African countries with valuable opportunities to enhance their technical expertise and regulatory capacity in the field of ICT. By participating in discussions, workshops, and training sessions, African stakeholders can gain new insights, skills, and knowledge that can help them develop effective ICT policies and regulations.

By actively participating in the preparation for global ICT conferences, African countries can exert influence on the decisions and outcomes of these international forums. This allows them to advocate for their interests, priorities, and concerns, and help shape the direction of global ICT policy-making to better reflect the needs and aspirations of the continent.

Overall, Namibia is excited to host these preparatory meetings which are crucial for Africa to contribute to global discourse in the formulation of best practice ICT regulatory policies.

In today's digital age, access to affordable and reliable telecommunications infrastructure is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for the development of our countries and the well-being of our people. Advancing connectivity is essential for driving economic growth, promoting social inclusion, and fostering innovation, making it crucial in creating a connected Africa for sustainable development. Together, we have the chance to shape the future of telecommunications in Africa and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Namibia, we have made significant progress in expanding access to ICT services and bridging the digital divide. Through our National Broadband Policy, we have laid the foundation for a vibrant and competitive ICT sector that is driving innovation, creating jobs, and improving the quality of life for all Namibians. However, we recognise that there is still much work to be done to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital revolution.

One of the key challenges facing many African countries is the lack of adequate infrastructure to support the growing demand for ICT services. As we prepare for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 and the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025, we must focus on increasing investments in broadband networks, expanding coverage to underserved areas, and promoting digital literacy and skills development.

Another critical issue that we must address is the need to foster a competitive and inclusive ICT sector that benefits all stakeholders. By promoting a regulatory environment that encourages investment and innovation, we can create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, drive down costs for consumers, and stimulate economic growth. At the same time, we must ensure that the benefits of digital transformation reach all segments of society, including women, youth, and people with disabilities.

As we look to the future, it is essential that we work together as a continent to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital revolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to ATU for choosing Windhoek, Namibia as a preferred destination for these meetings. I hope your time here will leave a lasting impression, and that you will enjoy the beautiful scenery, places and food of the Land of the Brave.

Namibia has a long and rich history, with cultural heritage that stretches back many years. Our country is known for its stunning landscapes, vibrant culture, and warm hospitality. From the towering dunes of the Namib Desert to the rugged beauty of the Skeleton Coast, Namibia is a land of contrasts and natural beauty that never fails to captivate and inspire all who visit.

As we come together here in Windhoek, we are reminded of the importance of unity, cooperation, and collaboration among African nations.

Moreover, I would like to reiterate the importance of building a connected Africa for sustainable development. By investing in ICT infrastructure, promoting competition and innovation, and

empowering our citizens to harness the power of technology, we can create a brighter future for all Africans.

I wish you fruitful deliberations in the coming days to develop a shared vision and agenda for advancing the telecommunication sector in Africa and beyond. Together, we can shape the future of telecommunications and create a more inclusive and connected world for all.

Thank you and welcome to Windhoek, Namibia.