

Keynote Speech at ITU Global Standards Symposium

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Honorable Vice-Minister Nguyen THANH HUNG,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It's a great pleasure to come to the beautiful city of Johannesburg to attend ITU Global Standards Symposium. Please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to express my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Communications of South Africa and ITU for their hospitality and considerate arrangements.

In today's world, standardization is an important precondition for the commercialization of technologies, a strong guarantee for sustainable development of the industry and a solid technical foundation for the overall competitiveness of a nation. In recent years, with the strong promotion of governments, businesses and standardization bodies, the standardization work in the field of ICT has recorded great achievements and is playing an increasingly important role in the development of the industry. But we should also be aware of the fact that the global standardization development is yet to be balanced and there is still a prominent gap between developing and developed countries in terms of participation in standardization activities and the implementation and application of standards. So it is appropriate and pragmatic for ITU to choose "bridging standardization divide" as the theme of this symposium, which will play a positive role in increasing the involvement of developing countries in the global standardization work, promoting the spread and application of standards across the world, and gradually bridging the standardization divide.

I'd like to take this opportunity to brief you the ICT development in China. In the past years, the ICT sector has been actively adapting itself to the convergence trend of technologies, networks and services, promoting the innovation of technologies and services, pushing for the transformation of the industry and striving to achieve rapid and sustained development. Now China has registered 970 million telephone users and 253 million Internet users, both ranking No. 1 in the world. The revenue from the electronics and IT manufacturing sector hit RMB 5.6 trillion, which was among the top of the world. China's ICT industry now features well-equipped telecommunications networks and ever-improved R&D capabilities. Equipment vendors like Huawei and ZTE have built their fames around the world. In today's China, telecom technologies and services are widely applied in various sectors ranging from social production to people's daily life. The telecom tariff has come down dramatically while the service quality is improving, which has brought benefits to all the Chinese people.

The rapid development of the ICT sector in China should be attributed to such factors as the fast global economic development, the opportunities created by the advances in information and communications technologies, the right strategies and measures taken by the Chinese government as well as the importance attached to the standardization work by the businesses. The ICT administration in China has always paid attention to the standardization work and has been very effective in providing guidance, setting up mechanisms and rendering policy supports. So far, China has issued over 3,000 telecom standards ranging from network construction, business operation, equipment manufacturing to market regulation, laying down vital foundation for the development of the ICT sector.

Generally speaking, China's telecom standardization work has gone through three transformations. First, we used to focus only on the standardization of technologies and products, but now we have taken into consideration other issues in our standardization work such as industrial development, market regulation, public interests and social harmony. In 2007, we developed a standard for handset chargers, which had delivered great convenience to the users. The standards we developed for the "Village Connected" project played a positive role in promoting universal service. Second, the way of developing standards has transformed from introducing international standards to cultivating our homegrown standards. China has been actively involved in the activities of many international standardization bodies including ITU. The number of our contributions to those organizations is increasing year by year and China now has a bigger influence over the development of international standards as more and more of China's contributions are adopted. In 2007, the number of China's contributions adopted by ITU was 612 while in 2000 it was only 6. Meanwhile, China's standards in areas such as TD-SCDMA, NGN, IP and multimedia have been adopted as international standards. Third, the standardization system has been transformed from the one depending simply upon businesses and research institutes to an integrated one composed of businesses, universities, research institutes and users. This integrated system has well leveraged the synergy of various parties and is playing a very important role.

In review of China's standardization history in the past few decades, we have the following observations:

First, the standardization work must be demand-driven and oriented to serve the development of the industry, market supervision, public interest as well as social development. The Standardization work should be driven by the demands of industry and technology development, take into account of long-term plans, focus on standards urgently needed by the industry, and develop the standards satisfying the communication needs, particularly those on hot and key technologies.

Second, various players should all be mobilized to create a market-oriented standardization mechanism led by businesses, with standardization bodies as acting main platforms. In the process of developing standards, the principles of fairness, justice and openness must be observed. An incentive mechanism should be set up to facilitate the participation of business community, universities and research institutes, expand cooperation with international standards bodies. Businesses should be encouraged to take part in domestic and international standardization activities. The application and implementation of internationally advanced standards should be promoted.

Third, the role of standardization bodies as a bridge connecting various players should be optimized. Standardization bodies should provide strong connections between operators, vendors, research institutes and universities and thus help bring out their respective advantages and experiences for synergies. Founded on December 18, 2002, China Communications Standards Association (CCSA) has attracted more than 200 members covering various links of the industry chain, such as basic telecom operators, major vendors, universities and research centers. Since its inception, CCSA has developed over 1,000 standards. It has played a key role in identifying demands for standardization, organizing standards development, promoting the application of standards as well as cooperating with international standards developing bodies.

Fourth, international exchanges and cooperation in standardization is indispensable. China's industry regulator has set up a long-term incentive mechanism for the participation in international standardization activities and has encouraged businesses and standardization organizations to take part in international standards-making process. Initially, to encourage participation in international standardization, the government subsidized a number of research projects that were part of an international standardization effort. Currently the government still awards outstanding contributions and individuals who have contributed greatly to international standards. Activities related to international standardization are on top of its foreign affairs agenda.

Fifth, the building of a professional team for standardization should be highlighted. To improve the quality of standardization and provide human resources and intellectual support for standardization efforts, a professional team must be created. Various means should be adopted to attract professionals with excellent academic records and rich practical experience. At the same time, the businesses should be encouraged to set up their own standardization divisions to develop their own standardization talent pool.

Distinguished guests, the standardization community is facing with great opportunities and severe challenges. First, the slowdown of global economic growth and the escalating international

financial crisis create an unfavorable climate and more uncertainties for the communication sector. Second, the rapidly evolving information technologies, the convergence of different networks, technologies and services, and the close connections between technologies and markets have posed higher requirements for the regulators to develop proper policies by taking perspective of current situation. Third, there is an obvious standardization divide between developing and developed countries. Even within developing countries, the gap remains huge between urban and rural areas and between different geographic regions in terms of information infrastructure. It is no surprise that there will be new problems regarding the standardization in the next few years. The task will be even more formidable. I'd like to share with you some of my suggestions on how to respond to the challenges:

First, standardization should focus on the needs of the industry and play a bigger role in promoting sustainable development of the industry. The ICT sector is in a critical period at the moment. Proactive and effective measures must be taken to alleviate the adverse impact of the global financial crisis and ensure sustainable development of the industry. In this process, standardization has a key role to play. Standardization helps accelerate the application of new technologies and services and regulate market order and operation, thus providing a strong driving force and support for the whole industry. We expect to see breakthroughs in the standardization efforts in hot and emerging areas such as 3G, 4G, NGN, and wireless broadband access. In the mean time, strong support should be given to new technologies that enjoy promising prospects and may trigger the growth of other links of the industry.

Second, standardization and R&D should be made more closely related to the market. Standardization comes from R&D but will go to the market ultimately. Only when they are closely connected, standardization will be productive with vitality.

Third, the role of ITU in bridging standardization divide should be enhanced. ITU should provide more human and financial assistance and support for developing countries to participate in standard-making process, apply and implement standards as well as train standardization professionals. To stimulate the understanding and application of international standards in developing countries, ITU should work out more recommendations that help developing countries implement and apply research results, give priority to cost reduction regarding the application and implementation of standards in developing countries and focus its input on such areas as protecting investments over legacy networks, convergence of new and existing technologies and networks as well as smooth migration of networks.

Fourth, international exchanges and cooperation in standardization efforts should be intensified. Developed countries have the obligation to help developing countries with standardization. Developing countries should also strengthen communication in standardization within themselves. Meanwhile, developing countries should gradually participate in international standard-making process in accordance with the realities of their own industry. China encourages competent businesses, associations and research institutions to conduct exchanges of experiences in standardization, and would like to cooperate with other developing countries in exchanges of experiences and training programs.

Ladies and gentlemen, standardization is a formidable task with important implications. Let's join hands and work together to promote the development and prosperity of the ICT sector globally and build a harmonious information society for all!

Thank you!