**WSIS Forum 2015**

**High Level Policy Statement of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, India**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary General, ITU**

 At the outset, I would like to thank the ITU and the other UN agencies with a WSIS mandate for organizing this WSIS Forum 2015.

The two phases of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva and Tunis have provided a vision of utilizing ICTs for greater benefit of mankind, with focus on achieving the developmental objectives by bridging both the digital and the development divides.

The theme of this year forum, “Innovating Together: Enabling ICTs for Sustainable Development” is most appropriate and timely. For sustainable development, it is necessary to ensure social inclusion and environmental sustainability along with the economic growth. ICTs are instruments for economic development and social inclusion.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the regulator for telecommunications and broadcasting sector in India, has created an enabling environment for sustainable development. Our endeavour is to create a regulatory framework that fosters investments in networks, stimulates growth and provides connectivity through user friendly eco-system and competition.

India is using ICTs for enhancing access to education, health care, public services, information, finance and knowledge. Rapid innovations, dissemination of information, quick adoption of mobile technologies and improved access to the Internet have greatly expanded the gamut of opportunities that ICTs offer to promote inclusive development.

With over 970 million mobile subscribers in India, the m-commerce and mobile banking are driving the economic growth and social inclusion. The m-commerce is one of the most productive uses of ICT which is helping in improving the efficiency and accessibility. It is helping in social inclusion by providing the distribution platform for small and medium enterprises, and for rural artisans’ products. Entrepreneurship driven by youth is leading to innovative use of ICT infrastructure and generating employment opportunities.

For successful implementation of financial inclusion program named as ‘Jan Dhan Yojna’ in India, TRAI, in coordination with the banking and telecommunication industry, ensured the interconnection among the banking and telecom systems at a central platform, so that each mobile customer can transact with any bank account using his mobile.

E-learning platforms are advancing the cause of capacity building for the world and providing an opportunity of learning to the marginalised persons in the society. India has knowledge and capacity to impart ICT skills to the youth across the world, using online platforms.

To further propel the growth of broadband subscribers in India, we are implementing the time bound cable digitisation program by which the one-way analog cable TV network is being upgraded into two-way digital cable network which can provide the voice, video and data service to the subscribers simultaneously. It will help in adding another 100 million wireline broadband subscribers and increasing the distribution capacity of media and entertainment programs.

Despite the significant progress made to date, inequalities in access to ICT networks/ infrastructure, education and technological progress remain. These issues need to be addressed pro-actively, hand in hand with non-technology related barriers, in order to achieve an inclusive and a people-centred Information Society.

Confidentiality and security play an essential role in the information society. It is necessary to prevent misuse of ICTs and ensure timely response to the cyber threats. The use of electronic messaging systems to send unsolicited messages i.e. SPAM, is the most prevalent misuse of ICTs. Spam communications consume substantial portion of the international internet bandwidth which is the backbone for gainful use of ICT applications.

Cross border economic offences using ICT platform are becoming common. The cyber threats, like virus, phishing, hacking and intrusion etc., impede the use of ICT.

The challenges of cross border SPAM, Phishing, Cyber threats and economic offences using ICT platform in this current interconnected world, can only be addressed successfully by concerted efforts and international cooperation to foster safe and secure environment for using ICTs. Therefore cooperation among governments, regulators, the civil society, businesses, and all interested stakeholders on national and international level is essential.

We aim to tap the potential of ICT for success of “Digital India”, and want to nurture innovative talent and entrepreneurship for success of “Make in India”. In this way, the ICT sector can bring about economic growth and social inclusion, contributing towards a better quality of life for our people.

I am sure that this forum would deliberate on these and various other challenges & suggest the measures to overcome them.