



Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Communications
and Information Technology

ICT Minister Statement on occasion of celebrating the ATU ICT Day

H.E. Mr Abdul Karim Soumalia, ATU Secretary General

Honorable ICT Ministers of ATU Member States

Brothers and Sisters,

It gives us great pleasure to share this remarkable moment with our brothers and sisters in Africa to celebrate the 38th African Telecommunications/ICT 2015 under the theme **“ICTs: Contributing to Radical Transformation of Africa through Innovation and Connectivity”**.

I wish to start by commending the African Telecommunications Union for exerting tremendous effort to guarantee an enabled “Knowledge African Society”.

It is undoubted that during the last 10 years, Africa has witnessed leapfrog in various areas of the ICT sector.

It is quite impressive to see more than half of African countries have developed their broadband networks and the rest are taking on the right track to catch up. The connection of African villages to broadband has also improved, thanks to the mobile and wireless broadband technology. Mobile applications have also reached considerable levels especially in East Africa. With this in mind and despite the fact that the majority of countries have adopted a national ICT agenda and considers this sector as a national priority, yet, its status in the continent does not satisfy our ambitions and what we aspire to.

Being mindful of the vitality of ICT backbones and the broadband infrastructure to stimulate the ICT sector as well as the entire economy, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in Egypt embarked on a number of projects since 2002 to encourage connectivity, starting by the free internet initiative and providing broadband services through deploying the ADSL technology.

During the last five years, especially after the revolution of January 2011, the telecom sector experienced an unprecedented demand on its various services with the mounting numbers of social media users and news-based websites leaving the government with a challenge to cater to the needs and wants of users. To meet people's expectations, we launched the eMisr National Broadband Plan in 2011 to increase broadband internet penetration and promote the development of a digital society.

Brothers and Sisters, the creation of Internet based communities and the increase in the dependency rate on ICTs in today's world leaves us with a challenge due to the increase in the dangers surrounding it. Security of users and protection of data over the internet is no less important than the infrastructure that carries the internet service to end users. We have been witnessing a mounting number of cyber-attacks and mal usage of the Internet which represents a serious threat to the confidence in the Internet and online services. I hereby encourage all member states to exert their utmost efforts to adopt policies to combat such a global threat and to take the adequate measures to minimize its adverse effects.

Despite the achievements our countries attained in the ICTs, yet we cannot deny that we still face enormous challenges in the process of development of this sector. In spite of the numerous initiatives and programs implemented to develop the capacity of our human resources, the number of the ICT enabled people in our African countries does not satisfy our aspirations. In Egypt, we worked to promote e-literacy skills for all segments of the society, particularly to marginalized and underserved communities through IT clubs, technology homes and mobile IT clubs.

We have been more than glad to share this experience with our African brothers through organizing a series of capacity building programs for calibers from different African countries since 2004 in a range of IT and telecom related subjects.

I also would like to reassure Egypt's commitment to partner with all ATU member states to share our best practices and expertise to contribute to the sustainable development process of ICTs in our African nations.

I wish you a very happy ATU ICT Day.

Thank you

Eng. Yasser Elkady,

Minister of Communications and Information Technology

The Arab Republic of Egypt