CONNEXION
steering telecom ahead

Sept-Oct 2014

BANGLADESH:
FORERUNNER *in*
MOBILE
COMMUNICATION

PP14 BUSAN KOREA | ITU

*Bangladesh
Emerging with Potentials*

AMTOB
Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh

THE VOICE OF BANGLADESH MOBILE TELECOM INDUSTRY

CONNEXION

FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR

Editorial

CONTENTS

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Bangladesh has emerged as a forerunner in mobile access considering its significant achievements in the field through enabling mobile communications services to millions of unconnected grass root people. Mobile telecom sector has proved to be a change maker, a development partner through changing life style by uplifting their standard of living.

Reforming the legislative and policy framework in Bangladesh is a key component of what needs to happen. In particular, the 1998 National Telecom Policy needs to be updated to keep up with changing technology and for mobile enabled solutions in the areas of health, education and financial inclusion to be provided to all so that the vision of 'Digital Bangladesh' can be achieved in real sense.

Demand for mobile internet has attained a new momentum followed by the launching of 3G technology. Currently the country has over 40.83 million Internet users of which 97.35% is provided by the mobile network operators.

Experts believe that revision of taxation and tariff policy for telecommunication sector can help the rural population to have more access to ICT products and services which is important for financial inclusion. Mobile financial service is the most popular ICT services used by rural population.

Bangladesh was successful in playing important role in many international forums and has achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The country is always interested to play vital key role in international forums.

Bangladesh seeks support from its allies to retain the country's council membership at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN special body on telecommunications.

Bangladesh is currently a member of the ITU Council and will contest again from the Asia and Australia region known as 'E-region'. Bangladesh is all set to lead and continue serving as a Council member of the UN body.

T I M Nurul Kabir

ABOUT AMTOB

Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) is a national trade body representing all mobile telecom operators in Bangladesh. AMTOB has emerged as the official voice of the Bangladesh mobile industry to interact with relevant government agencies, regulators, financial institutions, civil society, technical bodies, media and other national and international organizations. It provides a forum to discuss and exchange ideas between the stakeholders and the industry actors for the development of mobile telecom industry through public private dialogue. AMTOB facilitates an environment which is conducive for its members and industry stakeholders with a view to establish a world class cellular infrastructure for delivering benefits of affordable mobile telephony services to the people of Bangladesh to bridge the digital divide.

DID YOU KNOW?

A 100 ft-stretch of pavement in the city of Chongqing claims to be the first street for mobile phone addicts in China, with **a lane specially painted** for people who have **their eyes glued to their screens**

Ultra-fast charging batteries can be recharged up to **70%** in only **two minutes**

In Japan, **90% Mobile Phones** are waterproof because **youngsters USE** them even in the **shower**

Nomophobia is the **fear of being** without your cellphone or losing your signal

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NUMBERS & ANALYSIS

By the end of 2014, some **2.9 billion** people or **40%** of the global population will be online

At current **growth rates**, half of the world's population will be **online by 2017**

The total number of unique mobile phone users may be around **3.4 billion** people by 2014

Worldwide, mobile phone subscriptions will exceed **6.9 billion** by the end of 2014, with three quarters of these subscriptions in the developing world and over half in **Asia-Pacific**
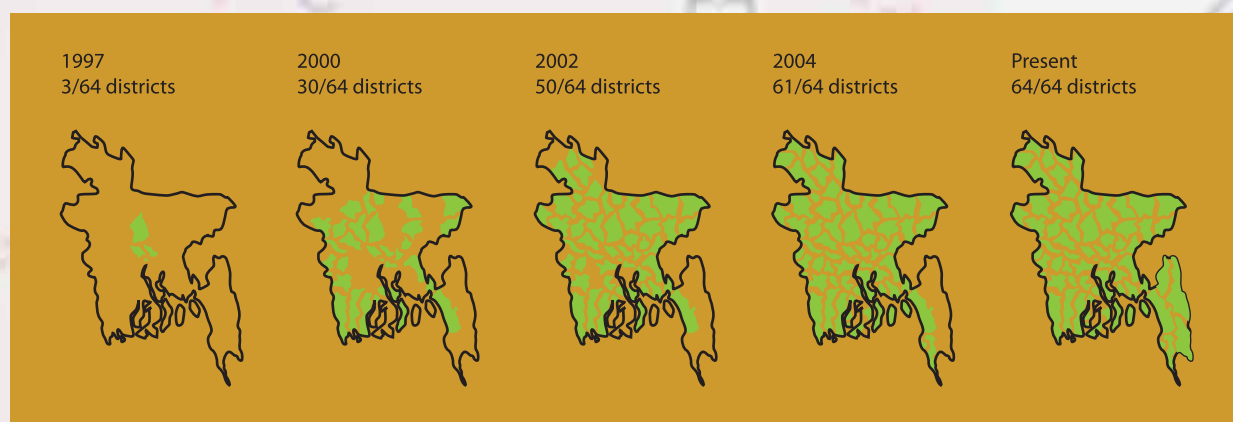
BANGLADESH: FORERUNNER IN MOBILE COMMUNICATION

Bangladesh is, in many ways, a country ahead of its time in terms of mobile access. Despite being ranked as a low income country,cited in a recent analysis titled "Country Overview: Bangladesh" published by GSMA, over 50% of the population subscribes to mobile services and has outpaced all its peers in terms of network coverage.

Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to launch a mobile network in 1993 but the first cellular license was issued back in 1989. The first license issuance happened within a decade of the global commercial launch of mobile telephony in Japan in 1979.

MOBILE NETWORK COVERAGE

Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) have brought about 99.17% of population and 89.50% geographic area under its network coverage and that all 64 of the country's district headquarter cities are covered by its 3G network.

TENTH LARGEST UNIQUE MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS

Bangladesh is the tenth largest market worldwide in terms of unique mobile subscribers. Based on the global mobile penetration average of the different income level, Bangladesh has a higher mobile penetration compared to the low and lower-middle income economies.

The number of mobile phone users in Bangladesh has grown rapidly; in 2003 subscribers penetration was only 1%, and in ten years this grew to 40%. It is expected to grow to 50% by 2020, according to GSMA Intelligence.

MOBILE FINANCIAL SERVICE

Currently, there are more than 16 million mobile money subscribers in Bangladesh, of which 40% are active accounts; this is above the global average of 30%. However, there is still much room

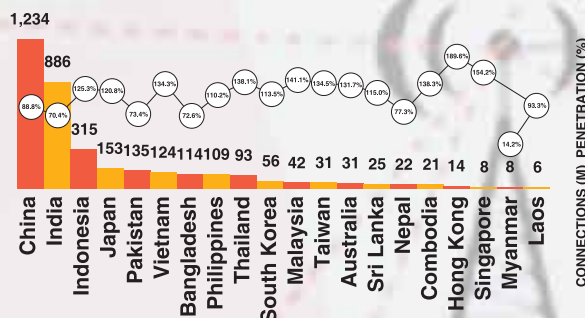| 1997	2000	2002	2004	Present
3/64 districts	30/64 districts	50/64 districts	61/64 districts	64/64 districts

In this regard, Bangladesh is significantly ahead of countries within its region or level of deployment. In deploying network infrastructure, operators have needed to extend their coverage to rural areas with limited access to the electricity supply. The only prime option is diesel generator, however, alternative energy solutions e.g. solar power has been supporting the network expansion effort.

for growth as only 16% of adults are mobile money users, and it is here that we believe operators are well positioned to provide leadership, and that there is therefore a strong case for market liberalisation to permit this.

GSMA's annual global survey of mobile money services has consistently shown operator-led services to be among the fastest growing.

Description	March 2012	December 2013	June 2014
Number of agents	9,093	188,647	414,170
Number of registered accounts (million)	0.4	13.2	16.7
Number of active accounts (million)	NA	6.5	6.7
Total transactions ($, million)	$25.9	$857.4	$1,100.1
Source: Bangladesh Bank			

MOBILE AGRICULTURE

Many of the Bangladesh's mobile operators are offering information and advice on a fingertip which has the potential to empower rural Bangladesh and enhance the work and lives of millions in the farming sector. Real-time information such as weather and yield can be life transforming. Mobile phone penetration has risen faster that adoption of other communication tools like TV, newspaper and radio.

MOBILE HEALTH

Use of mobile application and call centres has eased the struggle of patients. Now they can contact a qualified doctor just by dialling a short code and seek medical advice.

Mobile telecom sector has brought many innovative services. People are paying their utility bills, buying train tickets, vehicle registration fees by using their mobile phones.

Bangladesh always had a vision to move forward by embracing new technologies despite resource constraint.

Nobel laureate Professor Amartya Sen remarked that Bangladesh has astonished the world with the level of progress it has achieved in certain areas, especially in education, women's empowerment, reducing birth, maternal and infant mortality rates, health care and sanitation facilities for marginalised people and immunisation coverage among children.

Mobile industry is a capital intensive industry which is influenced by the macro-economic

Bangladesh has astonished the world with the level of progress it has achieved in certain areas, especially in education, women's empowerment, reducing birth, maternal and infant mortality rates, health care and sanitation facilities for marginalised people and immunisation coverage among children

condition of a country. Bangladesh is the only country in the South Asia which has a positive current account. The period of high growth of subscribers under the National Telecommunication Policy (NTP) 98 has been exhausted. Hence it is the opportune moment for revisiting the policy.

In Bangladesh there are about 40 million adults who don't have a cell phone. It is because the cost of owning a mobile phone for this untouched population is extremely high.

The policy framework needs to be more sophisticated to support the industry grow. The industry is no longer growing at the same rate. Further imposition of tax will cripple the sector which pays 10% of the total tax base of the country.

To spur growth of 3G subscribers we need to shape the mobile ecosystem for internet in Bangladesh. Reducing the SIM card tax will increase subscriber penetration.

NTP not revised at the opportune moment will severely jeopardize the industry. Elimination of the SIM tax will enable access to those 40 million potential subscribers in the rural and urban areas.

The government may also create fund to bankroll the inclusion of rural population. The mobile operators as well should be open to local entrepreneurs and welcome innovation. Hence not in the government policy but change also in the business models of the operators is much needed.

BANGLADESH EMERGING WITH POTENTIALS

Bangladesh is a country powered by people. People, particularly its emerging young population is the most potential resource Bangladesh owns. As such, Bangladesh retains a deep commitment to social solidarity and a progressive development agenda.

Appreciating the efforts of the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina in articulating the linkage between people's empowerment and development, the UN General Assembly in 2011 adopted the 'People's Empowerment and Development'agenda, acknowledging the fact that people should be the focus of all plans, programmes and policies at all level.

In attaining some of the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs)Bangladesh has been cited as a model. Leading role for Bangladesh in many areas of human progress and international cooperation is eventually today becoming an accepted norm. At the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held recently in Yaoundé of Cameroon, the Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament was elected as the Chairperson of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). A total of 321 members from 175 parliaments of 53 Commonwealth nations cast their votes in the election. Bangladesh's first woman speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury will head the 35-strong executive committee of the CPA for the next three years.

DISTINCTIVE SUCCESSES

While presenting the memento titled 'Tree of Peace' to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka on the occasion of the International Literacy Day-2014, the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova mentioned that: "Indeed, under her (Sheikh Hasina) leadership, Bangladesh became a champion country of "Global Education First Initiative".

Bangladesh received the special memento from UNESCO in recognition of her outstanding contribution to promoting girls' and women's education. Receiving the memento the Prime Minister dedicated the 'Tree of Peace' to all the women and children of Bangladesh.

In recognition of significant contribution in reducing poverty Bangladesh won the South-South Awards 2013.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving from Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, ITU Secretary General, The Global Health and Children's Award on September 20, 2011 for her contribution to develop Bangladesh's health sector using the Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The theme for South-South Awards 2013 was "Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Development". The International Organization for South-South Cooperation is established to advance the implementation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, as an initiative launched in conjunction with the sixteenth session of the United Nations High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Receiving the South-South award in New York, Prime Minister of Bangladesh said the award was a great achievement for Bangladesh and dedicated the award to the people of Bangladesh.

RESILIENCE AND POTENTIALS

Bangladesh received the 'Global Diversity' award in London in 2011. The 'Global Diversity' award is conferred to celebrating and highlighting personnel, business, corporate, regulatory and government achievements in improving equality and diversity in business.

Resilience and potential of the economy of Bangladesh has recently been noted in many leading global economic scenario exercises. JP Morgan named Bangladesh as one of the Frontier Five (along with Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Kenya and Nigeria), a group of selected emerging countries having promising macro economic performance, demographic trends and social development. According to Goldman Sachs research report, Bangladesh has been identified as one of the Next Eleven (N-11) countries having strong potentials for becoming one of the largest economies of the world, along with BRIC nations.

Bangladesh is cited as an example on several key social and economic achievements such as female education, reduction in child mortality, effective

disaster management, and increased economic participation by women. It is quite commendable that over the decades private sector has come up and up and emerged as the prime engine of economic growth and social development.

A number of initiatives have been taken up by the Government to create enabling environment for the private sector, so that it can play its due role as a vital economic driver. The Government took steps to generate Public Private Partnership (PPP) for scaling up investment within the economy.

SERVICES @ CITIZENS' DOORSTEPS

On 10 June 2014 Bangladesh was awarded WSIS Project Prize in the "ICT Application: e-Governance" category. The Government of Bangladesh envisioned the Access to Information (A2I) programme as an innovation vehicle to meet the needs of underserved communities with the motto: "Services @ Citizens' Doorsteps."

A2I is premised on using information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an enabler in improving public service delivery to the traditionally underserved population. Government of Bangladesh envisioned the A2I programme in collaboration with UNDP and USAID. Headed by the Prime Minister's Office, one of the evident values added by A2I has been the establishment of over 4,500 ICT empowered government-owned service delivery outlets.

A2I initiatives have made a multiplier effect throughout the society, from creating employment opportunities to promoting broader agendas of social inclusion. The A2I approach has adopted a slogan which is driving service delivery transformation in Bangladesh: "Citizens need NOT go to services because services will come to them."

ICT FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

According to the 2008 UNDP Human Development Index Statistical Update, Bangladesh ranked 147 among 179 countries with an HDI score of 0.524, placing it among countries considered to have achieved medium human development.

Bangladesh has won the ICT Excellence Awards 2014 in three categories, for improving people's life using information technology. The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) Global ICT Excellence Award is handed out every two years in conjunction with the World Congress on IT (WCIT), with the goal of identifying the most outstanding ICT users. The awards honour

organisations that have demonstrated exceptional achievement in using ICT to benefit societies, governments, organisations and individuals.

Bangladesh formally joined ITU within two years after independence, in 1973. Bangladesh was elected a council member of ITU for the period of 2010-2014, representing Region E. Bangladesh has been awarded the prestigious 'World Summit on Information Society 2014' prize at the WSIS+10 High Level of ITU at Geneva.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving the "South-South Award" for her goverment's achievement in alleviating poverty in Bangladesh from Francis Lorenzo, President of International Organization for South South on September 24, 2014

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY FOR PROGRESS & PROSPERITY

To harness the potentials of ICT for Human Development and social progress, the Government of Bangladesh, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, adopted the Vision 2021.

Vision 2021 and its associated Perspective Plan 2010-2021 have set solid development targets for Bangladesh by the end of 2021 when Bangladesh celebrates its 50th year of independence.

The 'Vision 2021' aims at developing Bangladesh into a resourceful and modern economy through efficient use of ICTs. The Government of Bangladesh adopted National ICT Policy 2009 with the vision to expand and diversify the use of ICTs to establish a transparent, responsive and accountable government; develop skilled human resources; enhance social equity; ensure cost-effective delivery of citizen-services and support the national goal of becoming a middle-income country within 2021.

ENGAGEMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

Bangladesh pursues a forward-looking foreign policy based on friendship with all and malice

BANGLADESH SEEKS SUPPORT FOR ITS CANDIDATURE IN ITU COUNCIL

towards none. Admitted to the United Nations in 1974, Bangladesh was elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for two years term twice, in 1978 and again 2000. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh served as president of the 41st UN General Assembly in 1986.

Achieving the distinction of being the top troop-contributor in UN peace-keeping operations, Bangladesh has been playing a considerable role in international peacekeeping mission.This reflects Bangladesh's deep and abiding conviction to global stability and the commitment of actively associating with the goals and purposes of the United Nations and of the international community.

REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIONS

Bangladesh has successfully negotiated several regional trade and economic agreements, including the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Bangladesh pioneered the formation of SAARC, a regional co-operation forum comprising seven South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Bangladesh has served in the chairmanship of SAARC and has participated in a wide range of ongoing SAARC regional activities, vigorously pursuing the cause of enhancing economic co-operation in the region.

Bangladesh is an active member of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), an international organisation which includes South Asian and Southeast Asian nations. Other member nations of this group are: India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

Bangladesh was admitted as a member of OIC in 1977. Since then, an explicit goal of Bangladeshi foreign policy has been to seek close relations with other Islamic states. In 1983, Bangladesh hosted in capital Dhaka, the foreign ministers' meeting of the OIC. At the

OIC headquarters in Jeddah, Bangladesh is represented in the capacity of one of the Director Generals.

Bangladesh along with the seven other nations is a founding member the Developing 8 (D8). D8 is an economic development alliance consisting of Muslim majority states which focuses in multiple areas including rural development, science and technology, banking, agriculture, humanitarian development, energy, environment, health and finance.

As chairman of the "Group of 77", an informal association encompassing most of the world's developing nations, Bangladesh played a constructive role in 1982-83. Bangladesh has taken a leading role in the "Group of 48" developing countries.

THE WAY FORWARD

Bangladesh is cited as an example on several key social and economic achievements like female education, reduction in child mortality, effective disaster management, and increased economic participation by women. Resilience and potential of the economy of Bangladesh is noted well by global economic players.

Bangladesh is committed to become a middle-income country by 2021 with a vision to be a developed country by 2041. The significance of ICTs as a means for reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth has prompted the Government of Bangladesh to take up a futuristic vision. ICTs have emerged as one of the key development agendas, in view of their potential for reducing corruption and increasing transparency in the decision-making process, as well as for people's inclusion and economic enablement.

Bangladesh has a proven track record for contributing in different global forum and is eager to continue its endeavor.

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP receiving prestigious ITU e-Governance award from ITU Secretary General Dr. Hamadoun I Touré. Kabir Bin Anwar, Project Director, Access to Information (A2i) program and Mr. Houlin Zhao, Deputy Secretary General of ITU are also seen in the picture.

BANGLADESH HOSTS 54TH ANNUAL TELECOMMUNICATION FORUM OF CTO

Bangladesh sought support from its allies as it desperately seeks to retain the country's council membership at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN special body on telecommunications. The ITU election will be held in its upcoming council election to be held in Busan, South Korea.

State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP, CTO Secretary General Prof. Tim Unwin and BTRC Chairman Sunil Kanti Bose seen on the dias along with other dignitaries at the CTO Forum

The appeal was made by Minister for Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology at the 54th Annual Telecommunication Forum of the Commonwealth countries held in Dhaka from September 8 to 10, 2014.

Bangladesh is currently a member of the Executive council of the ITU and will contest again from the Asia and Australia region known as 'E-region' where some 18 countries will vie for the 12-member EC of the UN body.

The Minister stressing the need for transferring telecom technology among the Commonwealth nations said "The government is now working to digitize Bangladesh by 2021 to overcome poverty though making progress in information and telecommunications sector."

The minister was addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the three-day-long Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO).

"I hope Commonwealth countries would share telecom technologies to help Bangladesh alleviate poverty" he said.

At the function, State Minister for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Zunaid Ahmed Palak said Commonwealth countries should come forward to exchange knowledge in telecommunications and information technology sector. CTO is a platform to exchange knowledge on telecommunications and ICT, he added.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Sunil Kanti Bose, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) Secretary General Prof Tim Unwin, CTO Chairman Juma Kandie, Nigerian Communication Commission's Executive Vice Chairman Dr. Eugene Juwah, Posts and Telecommunications Division Secretary Faizur Rahman Chowdhury and Information and Communication Technology Division Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan also spoke at the opening ceremony.

T I M Nurul Kabir, Secretary General of AMTOB is seen as a panel discussant at a session of the CTO Forum

CTO Secretary General Professor Tim Unwin said "Attention remains high on the role ICTs can play in the national economic growth of every Commonwealth country today. But below this lies serious inequalities which we have a moral duty to address. In particular, it is critical that we find ways through which the poorest and most marginalised in the Commonwealth can use ICTs to transform

their lives, especially in relation to people with disabilities, street children and other socially-excluded groups. This is one key mission of the CTO, and this annual forum is intended to share good practices from which we can all learn. This is a communal agenda, in the interests of all people."

Removing the digital divide through low-cost high speed broadband connections and content development in own languages are the keys to progress for developing countries like Bangladesh said Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu.

Speaking as a panelist at a session of the three-day CTO Forum, the Minister underscored the need for bridging the socio-economic and cultural gaps among people by empowering them through ICT education in order to break digital divide.

He stressed internet content development in one's mother language to ensure the access and understandability of people from all sectors.

AMTOB Secretary General T I M Nurul Kabir emphasized that for effective policy formulation and implementation, policymakers and industry stakeholders must have consultation. Otherwise industry needs may not be reflected in formulated policy. Also, policy needs revision to keep pace with the change of time and technology. Only then policy can help to boost the industry to help the development of the nation. A total of 53 member states of the CTO participated at the forum whereas telecom and information technology shared their views and knowledge on technology.

> *Removing the digital divide through low-cost high speed broadband connections and content development in own languages are the keys to progress for developing countries like Bangladesh*

NIGERIA ELECTED AS NEW CHAIR OF CTO

Nigeria has been elected as the new Chair of the Council and Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), taking over from Kenya. The election took place during the Organisation's Annual Council Meeting held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 11 – 12 September 2014.

"We are delighted and honored to be elected to this position, and we look forward to working with all members to continue to guide Management in its ICT4D efforts", said Dr Eugene Juwah, Executive Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) who will assume this position on behalf of the West African country.

Dr. Juwah was previously 1st Vice-Chair of the CTO. He has over thirty years of experience in the IT and telecommunications sectors, including over 20 years in top management-level positions. Appointed in July 2010 in his current position at the NCC, he championed the introduction of emergency communication services, mobile number portability, SIM card registrations and broadband access expansion in Nigeria. He takes over as Chairman of the CTO from Juma Kandie, Director for Human Capital and Administration at the Communications Authority of Kenya.

IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL BROADBAND POLICIES

The evolution of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), especially broadband, has received significant attention in most countries around the world. To be a part of the global information economy, countries need to put in place a robust policy framework to capitalize on the existing technologies to enhance competitiveness, increase productivity and economic development, to promote greater social inclusion and to facilitate the sustainable use of broadband services in the future. Broadband is becoming pervasive and mobile broadband, which is estimated to reach 32% global penetration by the end of this year – a number that will have almost doubled since the end of 2011, and quadrupled since the end of 2009. And yet there is still so much to do, with more than four billion people still offline – without access to the extraordinary benefits of the online world.

As the lead UN agency for information and communication technology (ICT) issues, the ITU considers this one of the key priorities as is evident from the launch of its Broadband Initiative and the establishment of the Broadband Commission with UNESCO in 2010. In 2011, at the Broadband Leadership Summit, the Commission endorsed a set of advocacy targets covering broadband policy, affordability and uptake. The first target calls for broadband policy to be made universal by 2015 and importance of policy leadership and the effectiveness and policy implications of national broadband plans.

National broadband plans are an important mechanism for governments to set this vision and strategy of how technology can move their own country forward. Among ICTs, broadband adoption has demonstrated the greatest impact on GDP growth and the use of broadband at the individual level has changed our lives in a myriad of ways. By prioritizing broadband, setting targets such as adoption, speed and quality, and identifying the critical policy measures to be implemented, governments signal not only their intention to create a dynamic environment where broadband can grow, but also their commitment to serve their constituents. By the start of 2013, some 134 or 69% of countries had a national plan, strategy, or policy already in place to promote broadband (excluding

the telecommunication policies and Information Society strategies) and in the Asia-Pacific region, ITU in collaboration with the government of Republic of Korea has assisted 17 countries in drafting their National Broadband Policies/Plans.

National Telecom Policy for Bangladesh

Upon request from the Ministry of Posts Telecommunications and Information Techonology, Bangladesh, ITU has developed National Telecommunications Policy (NTP) for Bangladesh, to establish clear guidance and settings for the telecommunications industry in Bangladesh for the longer-term. This means that the NTP will apply immediately but with the recognition that many of the goals will take time to be realized in full and for the full benefits to become manifest.

The NTP is aspirational and concentrates on higher level issues. The NTP is intended to have a long life and to be a constant guide for more detailed policy-making and shorter term planning for a long time. The NTP needs to be reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect the important telecommunications issues for Bangladesh, but it is unlikely to change dramatically over a short span of years. The NTP recognizes that Bangladesh has set itself broader national policy goals based on an aspiration to become a middle-income economy by 2030 (that is, within a generation).

There are several elements of this vision, including the identification of the drivers that will be

employed to ensure that the vision is realised and perpetuated. The NTP endeavors integrating Bangladesh in the new global knowledge economy through competitiveness, investment, development of human capacity and improved governance in the telecommunications sector, and to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country within a generation and developing telecommunication networks and services to serve the needs of the whole country through an open and competitive marketplace as well as harmonizing telecommunications policy with policies in the fields of IT, broadcasting, media and electronic commerce to realise the vision behind Digital Bangladesh.

The NTP is intended to be relevant for the next 15 to 20 years at least in the form that it has been developed, and is expected to be relevant up to a time when the structure of the industry and the detailed nature of its services cannot be envisaged with any certainty. However it is consistent that with such a long lifetime the NTP should be subject to regular review and, as appropriate, revision to preserve its currency and relevance at all times.

National Telecommunications Policy Principles

The objectives set out in NTP seek to ensure maximum benefit to Bangladesh as a whole, supplementing other efforts to promote the national welfare. The achievement of the objectives will be guided by a set of clear policy principles. The following principles will guide the NTP in Bangladesh:

Market driven: to the maximum extent telecommunications infrastructure provision and service delivery will be through the operation of market forces, whilst recognising the critical role of government in facilitating the roll out of services to areas in which service may not be commercially viable in the short to medium term.

Universal access: The policy reflects the principle that modern telecommunications services shall be accessible to all Bangladeshi people and communities. Access is a function of availability, affordability and capacity to use. All of these

National broadband plans are an important mechanism for governments to set this vision and strategy of how technology can move their own country forward

aspects will be addressed in programs designed by the Government to ensure that universal access is achieved. In particular, as already noted, the Government will address telecommunications access for communities that might not otherwise be served through the operation of market forces.

Affordability: Telecommunications services shall be affordable for all people in Bangladesh.

Leadership: This Policy seeks to encourage leadership in innovative application and usage at all levels of Bangladesh's economy and society, and especially by the private sector. The Government also has a clear leadership role in transforming its own processes and public sector services showcasing the opportunities available through telecommunications and ICT more generally.

Transparency: Policy revision and regulation shall be undertaken using best practice processes that are open and transparent and based on consultation with those potentially affected.

Conclusion

The NTP recognizes that Bangladesh has set itself broader national policy goals based on an aspiration to become a middle-income economy by 2030 and for this broader goal to be realized it is necessary that the telecommunications sector develops and that the most modern and innovative telecommunications services are readily available at affordable prices across the country, and that the full transformative power of broadband be fully harnessed.

There is a need for closer collaboration and 'smart' partnerships amongst policymakers, regulators at regional, national and international level across sectors for harnessing the benefits of the ICT/broadband due to the direct positive impact it has on enhanced productivity and innovation in each sector such as health, education, agriculture, electricity, transport etc. Bangladesh has greatest opportunity to realize the outcomes contained in the Digital Bangladesh through adoption of National Telecom Policy.

Note: This was a message from Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for GSMA AMTOB Seminar, Bangladesh.

GSMA-AMTOB WORKSHOP REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF MOBILE IN BANGLADESH

The GSMA and Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) urged the Bangladesh Government to revise the country's decade old telecom policy in order to accommodate new technological development to spur further growth of the sector.

The call was made at a workshop organized by the GSMA, in cooperation with the AMTOB titled "Realizing the potential of mobile in Bangladesh".

Minister for Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology Abdul Latif Siddique, MP, said that the mobile telecommunication sector has emerged as an inevitable sector without which no development and progress could take place.

The minister made the comment while addressing the AMTOB/GSMA workshop as the chief guest. He assured the industry that the government would do everything possible considering the contributions of the sector.

Irene Ng, Head of Asia, GSMA addressing at a plenary session of the GSMA-AMTOB workshop titled 'Realizing the Potential of Mobile in Bangladesh'

Irene Ng, Asia Regional Head of GSMA commented that the mobile industry has already contributed a great deal towards the development of economic and social development in Bangladesh. But, more needs to happen to enable the full potential of mobile to be realized and for digital inclusion to take place in Bangladesh. For a start, reforming the legislative and policy framework in Bangladesh is a key component of what needs to happen. In particular, we look forward to the 1998 National Telecoms Policy to be updated to keep up with changing technology and for mobile enabled solutions in the areas of health, education and financial inclusion to be provided to all so that the vision of 'Digital Bangladesh' can be truly met.

Md. Faizur Rahman Chowdhury, Secretary Posts and Telecommunications Division, MOPT&IT in his speech said Telecom Division has taken initiative to formulate an effective telecom policy with the help of ITU and policymakers. Demand for mobile internet has attained a new momentum followed by the launching of 3G technology. Current mobile coverage is more than 70% while for mobile internet it has exceeded 30%. The vision of the government is to establish a poverty-free, mid income nation through a sustainable growth in technology, the Secretary added.

AMTOB Chairman Ziad Shatara said Mobile Industry worldwide has experienced a phenomenal growth both in terms of subscribers and services.

Shatara, who is the CEO of Banglalink Digital Communications Limited lauded GSMA for playing a crucial role in developing a valuable relationship with the policymakers, regulators, mobile operators and other worthy stakeholders all across the globe. Mobile operators are really proud to be a part of the industry which is fuelling the economic growth of the nation.

He insisted that the taxation regime for the industry needs to be far more investment friendly to propel mobile technology to the next level.

AMTOB Vice Chairman and CEO of Grameenphone Vivek Sood commended the mobile phone operators for the rapid expansion of mobile financial services. The service uses the valuable telecom resource and the MNOs should be acknowledged therefore.

BTRC Chairman, Sunil Kanti Bose disclosed that the consumers have lost their faith on mobile companies. The mobile operators must come forward to the aid of the customers in solving relevant problems without forwarding them to the regulator, he said. Bose also admitted that with technological innovation, mobile services are offering such diversified set of services that it is difficult for one regulator to oversee the entire operation. The regulator must develop capacity to support the operators. Both regulators and operators alike work to satisfy the customers, Bose added.

Sunil Kanti Bose, Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) addressing at the GSMA-AMTOB workshop as a special guest

T I M Nurul Kabir, Secretary General of AMTOB said "Mobile Network Operators and international organizations may support an effective public private dialogue through formation of a committee with government representatives to engage in a review of the current legislative, policy and regulatory framework governing the operations of mobile network operators and to make recommendations around specific reforms to the framework that may be necessary in order to support the realisation of the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021 plan' and the associated 'Perspective Plan 2010-2021' and any further objective that may be set within the forthcoming 'Vision 2041'."

The morning plenary session titled "A framework for growth: the policy framework in Bangladesh" was moderated by Aftabul Islam, Leading Policy expert and President of American Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Vivek Sood, CEO, Grameenphone Ltd., Supun Weerasinghe, CEO, RobiAxiata Ltd., Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and Shameem Ahsan, President, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) were the panel discussants in this session.

Dr. M Rokonuzzaman, Professor, North South University moderated the second half of the morning plenary session "From policy to implementation: defining and regulating the mobile sector". The session was adorned with the following panel discussants: Ziad Shatara, CEO, Banglalink Digital Communications Ltd., Rajnish Kaul, COO, Airtel Bangladesh Ltd. and Gias Uddin Ahmed, Managing Director, Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd.

Somnath Mahalanabis, EVP, Technology Planning, RobiAxiata, Md. Munir Hasan, Director, Grameenphone Ltd., Abdus Salam, CTO, Ericsson Bangladesh Limited and Colen Shi, CTO of Huawei Bangladesh were the panel discussants in the afternoon session "Unleashing growth from mobile: towards effective spectrum planning, management and harmonization." Joe Guan, Spectrum Policy & Regulatory Affairs Advisor, APAC moderated this particular session.

A presentation titled "The role of policy and regulation to achieve social goals" was made by Ricardo Tavares, CEO of Techpolis highlighting regulatory policy and best practices of telecom sector.

Participants of a panel discussion seen on the stage at GSMA-AMTOB workshop

The closing session title "A framework for action: fostering government and industry partnership" was conducted by AMTOB. Secretary General of AMTOB T I M Nurul Kabir provided the concluding speech.

CEO and MD of Airtel Bangladesh Limited, PD Sarma along with other Airtel Leadership Board members launched Airtel's revolutionary mobile tariff plan "Shobai Ek". "Shobai Ek" allows customers to talk 24 hours to all operators across Bangladesh, without any restrictions at 1 Paisa/sec flat rate. This industry first initiative has helped Airtel to raise the bar in delivering value to its customers through simple and transparent mobile tariffs

Banglalink and Kewkradong Bangladesh observes the 'International Coastal clean-up Day, 2014' with this year's slogan"We are the solution"

Citycell

Citycell sponsored Captain Cup Golf Tournament 2014. Kurmitola Golf Club, Dhaka was the organizer of this tournament. Air Marshal Muhammad Enamul Bari, ndu, psc, Chief of Air Staff, Bangladesh Air Force, Suman Bhattacharjee, Human Resources Director of Citycell were present with other high officials of Citycell and Kurmitola Golf Club at the prize giving ceremony of this tournament on September 12, 2014

grameenphone

Mozilla, a pioneer in Web platforms, introduces the Firefox operating system for smartphones in Bangladesh, in cooperation with Grameenphone and device partner Symphony

AMTOB
Members' Activities

Robi Career Carnival held at IBA, where students were given career counseling. RobiYouthClub.com, a first of its kind career counseling website for students and job seekers was also launched at this Carnival

Teletalk Bangladesh Limited (TBL) signed a payment solution Agreement with City Bank to facilitate their nationwide payments. Sohail R. K. Hussain, Managing Director & CEO of City Bank and Gias Uddin Ahmed, Managing Director of TBL, witnessed the agreement signing while Faroque Ahmed, GM, Finance & Accounts, TBL and Sheikh Mohammad Maroof, DMD, City Bank signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations

AMTOB
Associate Members' Activities

Ericsson Bangladesh Limited sponsored Wi-Fi service at Modhur Canteen of Dhaka University

Huawei ICT Talent Hunt held in CUET

ZTE team at a meeting

AMTOB
ACTIVITIES IN PICTURES

AMTOB Chairman Ziad Shatara delivering his welcome speech at the inaugural session of the GSMA-AMTOB Workshop on 'Realizing the Potential of Mobile in Bangladesh' held in late August 2014

Panel discussants at a plenary session titled "A Framework for Growth: the Policy Framework in Bangladesh" at the GSMA-AMTOB Workshop on 'Realizing the Potential of Mobile in Bangladesh' held in late August 2014. Mr. Aftab ul Islam, President of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh moderated the session.

Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Capital: Dhaka
Area: 147,570 square kilometers
Population: 160 million
Population Density: 1,015 (Per Sq. km)
Official Language: Bangla
Currency: Taka (BDT)
Annual GDP per Capita: USD 1,115
Literacy Rate: 52%
Tele-Penetration: 75%
Internet Penetration: 25%
Population under 34 years of age: 63%
Life Expectancy: 59 years
Mobile Coverage: 90% of Population

*BBS, March 2011 (adjusted)

⊞AMTOB

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