

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH
17TH AGM OF ITU-APT FOUNDATION OF INDIA
OCTOBER 01, 2020 (THURSDAY)

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen!



1. It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to the **17th Annual General Meeting**, of the ITU-APT Foundation of India, which is being conducted Online this time and probably the 1st time as I remember. I would also like to extend my warm gratitude and thanks to the members for their dedication and support towards the foundation which has coined many success stories in the journey of the foundation.
2. As we meet, we are in the midst of some unprecedented times. The entire world and India is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic and the huge challenges it has thrown out. Governments across are at a dilemma – on one hand around how much and how long to impose lockdown conditions to arrest the spread of the pandemic and on the other side, how to quickly restore the business conditions and how to jumpstart the wheels of the economy.
3. **While it is a little disheartening for me that we are not meeting in-person on this special occasion, but, believe me, I feel really great to be with you online too, which is also again possible due to the resilient and robust telecom infrastructure and networks we have built over the years.**
4. **Thank you for joining us. I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy during the global COVID-19 pandemic.**
5. As you all know, the ITU-APT Foundation of India (IAFI) is a non-profit, non-political society and has been working in India with the prime objective of active involvement of telecom sector in the activities of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT).
6. In the year 2003 i.e. the 17 years ago, a small group of telecom professionals and experts with long experience in the Telecom sector created an institutional mechanism to enable participation of Indian telecommunication fraternity on a much wider scale in the activities of ITU and APT. That idea and the ensuing efforts resulted in the establishment of ITU-APT Foundation of India. The Foundation has today on its roll more

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than 100 members comprising Telecom, IT and Broadcasting professionals, corporate organizations, and associates.

7. **Over the years, we have aptly demonstrated our abilities and ITU-APT Foundation of India has been recognized by the ITU as Regional Telecom Organization and is a Sector Member in the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D) and in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T).**
8. Giving back to the community has been a guiding principle of our association since the inception. Through various Committees comprising of experts, ITU-APT foundation has been very active and has taken several initiatives to contribute to the policy formulation, implementation, regulatory framework and other government plans on issues concerning the Telecom sector development, digital India, standardization, spectrum, regional harmonization and so on.
9. Our individual membership has continued to grow stronger & stronger in these years. However, we still need to work together and very hard, to get more corporate members. Undoubtedly the individual members have always been the backbone of our foundation.
10. I would like to congratulate ITU-APT team especially the President for bringing ITU-APT financials from Red to a reasonable stature. But at the same time, a word of caution is not to sit on the laurels & save the money for rainy days, as foundation is growing day by day and a few important events are in the offing. All this corpus has been possible because of the members support to increase the membership fee & their happy acceptance.
11. **During the previous year, the ITU-APT foundation has organized several events and programmes** for development of the telecom sector to harness the expertise of its members and contribute in development of a robust telecom eco-system in the country. **Most of the programmes/ events had to be in Online mode due to pandemic COVID-19, however, they also have been as successful as the previous programmes. Thanks to the team of committed professionals and the membership we have at**

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ITU-APT and also the whole-hearted support from the Government. Some of the programmes/ event that had been conducted in previous year are:

- i. Satellite Communications – The Journey ahead; Opening of the Indian Space Sector to the Private Industry on 10th Sep 2020
 - ii. National Workshop on New Wi-Fi Spectrum in 6 GHz conducted online on 15-Jul-2020
 - iii. Virtual Celebration of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day on 18th May 2020
 - iv. 1st Preparatory Meeting for WTSA -20 on 8th April 2020
 - v. 5G Huddle 2020 conducted in Hotel Imperial, New Delhi on 5-6 February 2020
 - vi. Press Release briefings on the Outcomes of WRC-2019 on 29th November 2019 in New Delhi
 - vii. Curtain Raiser on 5G in ITU on 16th October 2019 at Hotel Claridges in New Delhi
 - viii. And various other meetings and discussions
12. This year ITU-APT Foundation brings you the most talked about topics i.e. **5G, Wi-Fi 6 and also the Satellite Communication.**
13. **5G**, indeed, today, it is the most talked about technology as the world prepares to reap the benefit of 5G through its use cases. There are various fast mover countries such as China, USA, Japan and South Korea etc. **As per recent report, India is also about to start large scale trials for 5G technology and various use-cases** and then expected to be followed by 5G auctions and its rollouts.
14. Nations across the globe are struggling to counter the threat posed by the pandemic. The pandemic has also been affecting economic and financial conditions worldwide, with India being no exception. Sectors such as IT/ITeS, electronics, automobiles, entertainment, transport, tourism, and exports are in trouble due to disruption in the global supply chain and routine operations. During such crisis times, the **broadband connectivity through Wi-Fi has provided the much need support to move the economic engine of the country.**

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15. Recent IP traffic measurements indicate that peak IP network traffic has stabilized at 25% to 30% above pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. In India, internet traffic surged by as much as 40% during the national lockdown. **With our growing reliance on Wi-Fi, we are going to need faster, stronger Wi-Fi networks, which is now commonly known as Wi-Fi 6.** The good news is that it has already started rolling out in several parts of the world. Wi-Fi 6 offers the following advantages over existing standards. Further, as India also embarks upon the journey to 5G and other new technologies and applications such as IoT/M2M, AR/VR, Robotics etc, Wi-Fi 6 needs to be made available well in advance to supplement 5G.
16. Other important and relevant topic in our focus is the Satellite Communications, because of its various advantages over terrestrial communication networks as far as providing services in remote and far flung areas is concerned. In such areas, Broadband through Satellite plays a very critical role. **We at ITU-APT foundation of India, are very committed to the progress and awareness of Satellite Communications in the country and opening of the same for private sector to bridge the digital divide for connecting the unconnected.**
17. In order to match with the pace and paradigm technological shift it is important that the association also start deliberating on new age subject matter of concerns such as small cells, in-building solutions, data security, cyber security, edge computing data centres including the robust telecom infrastructure creation.
18. **The truly appreciate the dedication and hard work done by the Executive Council and the committed secretariat at the foundation, who have played a key role in building a strong, world-class organization and their efforts in addressing the current situation under testing times is a source of inspiration.**
19. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all members and functionaries for their support and cooperation without which the Foundation could not have had a successful 17 year run and carving for itself an important position in ICT sector professional bodies. **Co-Chairman Shri R. N. Agarwal, Vice Chairpersons: Shri N. K. Goyal, President Shri**

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Bharat Bhatia, Treasurer, Shri H C Soni, Secretary General, Shri S N Gupta and other members of the Executive Council, for their hard work, support and dedication in nurturing the Foundation.

20. I would like to conclude by saying that it has been a wonderful year. Our successes and improvements in all these years have been possible only because of your trust and confidence in ITU-APT Foundation. I feel humbled to thank each one of you, members, various partners, Government for their continued support. I assure my full cooperation and support in all the future activities of the Foundation and the members.

Once again, Thank you everyone, please stay safe and healthy and hopefully this time next year, we'll be able to meet in person.
