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| **The 20th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council****(SATRC-20)**28 – 29 August 2019, Paro, Bhutan |

**CONCEPT NOTE**

1. **Background**

The South Asian Telecommunication Regulator’s Council (SATRC) established under the umbrella of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) as one of the sub-regional activities to foster close corporation among the telecommunication regulatory authorities of the South Asian countries. Currently, nine (9) South Asian countries participate in SATRC activities. The SATRC meeting is held annually and attended by the head of telecommunication regulatory authorities of the South Asian countries including senior officials of the Ministries and Departments, as well as senior officials /representatives of the industry. The Council discusses key policy and regulatory issues of concern to the SATRC members and reviews the implementation of SATRC Action Plans and provide further directive.

Currently, SATRC is implementing SATRC Action Plan Phase VII (SAP VII), which was adopted by the 19th Meeting of the SATRC (SATRC-19) last year in Islamabad, Pakistan for the implementation period of 2019-2020. SAP VII has incorporated a number of emerging policy and regulatory issues as Work Items. All the work items were prepared in-line with the five strategic pillars identified in the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020. SAP VII activities are part of implementation of the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020 by SATRC.

The 42nd Session of the Management Committee of the APT (MC-42) approved activities of the APT for 2019 including the 20th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council (SATRC-20). Further, the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019 (APT-MM 2019) will be organized by APT from 25 to 26 June 2019 in Singapore to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the APT, and to recognize the valuable role of APT in the regional cooperation on telecommunication/ICT. It will renew high level commitment for continued support to further strengthen the community and provide high-level policy guidelines for the region for the next five years on the development of telecommunication/ICT and its critical role in enabling creative economy and socio-economic development.

The 20th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council (SATRC-20) is aimed to continue the discussion on the emerging policy and regulatory issues for South Asia keeping on focus on the identified Work Items in SAP-VII, the Strategic Plan of the APT for 2018-2020 and the outcomes Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019.

1. **The 20th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council**

The 20th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators’ Council (SATRC-20) will be held from 28 – 29 August 2019 in Paro, Bhutan.

SATRC-20 will mainly focus on sessions in Regulators’ Roundtable and Regulator-Industry dialogue on the key emerging issues. At the Regulators’ Roundtable sessions, the heads of the regulators will exchange opinion and share experiences on regulatory challenges and discuss the possible way forward including mutual cooperation. The Regulator-Industry Dialog will facilitate the exchange of opinions among regulators and industries on the challenging issues of regulations and ways to overcome the challenges collectively and facilitate the business environment. It will be an opportunity for the industry to raise their views and concerns on the current and future regulatory trends and their expectations from the regulators.

The discussions at SATRC-20 will address key issues, such as:

* Ensuring broadband connectivity;
* Issues surrounding cost and market condition for investment on broadband infrastructure;
* Spectrum roadmap for future mobile broadband;
* Spectrum considerations such as re-farming, priority bands for the deployment of 5G etc.;
* Digital Financial services and role of telecom service providers;
* Regulatory roles and challenges for new technologies such as 5G, Block Chain, AI and Industry 4.0 including data security.

SATRC-20 will also review the progress of SATRC Action Plan Phase VII implementation and provide further directives, if necessary.

1. **Expected outcomes of SATRC-20**

The agenda of SATRC-20 consists of sessions to address the emerging key regulatory and policy issues that South Asian telecommunication/ICT regulators are facing. Further, it included mutual discussion among regulators and industry to identify the challenges and way forward for mutual cooperation. The provisional agenda and tentative programme are annexed to this Concept Note.

Expected specific outcomes of SATRC-20 includes are:

* Understanding the key policy a regulatory challenges in the region, taking collective decision and areas of mutual cooperation.
* Providing a common platform for regulators and industry to discuss the challenges and find possible way forwards.
1. **Host, timing and location**

SATRC-20 will be held in cooperation with the Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA), from 28 to 29 August 2019, in Paro, Bhutan. Details are provided in Information for Participants.

1. **Contact**

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| **APT Secretariat** | **Local Secretariat** |
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1. **Provisional Agenda and Tentative Programme**

The provisional agenda and tentative programme of SATRC-20 are provided in Annex A, and Annex B, respectively.

**Annex A**

**Provisional Agenda**

1. Opening
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Election of the Chairman of SATRC
4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of SATRC
5. Implementation of the Strategic Plan of APT for 2018 – 2020
6. Outcomes of the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019
7. Report of the status of Implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VII
8. Statements of the Heads of Regulators on sub-regional cooperation through SATRC
9. Regulators’ Roundtable
10. Regulator- Industry Dialogue
11. Industry Session
12. Sharing best practices and experience by SATRC Members
13. Date and venue of SATRC-21
14. Any other matters
15. Closing

**Annex B**

**Tentative Programme of SATRC-20**

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| **Time** | **Wednesday, 28 August 2019** |
| 09:30 – 10:30 | **Opening** * Welcome Address by Director General, BICMA
* Welcome Address by Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity
* Address by Chairman of SATRC
* Inaugural Address by dignitary from Bhutan (TBD)
* Presentation of the token of appreciation

(Group Photograph) |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | **Coffee/Tea Break** |
| 10:45 – 12:30 | Session 1 – ***Plenary**** Adoption of Agenda
* Election of the Chairman of SATRC
* Remarks by the new elected Chairman of SATRC
* Election of Vice-Chairman
* Report of the implementation of the Strategic Plan of APT for 2018 – 2020
* Outcomes of the Asia-Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting 2019
* Report of the implementation of SATRC Action Plan Phase VII
* Statements of the Heads of Regulators on sub-regional cooperation through SATRC
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| 12:30 – 14:00 | **Lunch Break** |
| 14:00 – 15:30 | Session 2 – ***Regulators’ Roundtable: Regulators’ role to attract and sustain investments for innovation, entrepreneurship and employment generation***Investments for better infrastructure is key to provide reliable services so that it can stimulate innovation and promote entrepreneurship. As the industry grows with better investment the employment opportunities will also improve contributing towards the improvement of people’s livelihood. Therefore, the session can discuss on some of the following issues:*Moderator: Chairman, SATRC** *What innovative regulatory incentives can be implemented?*
* *Long term plans and market interventions*
* *The overriding effect on economic development with attraction of investment in the telecom sector*
* *Share any experience if any on the investment in the industry*

**Panelists:*** Head of Regulators
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| 15:30 – 15:45 | **Coffee/Tea Break** |
| 15:45 - 17:15 | Session 3 –***Regulators’ Roundtable: Digital Financial Services***With the increase in wireless broadband network and increase in smart phone penetration various financial services has been introduced especially on mobile devices. The regulators could deliberate on:*Moderator: (TBD)** *What role did the telecom regulators play? And what can be done more?*
* *Did it achieve the social objective of banking the unbanked?*
* *Are the issue of consumer and data protection adequately taken care?*
* *What is the relation with the banking regulators and how it can be further enhanced*

**Panelists:*** Head of Regulators
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| **Time** | **Thursday, 29 August 2019** |
| 9:00 – 10:30  | Session 4 – ***Regulator - Industry Dialogue: How to prepare for new Technologies and Services***The telecom regulators in the south Asian region has been constantly adapting to the change in technologies and regulatory environment. Several new regulations and guidelines were issued for the development of the industry. The session with panelists from regulators and industry shall share and discuss on some of the issues like:*Moderator: (TBD)** *New Technologies 5G and IoT - Preparedness in terms of Regulatory tools*
* *Related policy directives concerning new technologies*
* *Assessment of current practices in spectrum management and development of spectrum roadmap.*
* *Spectrum availability, re-farming and pricing*

**Panelists:*** Head of Regulators
* Industry Representatives
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| 10:30 – 10:45 | **Coffee/Tea Break** |
| 10:45 - 12:15 | Session 5 – ***Regulator - Industry Dialogue: Quality of Services for mobile phone networks*** In this session speakers from Industries and Regulators would discuss on the challenging issues of regulations and ways to overcome the challenges collectively and facilitate the business environment. It will also be an opportunity for the industry to raise their views and concerns on the current and future regulatory trends and their expectations from the regulators. Some of the issues include:*Moderator: (TBD)** *the initiatives to be taken collectively to ensure to quality of mobile services including broadband;*
* *Standards and Bench marking*
* *Measurement techniques and tool for quality of services*

**Panelists:*** Head of Regulators
* Industry Representatives
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| 12:15 – 14:00 | **Lunch Break** |
| 14:00 - 15:30 | Session 6 –***Sharing Best Practices and Regulatory Experiences***This session will discuss and share policy and regulatory best practices and experiences on aspects new and emerging technologies to support the growth of the digital economy.*Moderator: (TBD)** *Presentations from Regulators (topics TBD)*

**Panelists:*** Senior officials/representatives of Regulators
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| 15:30 – 15:45 | **Coffee/Tea Break** |
| 15:45– 17:00 | Session 7 – ***Industry Session: Regulatory challenges and opportunities*** This Session is would explore and exchange views on the recent industry developments and the role of telecom service providers. It will also provide a platform for the industry to learn from each other in the value chain like the equipment manufacturers, OTT service providers and other stakeholders. Discussion areas may include:*Moderator: (TBD)** *Regulatory challenges from the industry perspective*
* *Cost and market condition for investment for 4G/5G infrastructure*
* *Digital Financial services and role of telecom service providers*

**Panelists:*** Industry Representatives
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| 17:00 – 17:30 | Session 8 – ***Plenary*** Chair: Chairman of SATRC* Discussion on way forward on further cooperation in SATRC
* Adoption of the SATRC activities in 2020
* Date and Venue of SATRC-21
* Any other matters

***Closing**** Remarks by Secretary General of the APT
* Closing Remarks by Chairman, SATRC
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