

South Africa's Candidature for Election to the International Telecommunications Union Council



South Africa is honoured to present its candidature for the ITU Council under Region D, as endorsed by the African Union (AU). As a developing country, we remain committed to the goals and objectives of the ITU of connecting all the world's people, bridging the digital divide, and ensuring equal access to scarce ICT resources so as to realise a just, balanced and people-centred information society and knowledge economy.

Our candidature reflects our long-term commitment to work with the global community to contribute to inclusive, development orientated, ICT-led growth and the use of ICT as a tool for socio-economic development. This work is in line with our global commitments towards the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063.

Following South Africa's re-admittance to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1994, shortly after the transition to democracy, the country has prioritised playing an active role within the organization. Some of our highlights have been:

- Championing digital transformation through the hosting of the ITU Telecom World in Durban, in September 2018, with renewed emphasis on the participation of SMEs to support innovation and technology development.
- Supporting regional development through ICTs including co-chairing the AU Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative and being a member of the Smart Africa Alliance as vehicles to support Agenda 2063.
- Bridging the standardization gap between developed and developing countries through the hosting of World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA) in 2008, in Johannesburg and advancing regional development and capacity in the standardisation, conformance and interoperability capabilities.
- Contributing to the strengthening the ITU through the chairing of the Bureau on ITU Reform to improve on effectiveness, operationalization and overall management of ITU.
- Advocating for people-centred, development-oriented information society by contributing to the deliberations of the two phases of WSIS, and participating in the Working Group on Internet Governance, and chairing one of the two sub-committees in the 3rd Preparatory Committee meeting of the second phase (Tunis) of WSIS.
- Championing broadband rollout to support the UN SDGs and connect the unconnected by serving on the ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission since 2015.
- Supporting the ITU Capacity Development Programmes through the hosting of regional and global ITU Study Groups, Seminars, Regional Telecom Worlds, Forums and Exhibitions.
- Supporting the gender mainstreaming programme and digital inclusion through advancement in appointing the first woman to chair ITU Council in 1999.



MeerKat radio telescope, Northern Cape

South Africa's National ICT Development Agenda

As an integral part of South Africa's national ICT Development Agenda, the country has adopted the Integrated National ICT Policy to position ICTs as an enabler of effective service delivery and transform the lives of the South African people. This comprehensive policy will assist the country to move towards the achievement of a people-centred, people-driven information society and an inclusive and sustainable digital economy.

Since the inception of democracy in 1994, the South African Government has put in place policies to encourage direct investment. It has balanced this paradigm with the imposition on operators of universal service obligations so that there may be greater access and greater uptake of ICTs. Our broader policy objective is to make ICTs accessible and affordable and to empower citizens with digital tools to enhance livelihood.

Government is on continuous drive to connect the unconnected and building an inclusive information society in South Africa through the implementation of the SA Connect, the country's flagship broadband programme and the Internet for All Initiative, a partnership between Public-Private sectors to connect those offline.

In the path to achieve a more ICT connected society, the following key priorities have been identified:

- Greater e-government where citizens would interact with their government more interactively and access services speedily and efficiently and more readily.
- Development of ICT policies and programmes that support digital transformation and South Africa's industrial competitiveness in pursuit of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Reduction in the cost to communicate and achieve a greater uptake of ICTs in the broader society.
- Proliferation of more ICT small to medium enterprises to broaden the wealth creation opportunities in the sector.
- Create a more inventive and innovative climate for the emergence of new industries.
- Empower the local population to develop creative local content for both local and global consumption.



ITU Secretary General, Houlin Zhao with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the ITU Telecom World in Durban, South Africa in 2018

South Africa's ICT Infrastructure Landscape

The ICT sector is increasingly influential in the South African economy and pivotal to the manufacturing, business and government services, trade and telecommunications. The country's telecommunications sector is home to some of the largest operators on the African continent.

South Africa's telecoms landscape has benefited from significant investment in infrastructure, including undersea cables, a terrestrial fibre backbone and improved mobile coverage. Increased competition, reduced services costs and changing business models are transforming the market. Business-to-consumer e-commerce has grown rapidly in recent years.

These advances are paving the way for new services and solutions and more affordable communications and contributing the country's economic growth and digital development. Much of the development in the country is owed to the ITU sector programmes, the international telecommunications policies and regulations and the capacity-building programmes.

South Africa remains an active member of the global ICT family, having been a member of the ITU since 1910, re-joining the ITU family in 1994 following the advent of democracy in our country. South Africa presents its candidature for election to the ITU Council representing Region D. If elected, we will collectively work with other members to advance development through ICTs, promote gender mainstreaming, and encourage greater international cooperation and dialogue.

Vote South Africa for ITU Council and the Radio Regulations Board



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Minister Siyabonga Cwele at the unveiling of the MTN 5G,
ITU Telecom World 2018