COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum 2016
Marlborough House, London
14 June 2016

DECLARATION BY THE COMMONWEALTH ICT MINISTERS

Recognising

a) *the unique nature of the Commonwealth as an association of willing nations that subscribe to principles set out in the Commonwealth charter;*

b) *the proven, central role Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play in socio-economic development, which is recognised by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;*

c) *the notable achievements of the Commonwealth in utilising ICTs to enhance development of its member countries;*

d) *the contribution the Commonwealth makes to Global ICT agenda and its developmental impact across the world, including for non-Commonwealth countries;*

e) *the vast pool of human resources and technologies domiciled collectively within the Commonwealth;*

f) *the organisational structure of the Commonwealth that encompasses a range of organisations with clearly defined mandates, providing great opportunities for collaboration;*

g) *the services the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) has rendered in advancing and promoting the Commonwealth's ICT sector.*

We, the Commonwealth Ministers holding their national mandates in ICTs:

1. congratulate Mr Shola Taylor on his appointment as the new Secretary-General of the CTO and note the achievements made at the CTO since his appointment;

2. welcome Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC as the sixth Commonwealth Secretary-General and invite her to strengthen collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the CTO to maximise the benefits of ICTs to Commonwealth countries;

3. join *Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, in congratulating the CTO on its 115th anniversary;*

4. endorse the strategic plan of the CTO for 2016-20, noting in particular the focus on ICT regulation, Affordable and Universal Broadband, recognising and addressing new forms of "digital divide", Cybersecurity and ICT applications;

5. congratulate the CTO Secretariat for the successful coordination of Commonwealth Coordination meetings at the WRC-15, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers /Governmental Advisory Committee and UN Internet Governance Forum in support of the free, open and secure internet;

6. reaffirm the mandate granted to the CTO to lead the coordination of the Commonwealth's engagement in international ICT agenda;

7. mandate the CTO to continue to build capacity, paying particular attention to the emerging and over-the-horizon technologies and taking into account the needs of women, the youth and other disadvantaged groups;

8. call on the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat to continue to support the CTO and to undertake to recommend to our respective Heads of Government to recognise the CTO as an intergovernmental organisation;

9. commend the CTO for the initiative to develop Member Action Plans for its members and taking into account synergies with regional organisations that member countries belong to and invite member countries to fully engage with the CTO on this initiative;

10. extend appreciations to the United Kingdom for hosting the CTO and supporting its activities which contribute to the development of the Commonwealth's ICT sector;

11. extends appreciations to all the countries that have hosted CTO activities and commits to host activities in future;

12. welcome India back as a Full Member Country of the CTO and invite India to work through the CTO to contribute to the development of the Commonwealth's ICT sector;

13. encourage Commonwealth countries to contribute to the development of the Commonwealth's ICT sector through the CTO;

14. notes the CTO's plan to carry out a study to understand the market dynamics and policy and regulatory challenges of Over-The-Top services both in the context of their impact on traditional business models and of opportunities for innovation and stimulating economic growth;

15. commit to participate at the 56th Council meeting of the CTO on 15th and 16th September 2016 hosted by Fiji and contribute to the shaping of the Commonwealth's ICT agenda;

16. undertake to participate in the upcoming capacity building activities of the CTO, in particular the Commonwealth ICT Investment Forum for Emerging Markets, Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum, commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum and the Commonwealth Cybersecurity Forum;

17. recommend that the new compendium of training entitled the CTO Course Catalogue be utilised for capacity building needs of member countries.