

THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE ORGANIZATIONS HOLDS FIRST ITSO SYMPOSIUM ON ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

Washington DC, 18 June 2018– The International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO) held its first ITSO Symposium on **Achieving Sustainable Development through Satellite Communications** at American University’s Washington College of Law in Washington DC on 12 June, 2018 before ITSO’s 38th Assembly of Parties.



The ITSO Symposium was attended by 69 individuals from 35 countries. Presenters included Mr. Patrick Masambu, Director General of ITSO, Jean Philippe Gillet, the Vice President & General Manager Broadband Services of Intelsat, Mr. Alex Wong, the Head of Global Challenge Partnerships at the World Economic Forum (WEF), Mr. Antonio García Zaballos, the Lead Telecommunications Specialist at the Inter-American Development Bank, Mr. Charles Nahabedian, CEO of VideoKall, and Mr. Thembo Nyombi, the Director for the Rural Development Fund of the Uganda Communications Commission, among others. The event was moderated by Mr. Douglas May of the U.S. Department of State.

The event was divided into three sessions:

- i) Satellite Broadband
- ii) Challenges and Initiatives, and
- iii) Applications and Projects.

Each session had presentations made by representatives of international organizations, the private sector or the non-profit sector.

The ITSO Symposium concentrated on the importance of ICTs for sustainable development, and specifically focused on how satellite broadband can be used to address connectivity gaps and the role of new technologies in bridging the digital divide. The Symposium also covered challenges to universal connectivity such as access to infrastructure, affordability of services, relevant content, and lack of basic digital skills training. Best practices to combat the existing financial, policy, and regulatory constraints that prevent policy makers and private sector actors from breaking down those connectivity barriers were also discussed.

Finally, ongoing projects that leverage satellite technology for sustainable development such as the VideoKall Unmanned Micro Clinic and the ITSO-UCC-Intelsat pilot project to bring high speed data and voice to the Kibuku (Ntoroko) and Bufundi (Rubanda) communities of Uganda, were presented.

More information on the event can be found in the Chairman's Report

<https://itso.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Symposium-Report-06.08.2018.pdf>.