

# **World Telecommunications & Information Society Day 2021**

## **Director General's Message**

As Sri Lanka joins the rest of the world in celebrating the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2021 in marking the 156<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ITU, it is my pleasure to be able to provide a message of felicitation.

The theme for this year's WTISD celebrations, "Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times" is apt noting the black swan event of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has not only highlighted the need of ICT in moving into a future with a new norm of work and lifestyle but also moreover brought to light the extent of Digital divide that is persistent between and within nations. The WTISD 2021 theme has further elaborated the imperative of accelerating the key tenets and goals identified on the ITU's "Connect 2030 Agenda" in ensuring meaningful access to ICT and connectivity universally with an objective to support the concept of future digital economies and digital transformation of societies.

With the heightened need for ICT innovations required to accelerate and empower digital transformations, it is essential to face a new normal emphasizing the role of telecommunications while ICT is growing it's imperative to create an environment that would encourage rapid innovations as well as create a conducive mechanism for sharing of technical expertise.

On this significant occasion of The World Telecommunications and Information Society Day, we as the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka focus on ensuring Sri Lanka's own ambitious digitalization strategy and roadmap is realized by launching initiatives harmonized with ITU's "Connect 2030" agenda. This highlights the rapid expansion plans for ensuring broadband access across the country including coverage for rural areas and ensuring affordable access to critical segments such as the education sector in Sri Lanka by arranging free data access for all state schools and university e-learning platforms. Further strategic initiatives including the launch of 5G trials and Number portability frameworks ensure the critical communication infrastructure and policies are updated to be in line with global best practices and standards for empowering the public to gain the best dividends of ICT and telecommunication services.

I take this opportunity to wish all stakeholders a fruitful and meaningful World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

Oshada Senanayake

Director General