PRESS COMMUNIQUE

Participation of the ICT Authority at the World Summit Information Society (WSIS) High-Level Policy Forum 2023

15 March 2023 - The ICT Authority, represented by its Chairman Mr Dick Ng Sui Wa, participated in Session 9 of the World Summit Information Society (WSIS) High-Level Policy Forum 2023, held in Geneva, with agenda focussing on the theme 'ICT Applications and Services / Climate Change.' The exposé of the Chairman of the ICT Authority was centred around the security and resilience of telecommunication networks as an enabler for water and electricity distribution in Mauritius.

The WSIS brought together high-ranking officials representing governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and international organisations with the objective to provide a platform for discussion around the role of ICTs in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in collaboration with UN agencies involved, such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) of which the ICT Authority is a member.

Mr Dick Ng Sui Wa highlighted that the security and resilience of telecommunication networks is becoming a top priority for Mauritius, particularly in the context of utilities distribution. With the increasing reliance on telecommunication infrastructure, such as 5G networks, the ICT Authority recognises the need for a robust and secure framework.

Utilities distribution systems are expected to benefit from the operational opportunities offered by carrier-based 5G networks, including the "Grid of Things" for electricity distribution and the potential migration of existing fibre-based SCADA systems over a cellular network. The success of these changes, however, relies on secure and resilient telecommunication networks.

Historically, the telecom industry in Mauritius has maintained strong security standards, thanks to proprietary physical infrastructure and network functions residing on hardware platforms. However, the rapid escalation in the cyber threat landscape and the current rollout of 5G networks necessitate the development of a security regulatory framework.

To address these challenges, the Chairman pointed out that the ICT Authority is working on new regulations with the assistance of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). These regulations aim to ensure a regulated environment for licensed providers, secure delivery of public electronic communications networks and services, and the prevention of infrastructure interruption, corruption or denial.

The ICT Authority is considering the inclusion of the GSMA Network Equipment Security Assurance Scheme (NESAS) and Common Criteria (CC) standards in the proposed telecom network security regulations. This would require imported telecom equipment to demonstrate compliance with these schemes in order to be type approved by the Authority for entry into the country.

The drafting of the telecom network security and resilience regulations will happen in two phases: first, regulations pertaining to the type approval process for new telecommunication equipment, and secondly, regulations detailing security and audit requirements for adequate protection in licensees' network facilities.

As Mauritius embraces 5G technology and its potential impact on utilities distribution, the ICT Authority remains committed to ensuring the security and resilience of telecommunication networks for the benefit of both service providers and subscribers.

24 March 2023

More information about the event is available at the following link: *https://www.icta.mu/media-office/*