



## Opening Remarks for the Optimization of the GE84 (FM Plan) Plan for Africa for the Second Coordination Group (CG2)

- Mr Mario Maniewicz – the Director of ITU's Radiocommunication Bureau
- Member State Delegations
- The ITU BR Staff spearheading this project
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is yet another great day for Africa and ATU in particular. This is the day the Second Coordination Group (CG2) begins its work on the GE84 (FM Plan) Plan for Africa. To us, the weight of this day is immense, we cannot understate it.

Through this project, the hope for FM Radio in Africa remains alive. We are excited at the possibility of having **new usable channels** will allow for FM Radio sustainability and expansion. It is in this regards that I would like to express my gratitude to: Mario Maniewicz – the Director of ITU Radiocommunication Bureau, ITU-R Staff working with him on this project, the African States that form the Membership of the CG2 group namely: Angola, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, and Sierra Leone, and all the experts who will be engaging in the engineering work.

The GE84 Plan has served the region for well over 36 years. However, due to the dynamic nature of the industry, we are need to adjust the plan to meet the ever-increasing demand for new usable FM frequency channels, or, expansion of FM radio network services. We acknowledge, as envisioned in the core objective of this project, the need to undertake a coordinated and African-wide modification of the plan in order to achieve optimum number of usable frequencies through identification of the usable channels. While some countries have commenced national programmes and initiatives to optimize their FM plans, the project aims to optimize the Plan in a coordinated continent-wide approach for optimum outcomes. This approach is borrowed from the success of the optimization of the GE06 (the DTT Plan) which was executed on a coordinated continental approach and resulted in the Second Digital Dividend spectrum (the 700MHz band IMT spectrum).

This project fits very well and is in pursuit of the ATU **Statutory Objective (c)** of *promoting programmes for the development of the African Information Society* as well as the **Objective** on *Optimizing the GE84 Plan (i.e. the ITU FM Sound Broadcasting Plan for Africa of 1984 under Pillar1: Promotion of Enabling Environment for Development and Sustainability of Digital Economies in our 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan*. It is one of the three ATU projects regarding the

promoting sound broadcasting in general; the other two being: (1) Study of the State of Digital Sound Broadcasting in Africa, and (2) Strategy for the Introduction of Digital Sound Broadcasting in Africa. I am very pleased to inform you that we are making great progress on these other two projects too, with approval date slated for September 2021.

As a first task to this project and to ensure its success, we set up four groups: The 1<sup>st</sup> group, CG1, had their commencement workshop from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. The other groups will have their workshops in the coming weeks. Over the next two-years, ATU in collaboration with ITU will have a number of these optimization workshops, whose purpose is to undertake the optimization of the Plan by way of internal improvements as well as coordination with neighboring countries, under the guidance of the BR staff.

What you have embarked on today is very important to the development of Africa as a continent. Many would agree that *FM Radio is still the king of the media industry in Africa*. It remains a key ICT service delivering immense social-economic value across the continent. Yet, in many countries, new and expansion of the FM radio is hampered by lack of FM frequencies. It is in this regard that I would like to recognize the importance of your support and dedication to the success of the project. Together, we have the right energy for Africa's ICT development journey.

Let me conclude by, once more, thanking all the stakeholders for their commitment and contribution to this workshop and the entire process.

I wish you all the very best.

**Thank you all.**