

## Cosmas Zavazava

### Zimbabwe

Candidate  
for the post of  
**Director of the  
ITU Telecommunication  
Development Bureau**

#### ***What is your view on the role of digital technologies in a rapidly changing world?***

The role of digital technologies in a rapidly changing world is that of enabler or catalyst in all the socio-economic sectors that are adapting to a new environment. As the introduction of modern technologies happens fast, our role as ITU is to ensure that appropriate policies, legal and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enable, not stifle, the rapid deployment and use of these technologies.

Deployment should be timely in addressing challenges such as climate change, epidemics and environmental degradation. Institutional and human capacity building is important for developing countries, particularly the least developed.



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### ***How should the work of ITU's Telecommunication Development Sector evolve to maintain relevance in today's world?***

The work of the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) must evolve, consciously adapting to the changing world. Beyond adapting, BDT must pre-empt social, economic, and other changes in the environment.

The ITU membership, knowing this, adopts the framework of our work at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), leaving room for innovation in implementing it. If we remain transparent, accountable, and efficient, the ITU membership will appreciate our efforts to make our work relevant. This relevance can be ensured through partnering with other United Nations (UN) agencies, regional groups, civil society, academia, the private sector and industry. Therefore, to remain relevant in today's world, BDT should address today's and tomorrow's challenges, leveraging digital technologies and addressing the challenges of all ITU Member States.

### ***If elected, what are your three priorities and how do you plan to achieve them?***

If elected, these are my three top priorities:

1. Discuss with colleagues (ITU staff) at all levels, articulate my **vision for the Telecommunication Development Bureau** and clarify BDT's mandate. This also means listening carefully to other views, and at the same time, building trust.
2. Engage staff on **issues of strategy** aimed at effectively implementing the Kigali Action Plan adopted by the latest WTDC. Having a shared strategy will get us results and, in the process, establish my leadership style.
3. Analyse the budget for the Bureau and ensure that we efficiently and effectively use the available **financial resources** to implement activities and projects for results. This will also determine any additional financial resources we may need and inform us on how to fill the gap through resource mobilization efforts, with the aim of being able to roll out and implement impactful projects across all regions.

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### ***How can the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector contribute to progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals?***

Currently, 2.7 billion people remain offline. Through closing the digital divide, accelerating digital transformation, and making information and communication technologies (ICTs) affordable, the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It requires working to support the deployment and use of digital solutions in agriculture, economic growth, health, education, gender empowerment, the environment, infrastructure, innovation, and every other sector, so that we can accelerate the implementation of each of the 17 SDGs.

Through partnerships with other sectors and implementation of impactful, purposeful projects, the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau can contribute effectively to reaching the SDGs. Partnerships are important to pool resources and direct them towards this “shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.”

### ***Tell us about your achievements in leadership and building consensus.***

I assumed relevant leadership positions before joining ITU. I became the Controller at the Zimbabwe Government Telecommunications Agency before the establishment of the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ). I was a senior diplomat serving at Minister Counsellor level at a multilateral diplomatic station. These two roles sharpened my negotiation skills, particularly in my collaboration with telecommunications stakeholders as Controller.

As a diplomat negotiating in UN agencies such as the World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, International Labour Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, and World Meteorological Organization, as well as ITU and others, building consensus through negotiations was of paramount importance.

At ITU, my work has involved interfacing with ministers, directors-general of telecommunications regulatory agencies, UN directors- and secretaries-general, and industry leaders. I have consistently achieved positive results when negotiating on policy and regulatory changes, as well as on the direction of telecom and ICT projects for development, including for humanitarian purposes. I have led through innovation and demonstrated sound leadership through the launch and implementation of successful new projects.

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***What else would you bring to the table as the next Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau?***

I would bring rich experience, transparency, accountability, efficiency, and strategic and innovative thinking. Respect for Member States by promoting a member-driven Bureau, listening to all stakeholders (internal and external), team spirit, and an approachable, easy demeanour are all qualities I will bring. I would also bring passion, motivation and enthusiasm within BDT.

My experience encompasses project implementation in countries at different levels of development – the least developed, landlocked developing states, small island developing states, developing and developed countries.

***Is there anything else you would like to add?***

I am for meaningful development. In steering ITU development activities and projects, BDT can help the world succeed through the delivery of real and tangible results facilitated by ICTs. I believe that in collaboration with our Member States, industry and the private sector, academia, and UN organizations, we can make an enormous difference in closing the digital gap and accelerate digital transformation. We can also achieve affordability in terms of devices and services.

Through our efforts, we can help the world address today's challenges, including climate change, epidemics, hunger, gender gaps, limited access, and the need to truly engage and empower our youth. I am determined to bring the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau to new heights. I am for impact and results.



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