

**Dr Cosmas Zavazava, PhD**  
**Candidate for the post of Director ITU, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)**  
*Endorsed by the African Union*



*“I am committed to close the digital divide and accelerate digital transformation.”*

**I present my candidacy as Director Telecommunication Development Bureau of ITU,** I understand the challenges that are associated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and know how to leverage modern information and communication technologies to help countries eradicate poverty, mitigate the impact of pandemics, connect the remaining half of the world population that remains off- line.

My priority as BDT Director will be to work towards a people-centered meaningful **universal connectivity** that provides **easy** and **affordable access** to digital opportunities for ALL. I will also ensure that BDT prioritizes skills development through upskilling and reskilling to bridge the **skills gap** particularly in developing countries and ensure the effective **use** of digital tools. I envision a BDT that is accountable, adaptable, efficient, innovative, responsive, results-based, and transparent.

**As Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, I will focus on promoting three key elements as drivers of sustainable development:**

**1. INVESTMENT** in resilient and secure Infrastructure as a bedrock to global connectivity and post-pandemic recovery

During my future tenure as Director of BDT, I will strongly support the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory framework that has a human face and is friendly to quality infrastructure investment for meaningful connectivity, strengthen industry and private sector participation, and foster win-win partnerships with diverse stakeholders to finance impactful connectivity projects. In a rapidly changing global information society, the BDT's responsibility is to foster the development of broadband access, particularly in developing countries, making it a powerful vehicle for sustainable development while at the same time giving a human face to telecommunications/information and communication technology (ICT) through the safe delivery of new applications that will positively impact people's lives.

**Proven record in this area**

Made an immense contribution to the preparation, organization, and successful holding of **Connect the World ITU series of Events** held in the Africa, Arab Region, Americas, and Asia-Pacific. These

events brought together Heads of State and Government, Private Sector, International and Regional Organizations and resulted in the marketing of investment opportunities of over 75 billion dollars in each region. I also organized and ran over 23 Multistakeholder Partnership Roundtables for the LDCs.

Some of the 23 Multistakeholder Partnership Roundtables:

- [Partnership Round Table for LDCs in Arab States \(Beirut, 29 May 2003\)](#)
- [Partnership Round Table for LDCs in Africa \(Arusha, 3-4 April 2003\)](#)
- [Partnership Round Table for LDCs in Asia and the Pacific \(Coventry, 11-15 August 2003\)](#)

## 2. INNOVATION in support of the digital transformation of society

Innovation helps build a culture of continuous learning, growth, and personal development for staff in the BDT and our Membership. In these times of increasingly fast technological advancements, BDT will be supporting governments to ensure that no one is left behind in digital development to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of efforts to bridge the skills gap within the BDT and in countries, as well as continuous improvement, BDT will acquire, create more effective processes, products, and ideas that will result in the best use of competencies, skills and knowledge and help the organization and countries to respond better to current and future challenges, and unlock value out of new opportunities. For instance, new approaches to resource mobilization through innovative financing, new approaches to win-win partnerships, and new approaches to co-financing and executing impactful projects for digital transformation.

### Proven record in this area

- At the peak of the Ebola pandemic in West Africa, I initiated and launched the first big data project to help track the spread of the pandemic. I also launched an information sharing up based on official sources in order to avoid people falling in the trap of fake news. See: <https://news.itu.int/big-data-will-help-fight-global-epidemics/e>
- I also designed and managed the first ITU project on measuring the Information Society using big data from the ICT industry to improve and complement existing statistics and methodologies to measure the information society
- As I strongly believe in innovation, I am a member of the Geneva Innovation Movement that brings together a host of United Nations organizations and have applied some of the shared and tested ideas on innovation in my leadership role.
- I participated in several United Nations System Staff College training course on innovation and leadership in times of crisis and have shared this acquired knowledge with colleagues across the BDT. I have also implemented some of the practices in my role as Chief of Department with positive outcomes in terms of introducing innovation was of strengthening engagement with industry and private sector in ITU-D that resulted in a healthy upward growth of the membership, innovative project management practices that resulted in more effective project execution, and innovative resource mobilization practices that saw a new strategy put in place and over USD million dollars being raised within 9 months.

## 3. INCLUSIVENESS for equal access and opportunities

I envision a BDT that is committed to ensuring that everyone without exception benefits from digital opportunities. BDT will work to close the digital gap through meaningful universal connectivity and for an inclusive digital society and pave way for the provision of broadband access for all, leaving no one behind including the 2.9 billion people that are still off-line.

I will ensure that BDT ensures digital inclusiveness, fosters access to digital opportunities through meaningful accessibility, affordability and use in all countries and regions and for all peoples, including women and girls, youth and marginal and vulnerable populations, people from lower socio-

economic groups, indigenous peoples, older persons, and persons with disabilities. BDT will be diverse with active staff engagement, and a true feel of an inclusive environment.

#### Proven record in this area

- Resource mobilization, project design and implementation for Countries in Special Need (those emerging out of war and natural disasters). Project to reconstruct infrastructure and contribute to sector reform in countries emerging out of war and major disasters (Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Somalia, Ethiopia, D.R.Congo, Sierra Leone, East Timor and Eritrea) and focusing also on war victims. This project was co-financed by USAID and ITU.
- Design of projects in emergency telecommunications to benefit victims of natural disasters particularly the disabled, women, elderly, and the marginalized.

#### BIOGRAPHY



Dr Cosmas Zavazava is a national of Zimbabwe with a solid track record of implementing information and communication technology (ICT) projects in all the regions of the world. His experience spans over 35 years in the telecommunications sector and over 20 years in the Development Sector of the ITU where he has been responsible for 3 different departments.

He is currently the Chief of Department responsible for Partnerships for Digital Development in the BDT since 2019. In this post he is responsible for negotiating partnerships, mobilizing resources for projects, growing, and engaging with the Development Sector's industry and private sector members, and managing ITU's project portfolio. He has successfully launched new initiatives that resulted in rapid growth and increase in industry, private sector, and academia membership and their participation in the work of the Development Sector. Dr Cosmas Zavazava, successfully negotiated new partnerships for ITU that resulted in millions of dollars to fund projects.

He was previously Chief of Department in the BDT responsible for Projects and Knowledge Management from 2010 to 2019. In this capacity, he was responsible for the overall management of the ITU project portfolio, statistics, capacity building, emergency telecommunications, and providing special assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS). Prior to that he worked as Head of Division for business

development, special assistance to LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, emergency telecommunications, climate change adaptation, and e-waste management.

He also served as Chief of Department for Projects and Initiatives in the Telecommunication Development Bureau responsible for managing projects and regional initiatives, gender, safety of children online, people with disabilities, and strategies for bringing access to people living in under-served areas.

Previously, before joining ITU, he was the Head of Government Telecommunications Agency in his native country, and then a senior diplomat (Minister Counsellor).

In carrying out his work, he continued to demonstrate strong leadership, good judgement, hard work, and a result-oriented approach. He has a clear vision and commitment, relevant experience, passion, and aptitude for the assumption and successful discharge of the higher office of Director of the BDT. Dr Cosmas Zavazava travelled extensively to more than 125 countries to design and implement projects, to negotiate and conclude partnerships, and to speak at global events.



**MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF ICTS (CZECH REPUBLIC)**

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

A Zimbabwean national who is highly experienced in telecommunications issues, Dr. Cosmas Zavazava possess training and experience spanning over 30 years in the telecommunication/ICT sector. He has worked in a multi-cultural environment for over 20 years and has a track record for implementing information and communication technology related projects/activities in all the regions of ITU.



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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### International Telecommunication Union

#### **Chief of Department, Partnerships for Digital Development: 2019 - Present**

- Responsible for ITU Development Projects (project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, closure, post implementation impact assessment, smoothen transition from the traditional activity-based project management approach to the Results Based Management (RBM) approach, and staff project managers training and skills development up to certification to strengthen ITU's project execution role and efficiency).
- Responsible for strategic partnerships and resource mobilization for the financing of impactful ITU projects which led to the mobilization of over 20 million dollars per year.
- Responsible for strategic recruitment, retention and meaningful engagement with industry, private sector, and academia on development issues which resulted in rapid growth of ITU-D membership reaching over 350 members.

#### **\*Key Innovations:**

Launch of the TECH TALKS series to enhance engagement with ITU-D members (private sector, academia, scientific community, industry), launch of Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues (IAGDI-CRO) to foster the exchange of information, assist in identifying and coordinating development priorities and regulatory barriers, and Know Your Members initiative to provide ITU-D members with an opportunity to interact with the BDT Senior Management as a way of information exchange, providing feeding and addressing areas of concern to provide quality services mutually beneficial to the members and the ITU-D.

#### **Chief of Department, Projects and Knowledge Management: 2014 - 2019**

- Responsible for ITU Development Projects

- Capacity Development programme aimed at achieving digitally competent society where all people use knowledge and skills on digital technologies to improve their livelihoods. In part, this was realized by developing capacities of ICT professionals, boosting digital literacy and skills of citizens, and developing knowledge resources.
- Measuring the Information Society (Statistics and Indicators) by assisting governments in developing countries in their ICT data collection and dissemination efforts. Support was provided for the production of statistics in the areas of ICT infrastructure, access, and use by household and individuals.
- Emergency Telecommunications for saving lives through the use of ICTs for disaster risk reduction and management (design of national emergency telecommunications plans, the setting up of monitoring and early warning systems, the deployment of equipment to support member states' response efforts in the immediate aftermath of disasters).
- Support countries through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as environmental protection including e-waste management.
- Responsible for strategic planning and providing assistance to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, countries with economies in transition, and countries in special need (emerging out of war situations and major disasters).

\***Key innovations:** Designed and launched the Global Capacity Building Symposium (CBS), and the Global World Telecommunications/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS).

#### **Chief of Department, Projects and Initiatives (PRI): 2010 -2014**

- Responsible for assisting ITU Member States and ITU-D Sector Members with the utilization of appropriate technologies to build or extend their telecommunication infrastructure and adapt to the rapidly changing telecommunication/ICT environment,
- Responsible for providing guidelines and tools for the development of telecommunication networks, broadcasting and spectrum management, as well emergency telecommunications and disaster relief,
- Responsible for providing administrative and technical support in the formulation of project proposals and implementation of projects,
- Responsible for the implementation of BDT's special global initiatives relating to Gender, Youth, and Children, Indigenous and Disabled peoples, and communities living in underserved areas.

#### **Head of the Division (Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Emergency Telecommunications, E-waste management, and Climate change adaptation and mitigation): 2006 -2010**

- Responsible for carrying out studies to identify challenges encountered by least developed countries, landlocked developing states, small island developing states, and countries with economies in transition in their effort to achieve universal access to reliable and affordable ICT/telecommunications services, as well as delivering direct assistance to these countries through well designed impactful projects.
- Capacity building for developing countries in policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks in emergency telecommunications through national, regional and global workshops.
- Development and launch of emergency telecommunications handbooks for use by Member States (includes the first and second ITU Handbooks of Emergency Telecommunications, the ITU Compendium of Emergency Telecommunications, Guidelines on Emergency Telecommunications, and Handbook on National Emergency Telecommunications).
- Development and launch of several publications on ICT trends in the least developed countries.

- Resource Mobilization, project design and launch of ITU's first project on deployment of emergency telecommunications for emergency response in the immediate aftermath of disasters including the setting up of ICT Access points for affected populations, telemedicine centers for medical staff, centers for reporting missing persons and the dead e.g., Sri Lanka, Thailand, Maldives, Samoa, Fiji, Japan, Pakistan, Dominica, Chile, Haiti, China, Niger, Uganda, Zambia, Tonga, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Peru, Greece, Maldives, etc.

**\*Key Innovations:**

Designed and launched the Global Emergency Telecommunications Symposium (GET), launched ITU programmes on e-waste management and climate changed adaptation and mitigation.

**Head of Division (Business Development) Head of Division (Least Developed Countries):**  
**2002-2006**

- Responsible for providing assistance to the least developed countries, undertaking studies to track telecommunications development in those countries and recommend actions to be taken by Member States to assist these countries
- Responsible for resource mobilization for the least developed countries through Partnership Round Tables to mobilize financial resources for the financing of projects in the least developed countries
- Responsible for BDT Procurement activities, and legal contracts/agreements

**\*Key innovations:**

Designed and launched a series of Partnership Round Tables for the LDCs to mobilize resources for the least developed countries, designed and mobilized resources for ITU's first project on deployment of satellite systems for emergency response in the immediate aftermath of disasters, designed and held a series of global, national and regional capacity building events in public protection and emergency telecommunications e.g. in Geneva, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Greece, Maldives, Cape Verde, Egypt, Sudan, Peru, Barbados, Haiti, Colombia, Cameroon, Luxembourg, Kenya, etc., designed ITU's first project for countries in special need and mobilized resources to finance it leading to its implementation in 7 countries.

**Consultant/Expert, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau at ITU headquarters:**  
**2001 - 2002**

Responsible for analyzing the state of telecommunications, developing strategies to bridge the digital divide, and deliver direct assistance to least developed countries.

**Government of Zimbabwe**

**Minister Counselor, Zimbabwe Permanent Mission (Switzerland):** **1997-2000**

**Head, Government Telecommunications Agency Head,** **1989-1997**

**& Head of Telecommunications Projects Division**

**Diplomat, Zimbabwe Embassy to Japan:** **1985-1989**

**Technical Officer**, Communications Division, Department of Civil Aviation : 1982-1983

**Lecturer**, Master's in Business Administration (Nottingham University, part-time): 1993-1997

Lecturing in Business Policy and Analysis, Business and Its Environment, Strategic Management, Information Management Systems. Also supervising and marking student dissertations.

## EDUCATION

- (PhD.) Multilateral Trade, Switzerland
- (LLM) Master of Laws in Telecommunications and Information Technology United Kingdom (Scotland)
- (MA) Master's in International Relations, United States of America (Missouri) - (*Suma cum laude* and awarded an Academic Leadership Award)
- (MBA) Master's in Business Administration, Zimbabwe
- (BBA) Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, USA-Japan Campus
- (Diplomas) Telecommunications, and Systems Engineering, Romania and Japan

## LANGUAGES

English, French, Spanish (basic), Romanian, Japanese, and Shona

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