

The Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR25) Kicks Off in Riyadh

RIYADH, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, September 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 25th edition of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR25) kicked off today in Riyadh, organized by the Communications, Space & Technology Commission (CST) in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) under the theme "Regulation for Sustainable Digital Development."

The event is taking place at the King Abdulaziz International Conference Center, in Riyadh, and is attended by representatives from more than 190 countries.

H.E. Eng. Haytham ALOhali, Acting Governor of CST, extended his greetings to Their Excellencies, the distinguished guests and participants of the GSR25.

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and H.R.H. Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their unlimited support and enablement of the communications, Space, and technology sector.

He also highlighted the Kingdom's achievements and efforts as a hub for dialogue and innovative digital regulation.



H.E. Eng. Haitham Alohaly Governor Communication, Space & Technology Commission (CST) and GSR-25 Chair



scene from the opening ceremony, a traditional Saudi Arda dance

During his opening remarks, H.E. ALOhali greeted participants, highlighting the event's special significance as it celebrates 25 years since its establishment, coinciding with the ITU's 160th anniversary.

H.E. also stressed that the AI era offers a unique opportunity to shape the future of humanity and the planet for the next 160 years and beyond, building on the collective achievements that have already enabled more than two-thirds of the world's population to connect.

However, despite the major progress over the past 16 decades, urgent challenges remain.

Today, 2.6B people are still unconnected, and the world continues to face disparities in digital capacity, regulation, and affordability.

H.E. added that, in line with the Kingdom's leadership role, and in partnership with the ITU, a new roadmap is being launched to expand connectivity worldwide and deliver innovative, cost-effective solutions.

The initiative aims to leverage the opportunities of the AI era to advance inclusivity and foster economic and social prosperity, especially for developing countries.

A joint study by Saudi Arabia and the ITU revealed the world will need investments between \$2.6T and \$2.8T to close the digital divide across four levels: connectivity and infrastructure, skills, affordability, and policy and regulation.

Of this amount, approximately \$1.7T is required for connectivity and infrastructure alone, which is triple the estimated amount from the previous study published in 2020.

This highlights the urgency of global collaboration and knowledge sharing to build inclusive digital societies.

H.E. Alohalhi stated that under the unlimited support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia is renewing its commitment to its active role within the ITU, and to advancing innovative solutions that exceed traditional approaches.

Whether by linking earth and sky through satellite networks, or by reimagining digital infrastructure in line with the AI era.

ALOhalhi also highlighted the Kingdom's success stories in digital economy, AI, data centers, and digital government under the framework of Vision 2030.

He noted that the leadership's support has strengthen Saudi Arabia's position as both a regional and global hub for technology and innovation, with the digital economy now contributing 15% to

GDP, reflecting the rapid growth of the ICT sector, which today represents the largest market in the region, driven by significant national and international private-sector investments.

He emphasized that human capital development is a key pillar of Vision 2030.

Hence, Saudi Arabia has strengthened its regional leadership by building the largest digital talent pool, with more than 380,000 specialized jobs in the technology sector.

Women's participation has also seen remarkable growth, from 7% in 2018 to 35% today, surpassing both the G20 and EU averages.

During her opening remarks, the ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin stated that "This 25th GSR is both a celebration and a recommitment – to put people and planet at the heart of digital frameworks, to ensure technology bridges divides, and to make our digital future safe, inclusive, and sustainable for all," adding that "the next 25 years will be defined by the frameworks we build, the trust we forge, and the choices we make together."

In addition, Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, Director of the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau, delivered an opening keynote, in which he spoke about the Global Economic Model Study, saying: "The Global Economic Model Study, a result of our strong collaboration with the Communications, Space and Technology Commission, will be a robust economic modelling to measure the impact of digital and telecom infrastructure on other sectors and the overall national economy."

The initiative will reduce financial pressures on operators by implementing effective cost-sharing mechanisms that encourage public-private collaboration.

It will also strengthen the resilience of digital infrastructure to ensure long-term investments and provide advanced economic analysis tools based on the best international practices.

He also emphasized that the study's outcomes will benefit a wide range of national and international entities, including CST, ITU, and regulators worldwide.

Along with, operators, infrastructure companies and governmental entities relying on digital infrastructure.

He added that "GSR-25 is a celebration of two and a half decades of global regulatory leadership; it is also a launchpad for the future.

With the GSR-25 Best Practice Guidelines as our blueprint, we are equipping regulators to foster innovation, strengthen cooperation, and nurture inclusive digital ecosystems that drive sustainable development and deliver real impact for humanity."

Saudi Arabia represented by CST is hosting GSR25 until September 3rd, 2025.

Reflecting the international community confidence in the Kingdom's pioneering role in the digital domain, and its position as a hub for fostering dialogue and innovative digital regulation.

It also reaffirms Saudi Arabia's active role in supporting the achievement of sustainable digital development goals (SDGs), advancing solutions to connect humanity, and driving a transformative leap in digital regulation at the global level.

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