COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

C T O

Annual report
2019–20

Contents

Introduction and overview

Chair's message
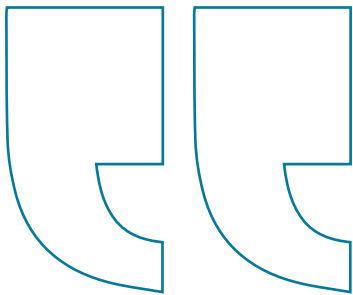
> *CTO must continue to offer guidance, training and support to ensure nations evolve national digital strategies, and implement plans that reflect the ever-changing world*

Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum

Dear Members — the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) remains an important advocate in leading discussions that will shape the ICT developmental landscape both now and, in the years, ahead.

The end of the financial year 2019–20 sees the conclusion of CTO's Strategic Plan 2016–2020, that focussed on six strategic goals. This plan supported membership growth and outlined the creation of enabling regulatory environments that allow ICTs and associated systems to flourish. It endorsed affordable, secure and high-quality universal connectivity, and promoted investment into e-applications and solutions, whilst outlining the need for effective coordination of members' interests in the international arena. The CTO's vision is to be "A trusted partner for sustainable development for all through ICTs".

The close of this financial year saw the enforcement of international travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic no doubt, will present immediate and longer-term challenges for global economies. Given the expanding impact of the pandemic, nations will need to strengthen, and build digital reliance for socioeconomic and industrial growth.

Whilst the pandemic prevented CTO's activities in late March 2020, CTO made substantial progress in the financial year 2019–20. I am pleased to report on CTO's proposal to promote the expansion of the digital economy. The inaugural Head of Regional and International Organisations Meeting 2019 brought together leading experts to review international progress in digitalisation for economic growth. It called for resilient infrastructure, advanced Internet capacity, strong mobile networks, and sizeable financial investment.

There is value in fashioning a shared approach amongst stakeholders and concentrating efforts to harness resources for digital transformation. It is important to recognise that CTO members face a unique set of problems and vulnerabilities with small island states facing largely different challenges to larger, more populous nations.

I am pleased to note much progress has taken place operationally with regards to effective coordination of Commonwealth countries at international ICT conferences and meetings. CTO has taken time this year to review the Programme for Development and Training (PDT) to ensure the programme is more accountable, transparent, and relevant for each member's needs. CTO has provided development assistance support to both members and non-members. I am also delighted to welcome both the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis (St Kitts and Nevis) and the British Overseas Territory comprising Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha as CTO members.

CTO must continue to offer guidance, extend training, and lend key support to CTO member countries to ensure nations continue to evolve national digital strategies, and implement plans that reflect the ever-changing world.

As Chairman, I thank the Council and the Executive Committee for their support. I also wish to convey my appreciation to the Secretariat for their commitment and determination, for advancing an organisation, in a year that required adjustment and transformation. My hope is for members support the CTO during this difficult time and I urging them to take every step to curb the spread and limit the fallout of the COVID-19 virus.

Stay safe one and all.

Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum
Chairman, CTO, Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, Fiji

Acting Secretary-General's message
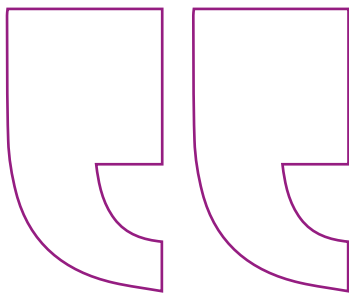
My vision is to focus CTO's efforts on areas that can make it relevant to all Commonwealth countries, by improving and promoting the CTO through its Secretariat services, as a trusted partner for sustainable development for all

Gisa Fuatai Purcell

Dear Members and Partners — I would like to thank you all for your support during the financial year 2019–20. The year came with periods of uncertainty and particular challenges, beginning with March 2020 — the start of global COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, I can report much progress was made throughout the course of the year.

My vision for the CTO is to focus its efforts on areas that can make the CTO relevant to all Commonwealth countries, by improving and promoting the CTO through its Secretariat services, as a trusted partner for sustainable development for all through ICTs. Guided by this vision, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030, the CTO Secretariat continued to successfully implement the six strategic goals of the Strategic Plan 2016–2020. I am pleased to report that progress has been made in achieving the strategic goals. The CTO Secretariat has also reviewed the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016–2020 and has developed the draft Strategic Plan for 2020–2024.

Strengthening membership value

There have been sustained efforts to ensure the visibility of CTO during international meetings of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

In addition, the Secretariat continues to engage all Commonwealth countries to attend CTO events and with an increase in CTO's membership base, these measures have been fruitful. Commonwealth High Commissions in London are now notified of every upcoming CTO event. It is anticipated this coordinated approach will help bolster attendance and mitigate CTO Council quoracy issues. CTO is now ensuring official communiqués are shared with member governments through International Relations pathways in advance of meetings.

I am delighted that the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis (St Kitts
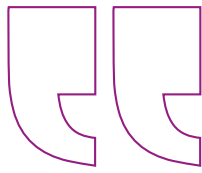
In addition to working on broadband, applications and cybersecurity, we will also assist our members to create forward-looking regulatory environments that will encourage investment, facilitate innovation and maximise resources."

and Nevis) joined CTO as a full member country (FMC) in September following bilateral meetings held between the Commissioner of the National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (NTRC) of St Kitts and Nevis and the CTO at the ICANN meeting in Kobe Japan, March 2019.

The CTO continues to engage larger economy countries of the Commonwealth, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. As reported during the Council Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, overseas territories of New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America have expressed interest to join the CTO — notably American Samoa, the Cayman Islands, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The CTO continues with the implementation of the agreed unit of membership contribution schemes, member action plans and member account managers, and in January 2020 conducted a survey across the entire Commonwealth membership in advance of the biennial meeting of Commonwealth ICT Ministers. These initiatives continue to enable the Secretariat to deliver value for the membership of the CTO as per the Strategic Plan 2016–20.

The CTO Secretariat aims to ensure that each member derives value from their membership of the CTO.

The Secretariat continues to promote the Programme for Development Training (PDT) to member states. The PDT has been reformed to ensure accountability, quality of services and value for money, in addition to improving the knowledge, skills and practices of participating PDT members.

Enabling conducive regulatory environments

The CTO through a range of capacity development programmes, technical support, consultancy services and events, has actively promoted and facilitated the development of modern regulatory frameworks, including licensing, spectrum management, quality of service, digital broadcasting, and over-the-top services, to create an enabling conducive national environment for investment that is conducive to development of the digital space.

Access to information and communication technologies (ICT) is essential for the promotion of social and economic development globally. Adopting the right national regulatory framework is an on-going challenge. As such the Commonwealth ICT Roundtable series has proved popular among members as the platform for capacity building and skills and knowledge enhancement. Three "Regulating ICTs" roundtables were held in April, September, and December 2019, attended by a total of forty-five delegates representing ten countries. Due to the growing role and scope of most regulatory agencies in member countries, I have no hesitation

in recommending those who are yet to take part, to consider doing so soon and in addition, to include other capacity development programmes, and those delivered in-country from the portfolio of courses. Topics of study range from licensing, costs and tariffs and mobile money regulation to broadcasting content regulation, cybersecurity, and spectrum management among others.

The CTO's international events are designed to balance knowledge sharing, political impact and networking, and to reflect the organisation's focus areas and notable ICT issues. I would like to thank the governments of Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, and Botswana for hosting key events this year, chiefly the Commonwealth ICT Forum 2019, the Commonwealth Telecommunications and ICT Forum 2019, the annual CTO Council meeting and the Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum 2020. All events were delivered to the highest of standards and proved popular with members and partners alike. A special thanks also to Huawei Technologies, industry partner for the inaugural Heads of Regional and International Organisations Meeting 2019. It is the generous support shown by our members that enable the Secretariat to deliver successful international events.

Safety in cyberspace

With the assistance of the United Kingdom, our direct involvement in working with member countries to develop national cybersecurity
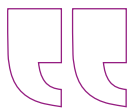
When it comes to cybersecurity, we are only as strong as our weakest link. The CTO is committed to assisting our members in developing and implementing their national cybersecurity strategies for the benefit, not only of their national ICT sectors, but also the international community. The Commonwealth Cybersecurity Forum is another strand to the CTO's work, in enhancing cybersecurity and protecting cyberspace."

strategies and adopt and promote cyber standards has progressed well. By extension, the Secretariat submitted and won bids to country tenders posted by Commonwealth countries, CTO worked with partner organisations that received cybersecurity funding approved for the CTO. Projects focussing on the development of National Cybersecurity Strategies have been implemented in seven countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda).

These National Cybersecurity Strategies contain strategies to respond to cyber threats and focus on incident response enabling safer use of ICTs for its citizens.

The CTO is now a member of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE), a multi-stakeholder community with members and partners from across all regions. The GFCE facilitates cyber capacity development and the exchange of expertise. The National Agency for Information & Communication Technologies (ANTIC), Cameroon has signed an agreement for the CTO to deliver several training courses, six of which relate to Cybersecurity. As we move towards embracing the digital economy, cyber challenges will increase and become more complex. The CTO must continue to work with members to ensure the digital economy is made safer for all.

Promoting a coordinated Commonwealth for ICT

In line with the CTO Strategic Plan 2016–2020 and the mandate endorsed at the Commonwealth ICT Ministers 2016, the CTO planned and carried out coordination meetings at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva (April 2019), the ITU Council 2019 in Geneva (June 2019), the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-19) in Vanuatu (July 2019), ICANN65 (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) in Morocco (July 2019) and ICANN66 in Canada (November 2019), at the Telecommunication Standardisation Advisory Group (TSAG) preparation meetings in Geneva (September 2019 and February 2020), at the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) in Sharm El Sheik (October–November 2019), and at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Berlin (November 2019). The coordination meetings help promote international coordination activities, encourage knowledge sharing and improve CTO's visibility.

In 2018 at a Commonwealth coordination meeting at ITU Telecom World (Durban) co-chaired by the UK and Ghana, the CTO was mandated unanimously by the countries present to serve as the Secretariat for the group and to coordinate Commonwealth activities at ITU meetings.

I am pleased to confirm negotiations with the ICANN fellowship committee at Kobe (March 2019) resulted in CTO being a recipient of ICANN fellowships. The CTO was granted fellowships for ICANN65 and ICANN66. As a group of nations, the Commonwealth can give greater weight to its members' position during international meetings. CTO plays its part in accepting speaking invitations and highlighting the Commonwealth ICT and digital economy needs that will result in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Linking ICTs to SDGs

CTO's ultimate challenge is to ensure ICTs are effectively applied in all areas of social and economic development. For this reason, the Secretariat drives capacity building initiatives, stages awareness events and participates in international fora highlighting the current needs and fosters collaboration with sister organisations. With the advent of the digital economy, the CTO must ensure Commonwealth countries are not left behind and promote the digital world as a platform for transformation of public services, improving the delivery of digital services to achieve the SDG goals. The CTO will promote the digital economy to all members by developing policies, strategies, and implementation plans.

I want to thank the Secretariat of the CTO for their patience and support during this financial year.

Above all, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all Members of Council, the Executive Committee, and all Members for their support over the past year.

Regards,

Gisa Fuatai Purcell
Acting Secretary-General and
Director of ICTs, CTO

About the CTO

The CTO is the oldest and largest Commonwealth intergovernmental organisation in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Being fully involved in the development and use of ICT for social and economic development, the management of the organisation recognise that it must stay at the cutting edge of ICT developments to deliver significant benefits to its members.

The history of the CTO can be traced back to 1901, while the organisation's present form as an intergovernmental treaty organisation came into being in 1967.

The CTO has a diverse range of members including developed countries, developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries.

Therefore policies, decisions and actions must cater to the needs of this wide range of countries, and our programmes are implemented in a manner to reflect the changes in both the Commonwealth as well as the global telecommunications/ICT community.

CTO's mission, vision and goals

OUR MISSION

To provide result-focused ICT leadership in the Commonwealth and beyond.

OUR VISION

A trusted partner for sustainable development for all through ICTs.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Under the Strategic Plan for 2016–2020, our six strategic goals are to:

1 Enhance the value of the CTO membership and expand the CTO's membership base, including through Member Action Plans which define clear programmes and activities for each member.

2 Promote enabling regulatory environments in key areas such as licensing, spectrum management, quality of service and over-the-top operators.

3 Promote affordable universal and high-quality broadband connectivity via enabling policies and regulatory measures that facilitate the rapid rollout of broadband infrastructure.

4 Promote a culture of cybersecurity and effective cyber governance through the establishment of cybersecurity frameworks, standards, and guidelines.

5 Promote the development and use of ICT applications for socio-economic development e.g., e-governance, e-health, e-education, and e-agriculture, among others.

6 Ensure effective coordination of Commonwealth countries at international ICT conferences and meetings.

Services to our members

Capacity development and training

With our network of telecommunications, IT, and broadcasting specialists, we assist our members in a variety of ways to suit their specific needs. Services include:

- Bespoke in-country programmes
- Over 50 open courses each year
- A pooled procurement service for training
- Fellowships and secondments

ICT development research

Through our research services, we support policymaking and regulatory bodies, specialised agencies, and the private sector in understanding the challenges and opportunities new technologies bring and facilitate evidence-based decision-making. Recent studies completed have addressed a wide range of issues, from access to quality of service, to e-health sustainability.

Technical support, consultancy (TSC) and advisory services

The CTO undertakes consultancy projects for members and non-members. In recent years, the division has become an invaluable resource for a wide range of stakeholders, including multilateral and bilateral development partners, operators, government ministries, communications regulators, civil society organisations and various industry associations.

Events and conferences

The CTO's events and conferences gather ICT policymakers and their advisers, private sector executives and civil society leaders to help establish environments that are conducive of more effective adoption and uses of ICTs in national development. National and global initiatives in areas such as universal access, cyber governance, privacy, and e-applications are presented and discussed in depth, turning each event into a unique learning experience.

"

International multi-lateral organisations must continue to work more closely to help combat the digital divide that exists in the world today. This digital divide exists in all countries in the world but sadly it exists to a greater extent in some countries than in others. Governments must learn from one another in terms of the initiatives that need to be taken so that this digital divide can be comprehensively tackled."

Mats Granryd, Director-General, GSMA and Commissioner, UN Broadband Commission

Governance

Members of Executive Committee

Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum
Chair, Republic of Fiji

Dr Jones Killimbe
1st Vice-Chair, Republic of Tanzania

Professor Americo Muchanga
2nd Vice-Chair, Republic of Mozambique

Gilbert C. Peterson SC
Former Chairperson, Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago

Carol David
Chairperson of the CTO Programme
for Development and Training
Management Committee (PDT MC),
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Philémon Zo'o Zame
Development Partner's
Representative, Cameroon

Ashley Lumsden
Industrial Partner's Representative, Huawei

Gisa Fuatai Purcell
Acting Secretary-General and Director of ICTs

Management of CTO Secretariat

Gisa Fuatai Purcell
Acting Secretary-General and Director of ICTs

Dorothy Elangot
Manager Human Resources
and Administration

Robert Hayman
Manager, Events

Nikisha Joshi
Manager, Finance and Pensions

Letang Kekwaletswe
Manager, Capacity Development
and Training

Dr Martin Koyabe
Manager, Technical Support
and Consultancy

Jacqui Teixeira
Manager, Membership and Communications

Regional advisors

Philip Cross
Regional Advisor for the Americas,
ICT consultant, Jamaica

Anusha Rahman Khan
Regional Advisor for East and South Asia
region, ICT consultant, Pakistan

Coordination of Commonwealth efforts

A push for investment and safety

A progressive digital economy within the Commonwealth requires a digitally empowered citizenry living in a digitally enabled society. Countries where every citizen, enterprise and organisation have digital access and the capability to participate, result in a thriving digital economy. Despite the benefits and opportunities offered by ICTs, cyberspace presents several risks and challenges. Safety, security, and resilience are critical for cyberspace to deliver its full potential. Cyberspace and the digital economy are rapidly shifting around the world, both in engineering and in terms of policies.

Coordination and promotion of Commonwealth views at international negotiations and forums is critical in ensuring that the Commonwealth perspectives form part of the inputs for international consensus of various ICT policies and agenda globally. Coordination ensures that CTO fully plays a part in supporting Commonwealth Countries in their participation at international forums. CTO's international coordination activities for the financial year are summarised as follows:

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2019

📅 **8–12 April 2019**

🧭 **Geneva, Switzerland**

The Commonwealth Coordination of ICTs for SDGs session was held on 8th April 2019 in the margin of WSIS Forum 2019. The session was co-chaired by UK and Ghana and attended by Commonwealth country representatives. The session was in line with both the WSIS and UN action line C11, that calls for regional and international cooperation at ICT meetings. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, His Excellency António Guterres, also addressed the importance of international cooperation during a high-level panel on digital cooperation during the event.

The 53 members of the Commonwealth share the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter and work collaboratively with one another in a range of areas that contribute to the WSIS, including development, governance and technical assistance.

It was agreed Commonwealth countries will renew their coordination on issues at the ITU on ICTs for SDGs.

Delegates were encouraged to attend the Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum 2019 to finalise Commonwealth approaches to the World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC) 2019.

There was an announcement that there would be further Commonwealth meetings at ITU Council, TSAG preparatory meetings and WRC-19.

There was agreement that topics for future collaboration should include online hate speech and freedom of speech, the impact of AI and block chain, child online protection, cybersecurity and connecting the unconnected.

Coordination of Commonwealth efforts

> *Commonwealth coordination for ITU conferences has proved to be very successful thanks to the fact that if Commonwealth countries reach common objectives on the issues on the agenda, they can influence the proposals coming from their region and thereby help the ITU conference to reach consensus, especially since Commonwealth countries are active in four of the six ITU regions."*

Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Heads of Regional and International Organisations Meeting 2019, July 2019

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council 2019

📅 **9–19 June 2019**

📍 **Geneva, Switzerland**

The Commonwealth Coordination meeting was held in the margins of the ITU Council 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting took place on 11 June 2019 and was co-chaired by the UK and Ghana. There were welcome remarks from each co-chair and by Malcolm Johnson, the ITU Deputy Secretary-General.

The meeting agenda focused on national and regional perspectives on the ITU Council 2019 agenda items. In addition, preparations for WRC-19 were discussed, with CTO inviting member countries to attend the Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum 2019 which will help stakeholders prepare for the Commonwealth Preparatory meeting for WRC-19.

Commonwealth countries proposed representatives from Ghana and South Africa to be nominated to chair the Expert Group on International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) — ITU. In addition, there were discussions on the preparations for World Telecommunications Policy Forum (WTPF) 2021. The coordination meeting attracted 34 delegates.

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers 65 (ICANN65)

📅 **24–27 June 2019**

📍 **Marrakech, Morocco**

The Commonwealth Governmental Advisory Committee meeting at ICANN65 took place in Marrakech on the 25 June 2019, chaired by the Cook Islands and Australia.

It was agreed that country code Top-Level domain (ccTLD) must be compliant to assist cybercrime investigations. It was acknowledged that General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) restricts information sharing from the WHOIS domain database and this needs further review. There is need for continuous capacity building on the adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) across the Commonwealth of nations to increase national security in all countries.

There was focussed discussion on the following:

- Subsequent new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Round Procedures
- International Governmental Organisations (IGO) Protection — Curative Rights
- Geographic Names
- WHOIS and General Data Protection Regulations
- Concerns Regarding Second Level 2-Character Country Codes
- Third Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT3) report

ITU Telecom World 2019

9–12 September 2019

Budapest, Hungary

CTO Acting Secretary-General, Mrs Gisa Fuatai Purcell, led a seven-strong CTO delegation to Hungary. The CTO team held bilateral meetings with CTO-member governments and regulatory bodies, from Ghana, India, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and met ICT Sector companies, including Huawei and Rhode and Schwarz. Together the team were promoting CTO activities from a CTO custom-designed exhibition stand, engaging external stakeholders and conversing with industry experts. CTO members the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) and National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) of Sierra Leone joined CTO's exhibition, on the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation stand.

During the four-day event, CTO's Manager, Technical Support and Consultancy, Dr Martin Koyabe, joined a technical discussion, *Diversity by Design: mitigating gender bias in AI*, chaired by former CTO Secretary General, Professor Tim Unwin. The issue of gender bias in AI was explored thoroughly, many in the room exploring the extent of the issue for the first time. It was agreed women need to feel more comfortable with AI. Transparent, cooperative and collaborative teams are the way ahead, ensuring transparency in developing AI governance models from the top and ensuring the right policies and frameworks are in place.

ITU Telecommunication Standardisation Advisory Group (TSAG) Meetings

23–27 September 2019 and 10–14 February 2020

Geneva, Switzerland

The Commonwealth Coordination meeting was held in the margins of the fourth and fifth ITU TSAG meetings on the 24 September 2019 and the 10 February 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The focus was on the Commonwealth priorities for the WTSA-20. Countries expressed support for the five priorities:

- affordable connectivity
- collaboration and cooperation
- inclusion
- technical excellence
- strengthening collaboration with the D-Sector

It was agreed that Commonwealth countries should now use the priorities to guide their preparation of proposals for WTSA 2020.

World Radio Communication Conference 2019 (WRC-19)

⊘ **Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**

🗓 **28 October–22 November 2019**

The ITU World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 28 October–22 November 2019. The CTO facilitated three Commonwealth Coordination meetings on the margins of WRC-19 on 29 October and 6 and 12 November 2019.

The first coordination meeting discussed the general WRC-19 agenda and the CTO's report to ITU WRC-19 that gave support to the regional agendas of Commonwealth nations.

The second coordination meeting focused on areas of commonalities that needed consultation and support of Commonwealth Countries. Both meetings were useful, allowing discussion and agreement on WRC agenda items in regions where Commonwealth Countries are represented.

The third meeting gave focus to the WRC decisions across Commonwealth regions on agenda items that need support in advance of the WRC-19 plenary discussion.

ICANN66

⊘ **Montréal, Canada**

🗓 **2–7 November 2019**

The Commonwealth Governmental Advisory Committee meeting at ICANN66 took place in Montréal, Canada on 4 November 2019. It was chaired by Australia and the Cook Islands. The Commonwealth GAC meetings provide a platform for Commonwealth Countries to assist each other on understanding the GAC topics which can sometimes be technical and not very well understood by all delegates.

The areas of focus were:

- Subsequent new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Round Procedures
- International Governmental Organisations (IGO) Protection — Curative Rights
- Geographic Names
- WHOIS and General Data Protection Regulations
- Concerns Regarding Second Level 2-Character Country Codes
- Third Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT3) report

14th Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2019

⊘ **Berlin, Germany**

🗓 **25–29 November 2019**

The Commonwealth coordination at IGF 2019 took place in Berlin, Germany, 25–29 November 2019. On 27 November the CTO hosted the Commonwealth open forum "Collaborative Multi-stakeholder Approaches in Cybersecurity" at the IGF 2019. The meeting was opened by Honourable Pinky Kekana, Deputy Minister of Communications of South Africa with a panel featuring representatives from the World Economic Forum, The Commonwealth Secretariat, Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace (GCSC), Latin America and Caribbean Network Information Centre (LACNIC), and Together against Cybercrime (TaC). There were over 100 delegates in attendance.

The session focused on the role of relevant stakeholders in cybersecurity and cyber resilience. Discussions from speakers and participants touched on what role should different stakeholders play in cybersecurity capacity building approaches and resource challenges and what can be done to address them. Facilitating benchmarking, technical cooperation and developing and implementing cybersecurity strategies including role of national CERTs, through a multi-stakeholder collaborative approach was emphasised

There was call for increased cybersecurity capacity building and for law enforcement to be permitted to collect and present digital evidence. There must be continued efforts to educate rural communities in online safety and for civil society to help implement national cybersecurity strategies. Countries should strengthen cybersecurity at national and regional elections. Local cybersecurity actors and communities should contribute to effective national strategies. Cybersecurity challenges must be acknowledged and addressed. A reporting mechanism for cybersecurity can assist in tracking progress and be a sustainable model for capacity building in cybersecurity.

The Commonwealth Cyber Declaration 2018, endorsed by all 53 countries, called for a free, open, inclusive and secure cyber space, and required countries commitment to help each other in implementing cybersecurity strategies. The Commonwealth IGF2019 open forum upheld the principles of this agreement.

Our membership

Above all else, the CTO is an intergovernmental membership organisation committed to supporting its members across the Commonwealth and beyond in using ICT in their development efforts. The CTO's Strategic Plan 2016–2020 puts emphasis on enhancing membership value for all members.

The CTO currently has two endorsed membership categories: Full Member Countries and ICT Sector Members. In 2018 CTO proposed two new types of membership: Affiliate Members and Academia.

Full Member Countries

Full Member Countries (FMC) are member states of the Commonwealth of Nations that have given an undertaking to make an annual financial contribution to the CTO. Other Commonwealth countries, simply referred to as Member Countries, are all member states of the Commonwealth not currently contributing financially to the CTO. These can still take part in CTO activities, but they have no voting right within the CTO Council.

ICT Sector Members

ICT members include the following:

- Regulatory agencies (telecommunication and broadcasting regulatory agencies and commissions) from any country.
- Specialised national agencies (universal access, IT, and cybersecurity agencies) from any country.
- Industry (carriers, fixed/mobile/data network operators, manufacturers and service providers).
- Civil society (professional membership bodies, industry associations, advocacy groups).

ICT SECTOR MEMBERS	
The Bahamas	Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority
Cameroon	National Agency for Information & Communication Technologies
China	Huawei Technologies
Gibraltar	Gibraltar Regulatory Authority
	Gibtelecom
Kenya	Safaricom
Namibia	Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia
Nigeria	Digital Bridge Institute
	Galaxy Backbone Plc
South Sudan	Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services
Uganda	National Information Technology Authority
United Kingdom	Avanti Communications
	Bitek
	CentralNic
	Facebook
	GSMA
Zimbabwe	Postal & Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

The description of the proposed membership categories follow.

Affiliate Members

Affiliate Members will be self-governing states linked to Commonwealth member states, either Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies, that can join the membership of the CTO to benefit from the organisation's programmes.

Academia Members

Academia Membership will be open to universities and other tertiary educational institutions from any country. Academia Members are admitted just as ICT Sector Members are, but with a lower annual financial contribution. Previously, academic institutions were admitted as ICT Sector Members.

Membership development

CTO's membership continued to grow in numbers in 2019–20, compared to the previous year 2018–19. In 2019–20 period, there was continued interest by various countries to join the CTO. St Kitts and Nevis formally joined the organisation as an FMC. The CTO continues to engage other larger economy countries of the Commonwealth, including New Zealand, Canada, Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The CTO continues with the implementation of the agreed unit of membership contribution schemes, member action plans and member account managers, including plans to conduct a survey across the entire CTO membership. These initiatives continue to enable the Secretariat to deliver value for the membership of the CTO as per the Strategic Plan 2016–2020.

CTO's membership continued to grow in numbers in 2019–20, compared to the previous year 2018–19. In 2019–20 period, there was continued interest by various countries to join the CTO

Gisa Fuatai Purcell, Acting Secretary-General and Director of ICTs

> *The private, public and government sectors must work together in identifying key policy to market initiatives that can ensure higher economic performance and can tackle key social problems through the use of ICT innovation."*

Edward Zhou, Vice-President, Global Public Affairs, Huawei Technologies

Programme for Development and Training

The CTO is mandated to build the human capacity of the Commonwealth by raising awareness and providing training on all aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT) for its members.

The Programme for Development and Training (PDT) provides specialised ICT capacity building programmes for governments, regulatory agencies and industry operators around the world. It was created by the CTO in 1985 as a mechanism to provide technical expertise in ICTs to stakeholders in developing Commonwealth countries. It is a membership programme, with the following organisations as current members.

PDT MEMBERS

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)	Mozambique Telecommunications (TMCel)
Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA)	Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)
Botswana Fibre Networks Ltd (BoFiNet)	Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), Jamaica
Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC)	Our Telekom, Solomon Islands
Cable & Wireless (C&W), Seychelles	Sierra Leone Telecommunications Company Limited (SierraTel)
Communication Authority (CA), Kenya	Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA)
Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM)	Telecom Fiji Limited
Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC)	Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)
Gambia Telecommunications Company Limited (GAMTEL)	Telecommunications Regulatory Board (TRB), Cameroon
Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)	Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TSTT)
Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)	Telikom Papua New Guinea
Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA), Mauritius	Telkom SA SOC Limited (South Africa)
Malawi Telecommunications Limited	Uganda Telecommunications
Mauritius Telecom (MT)	Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA)
Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy (Nigeria)	Vodafone Ghana
Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation (Ghana)	

Division highlights

Technical support
and consulting

The Technical Support and Consultancy (TSC) Division continues to work on three major projects as of Quarter Three of 2019–20 operational year. These projects are in areas focusing on Universal Service Fund, National Broadband Strategy, Over-The-Top (OTT), ICT Strategy Plan and Mobile Virtual Network Operation (MVNO) Framework. Alongside these projects, the CTO has continued to bid for additional projects, engage potential partners and foster both collaboration and partnerships with regional and international development partners.

The CTO signed an additional contract in Quarter Four 2019–20 operational period, which indicates a promising 2020–21 for the Division and to members, who benefit mainly from the Development Assistance Programme (DAP) delivered by the CTO. Some of the on-going contracts awarded to the CTO are because of successful proposals submitted for open tenders and single-sourced procurements from member countries, as well as successful applications for funding for various ICT projects.

Several new areas of work have also been identified in the proposed CTO Strategic Plan 2020–2024. These include Digital Economy, Environmental and Disaster Management and Cybersecurity Capacity Building in Incidence Response and Protection against Cyber Attacks at National Level.

CTO Over-The-Top (OTT) Review Study

Following the publication of the OTT report in 2018, the CTO has just completed a review study of the OTT report. This review aims to highlight changes in the market dynamics, as well as policy and regulatory approaches of OTT services, both in the context of their impact on traditional business models and the opportunities for innovation and application services. The OTT review work was funded by Facebook, a CTO ICT Sector member. The review report is expected to be presented at the CTO ICT Ministers Forum in June 2020, and later disseminated to CTO.

Development of Universal Service Fund (USF) for Malawi

In 2019–20 the CTO in partnership with Tetra Tech Ltd won an open tender by The Public Private Partnership Commission (PPPC) of Malawi to provide consultancy services for the establishment of a Universal Service Fund (USF) for Malawi. The objectives of the consultancy include assessment and analysis of existing communications gaps in Malawi, both geographical and functional; development of USF guidelines and operating procedures; proposing an action plan; developing procurement documents; proposing mechanisms for funding pilot projects and finally, providing recommendations for optimal technical solutions for closing the communications gaps in Malawi.

Developing the National Broadband Strategy for St Kitts & Nevis

The ITU contracted the CTO to engage its experts to develop the National Broadband Strategy for Saint Kitts and Nevis. This consultancy aimed to assist the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis to develop a National Broadband Strategy. The CTO has since conducted the first mission to discuss with stakeholders in Saint Kitts and Nevis regarding the status of Broadband in terms of relevant strategic areas including Policy, Legal & Regulatory, Infrastructure, Connectivity and Devices, Capacity Building, Awareness and Outreach, Applications, Content, Innovation and Research and Development, Finance and Investment, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The CTO has since produced deliverables, which are subject to review and approval by ITU and the government of Saint Kitts and Nevis. The successful delivery of this project will increase CTO's expertise in Broadband Strategy development and enhance the CTO's partnership with the ITU.

Establishment of a Centre for ICT for Development Innovation and Practice (CICTDIP)

In 2017–18, Jaeno Digital Solutions Limited (JDSL) in partnership with CTO won an open tender by the Digital Bridge Institute (DBI) to develop a comprehensive Framework Document which will enable the establishment of the CICTDIP that will promote innovation and ICT usage, as well as leverage ICTs to spur socioeconomic development in Nigeria.

To achieve the overarching objective, the consulting team will seek to: identify and develop the appropriate vision, mission statements and objectives for the CICTDIP; The team will be required to develop a comprehensive organisational structure for the management of the CICTDIP; identify and prescribe the required skill set and staffing levels for the CICTDIP. In addition, they will identify the competencies required for particular roles; outline the activities to be done within one year which would enable the CICTDIP to take effect and develop a strategy that will clearly define the role and responsibilities of DBI in the management of the CICTDIP. They will also develop a strategy that will guide the positioning of CICTDIP as an African Centre of Excellence for ICT4D; identify national socio-economic issues in health, agriculture, education and security etc; show opportunities for ICT innovations and creativity therein that will enable national productivity and competitiveness. Finally, they will identify local and international opportunities for collaboration and partnerships that can enable grants, investments, and capacity building.

Developing a Licensing Framework for Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs)

In 2017–18, Jaeno Digital Solutions Limited (JDSL) in partnership with the CTO won an open tender by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to develop a licensing framework for mobile virtual network operators. The project is expected to be completed by the end of Quarter Four 2019–20

Cybersecurity Capacity Building

Cybersecurity, Cybercrime and Cyberstandards have been recognised as key focus areas of the CTO under its Strategic Plan 2016–2020, due to its great impact on countries, entities, and individuals. It is also aligned with the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration that was recently endorsed during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2018) held in London, UK. One of the CTO initiatives under its Cybersecurity agenda is assisting Commonwealth countries in developing their Cybersecurity capacity, including Critical National Infrastructure Protection and Computer Emergency Response and Incidence Reporting based on Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)/Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs).

As countries develop and adopt respective National Cybersecurity Strategies (NCS) and implement laws to address the increasingly complex cyber threat landscape, there are greater demands from citizens for data protection and privacy. These changes are quickly creating new requirements for businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and government agencies. Many experts have issued new calls to action for the international development community to mainstream cybersecurity, by incorporating it into their normal operations and joining forces with the cybersecurity capacity-building community.

The CTO recognises that an effective National Cybersecurity Strategy is critical for each country to establish fully in the increasingly cyber-dependant trade and commerce. It enables individuals, companies, and nations to realise the full potentials of the cyberspace, without fear or reservation. In addition, it enables countries to provide secure and resilient digital infrastructure.

The CTO's Technical Support and Consultancy Division has continued to enhance its research and consultancy work with CTO Associate Consultants and experts based in Member countries. Several new areas of work have also been identified in the proposed CTO Strategic Plan 2020–2024. These include Digital Economy, Environmental and Disaster Management, and Cybersecurity Capacity Building in Incidence Response and Protection against Cyber Attacks at National Level.

Assessment of Cyber Emergency Response Team (CERT) for Afghanistan

In Quarter Four of the financial year 2019–20, the CTO signed a contract with the Government of Afghanistan to assess Cyber Emergency Response Team (CERT) for Afghanistan. CTO has expertise and competencies in Cybersecurity and developed the "Commonwealth Approach to Developing National Cybersecurity Strategies" model. In this project, CTO will partner with two organisations, NRD Cybersecurity and CENERVA. The project is scheduled to start in Quarter Four 2019–20 and expected to be completed by Q4 2020–21.

Cybersecurity Workshop in Sierra Leone

One of the CTO initiatives under its Cybersecurity agenda is assisting Commonwealth countries in developing their Cybersecurity capacity, including Critical National Infrastructure Protection and Computer Emergency Response and Incidence Reporting based on the National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT)/Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT).

As a part of this initiative, the CTO, and the Ministry of Information & Communications (MIC) of Sierra Leone, with the participation of National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM), conducted a Cybersecurity capacity building workshop in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 30 July 2019.

The workshop aimed at building the Cybersecurity capacity of the ICT and relevant sectors in Sierra Leone, including the Ministry of Information & Communications (MIC), National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM), telecom operators, Internet service providers and other relevant players, to develop and adopt robust national cybersecurity strategies and implementation plans. The workshop also built the Cybersecurity capacity for the development and deployment of a National CERT/CSIRT for the country. The CTO was also involved in building the cybersecurity capacity for development of a National Framework for Critical Information Infrastructure Protection (CIIP) for the government of Sierra Leone.

Events

Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum 2019

⌖ **London, United Kingdom**

☑ **19–21 June 2019**

The Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum 2019 ran from the 19–21 June 2019 at the Coin Street Conference, London, UK. The forum theme World Radio Conference 2019 (WRC-19) and the Spectrum Challenge: Achieving Wireless Capacity for Digital Transformation ensured a platform for members to share experiences in preparation for WRC-19, that took place from 28 October–22 November 2019, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The regional positions were presented by representatives or members of the following Regional Telecommunications Organisations; Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Caribbean Telecommunications Union, African Telecommunications Union (ATU) and the European Communications Office of the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications.

Commonwealth spectrum management preparatory meetings are essential in the lead up to the World Radio Conference (WRC)-19, to coordinate member interests at the international level. This Forum enabled CTO formulate and submit a position paper to WRC-19 on behalf of Commonwealth member states.

> ❝ *...a great opportunity to discuss services and applications and to find commonalities in the positions of the countries within the Commonwealth.*❞
>
> **Diana Tomimura, Spectrum Regulation and Policy Advisor ITU**

The three-day forum was helpful not only to share ideas but also to promote awareness on best practises and experiences, to provide clarity and improve the level of understanding between nations and regions.

Conclusions of the three-day forum include:

- 5G technology will require large blocks of spectrum within the frequency bands identified by ITU WRC-2015 for study for accommodation of 5G; in addition, the C band, the Ka band and the Ku band will need to be protected due to the large investments that satellite companies have made in satellite systems in these frequency bands.
- Analysis of the current and future spectrum use for narrowband and broadband machine type communications (MTC), also known as machine-to-machine (M2M) or Internet of Things (IoT), concluded that there is no need to identify specific spectrum for those applications, therefore, no change to the Radio Regulations or regulatory action is required.
- It is unnecessary to identify spectrum specifically for Intelligent Transport Systems. Regional and global harmonization can be satisfied by developing applicable ITU-R Reports and Recommendations. Therefore, no change to the Radio Regulations or regulatory action is required.
- Members support ITU-R studies in the frequency bands identified in accordance with Resolution 160 and will be guided by the results of the studies in assessing the suitability of any frequency band studied for High-altitude platform systems (HAPS).
- There are challenges in preparing for WRC and counter measures are implemented such as conducting seminars and awareness programmes to make sure there is support both at the national and regional level. CTO intends to continue providing support and will continue coordinating Commonwealth meetings on spectrum management to ensure commonalities exist, to spectrum management, across the Commonwealth.

This forum is analysing how new technologies can deliver stronger broadband capabilities in rural areas. New technologies will support job creation in rural communities. Agricultural production will be boosted in a more environmentally friendly manner."

Moctar Yedaly, Director of ICT, African Union

Heads of Regional and International Organisations Meeting 2019

⊘ **London, United Kingdom**

🗓 **24 July 2019**

CTO organised the inaugural meeting of Heads of Regional and International Organisations 2019, on the 24 July 2020, to champion international and regional partner engagement with emphasis to growth of the global Digital Economy. The theme of this one-day meeting was Creating a common approach to promote the Digital Economy. The meeting took place at the United Nations Ballroom, Four Seasons Hotel Trinity Square, London, the venue hosted the first UN meeting in 1946, this meeting held in the same historic building was a tribute to both past and current international collaboration work.

25 international and regional organisations were in attendance to provide a focus on international best practices, in promoting the development of the digital economy collectively. One of the event's focus areas was to promote affordable and secure accessibility to ICTs in the Commonwealth and beyond, aligned to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

The final conclusions of the meeting include the following:

- There is a need for continuous collaboration among international organisations and partners to develop a shared view of ongoing activities and opportunities across digital economy programmes, to achieve the SDG2030 agenda.
- Collaboration and cooperation are required for formulating comprehensive frameworks for implementation and research, whilst ensuring visibility of relevant projects.

> ❝ *The ideas and policy advice that are generated here today, that relate to improving broadband connectivity and access to high-speed internet services can assist governments and regional organisations alike in rolling-out their digital economy plans."*

Dr Rowena Cristina L Guevara, Chairperson, Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- Partnerships are core to the implementation of new strategies.
- There is a need to share a calendar of events to jointly drive momentum. There was consensus to have the next meeting of this kind, in Geneva, Switzerland. CTO can lead the initiative and seek help from other organisations.
- Organisations should use events as targeted opportunities to scale efforts of specific coalitions while ensuring timely coordination and cooperation.
- International standards for interoperability, interconnection, spectrum harmonisation and economies of scale play a big role in advancing the digital economy.
- In future meetings, the areas of gender inclusion and emergency telecommunication for digital economy should be included in the discussions.
- CTO signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with several International and Regional organisations in attendance.
- It was proposed by participants and the ASG agreed, for the CTO to propose a name for future gathering of Heads of Regional and International organisations, going forward. This one-day meeting was productive, timely and fruitful in forging relationships with industry partners.

Commonwealth ICT Forum 2019

⊘ **Freetown, Sierra Leone**
📅 **31 July–2 August 2019**

In May 2019, in preparation for the Commonwealth ICT Forum 2019, a CTO team undertook a visit to Freetown, and were granted an audience with the Vice President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh. His Excellency accepted the hosting of the Commonwealth ICT Forum 2019 and expressed gratitude that a Commonwealth forum would be staged in Freetown under the auspices of the government of Sierra Leone.

The Commonwealth ICT Forum 2019 took place from 31 July–2 August 2019 at Bintumani Hotel, 11 Man 'O' War Bay, Aberdeen, Freetown, Sierra Leone. This forum was jointly organised by the CTO, National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) and the Government of Sierra Leone. The Forum was held under the theme of Broadband for Inclusive Digital Transformation. The three-day Forum brought representatives from African countries together to discuss and share experiences. Experts and stakeholders from the public and private sectors were given a platform to share advancements, challenges and opportunities, and engage with each other in an open forum.

Spirited discussions centred on Internet Governance, Cybersecurity, Digital Transformation, Digital Inclusion, and many others. The need for increased infrastructure to enable rural connectivity to bridge the digital gap featured prominently in many of the conversations.

Other important aspects of the discussions were the need for raising increased awareness, the formulation of better regulatory frameworks and the necessity of building local capacity.

The forum saw the first Connectivity and Innovation Idea Youth Challenge organised by CTO in partnership with the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DSTI) and the National Telecommunications Commission. Four shortlisted candidates were invited to present their ideas at the Commonwealth ICT Forum. Each candidate had 3 minutes to tell the audience and judges about their concept. The winner was chosen by a panel of judges representing Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DSTI), CTO, and NATCOM using the following metrics: innovation, impact, and feasibility. Ideas that focused on thematic areas of the CTO conference were given special consideration.

Broadband for inclusive digital transformation is a topic so relevant to us all. Low-cost broadband and information technologies are creating new kinds of businesses and entirely new industries. They enable companies to be global exporters, including the export of skills, knowledge, and culture which we had never thought possible before."

**Honourable Mohamed Rahman Swaray,
Minister of Information and Communications, Sierra Leone**

First year college student, Mahmoud Gbessay, beat 12 contestants to win the first-ever Connectivity and Innovation Idea Youth Challenge. His idea was to establish an Education Television (E-TV), a home-based channel broadcasting at 5.5MHz with a range of 100 metres that will create and share educational content nationwide for Sierra Leone. ETV uses solar panels and has a radio frequency transformer, a trimmer capacitor, some resistors, and other components. ETV was one of 13 entries to the Idea Challenge. He won a cash prize of SLL 5,000,000 sponsored by the CTO and NATCOM.

The prize winner is a first-year student studying Computer Science at Njala University. With his prize, he wishes to take online courses to learn python, explore concepts around machine learning and artificial intelligence and plans to continue working on a mobile application (already in development) that will help students become better learners.

In addition to the prize money, he will have an opportunity to develop his prototype with technical support from the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation and the CTO.

The Forum received sponsorships from ICANN and Facebook and Orange Sierra Leone and Africell hosted the forum dinner and reception, respectively.

The CTO secretariat wishes to formally thank the government of Sierra Leone and the host organisation, NATCOM for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements.

The final conclusions of the meeting include the following:

- Rapidly increasing levels of urbanisation lead to scarcity of resources, which makes it imperative that investments be made in the creation of content to ensure fair management of resources.
- As part of the building of human capacity in rural areas, coding must be added to the curriculum in schools.
- Investment in connectivity and innovation is key in the development of smart cities.
- Countries need policies in place to ensure increases in entrepreneurship and digital literacy. Funds and opportunities must be created by governments.
- It is important to identify and support young individuals who are skilled innovators that can contribute towards increased connectivity.
- In addition to smart cities there should be more discussion on the development of smart villages since most of the population live in rural areas.
- A culture of collaboration needs to be enhanced among players within the innovation space in all countries.
- Innovation should be treated as a key driver towards the digital economy. Investments should be made towards supporting youthful ideas in the form of, (for example) laboratories where various applications can be developed and tested
- Mobile operators require increased support by way of incentives from governments and national operators to help increase investments in connectivity in rural parts of Africa, thereby bridging the digital gap and helping countries achieve the 17 goals of the Sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030.

Commonwealth ICT and Telecommunications Forum 2019 and Informal Meeting of the 59th CTO Council

📍 **Dhaka, Bangladesh**

📅 **30 September–3 October 2019**

The Commonwealth ICT & Telecommunications Forum 2019 was held from 30 September to 2 October 2019 at the Intercontinental Hotel, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, hosted jointly by the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, under the theme Towards a Digital Commonwealth.

The objective of the Forum was to endorse the availability of basic and value-added services to all, regardless of age, gender, affordability, and ability, while addressing of challenges of investment, the digital economy, and access to such. The 2019 Forum focused on key aspects of access and security of digital services including investment, infrastructure, connectivity, applications, value added services, and data.

Over three days, 70 resource persons delivered 15 sessions, this Forum was attended by around 102 participants representing 16 Countries.

The main product of the 2019 Forum was to educate stakeholders on the use and/or potential of 5G or Long-Term Evolution (LTE), enhancing broadband services, the

> *By embracing bold change, we can achieve a Digital Commonwealth — one with unprecedented connectivity that will benefit our nations, our economies, and our people for generations to come."*

Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications, Ministry of Communications, Republic of Fiji

use of applications such as digital financing solutions and over-the-top (OTT) services with focus also on cyber threats and national security. ICTs play a pivotal role in socio-economic development and there is a need for equitable ICT access, and a need to improve availability, affordability and accessibility. There was attention paid to people with disabilities and socially marginalised groups.

The forum saw the second Connectivity and Innovation Idea Youth Challenge organised by CTO in partnership with the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission and was Chaired by the Student to Start-up Programme, Bangladesh.

Anannya Tahsin, undergraduate of Urban and Regional Planning (URP), Bangladesh University of Engineering

and Technology (BUET) won the second-ever Connectivity and Innovation Idea Youth Challenge. The name of the winning project is Santarhut and was one of nine entries to the innovation competition. The winning idea was to create a digital platform that allows market access for agricultural producers and their customers. This platform would ensure local wholesalers can order quality fresh local produce at reasonable market rates and would connect multiple local producers to the urban marketplace enabling easy trading, a secure point purchase and facilitate receipt of goods. The prize money of £500 GBP sponsored by the CTO, will go towards helping the winning entry develop a digital trading platform.

The international forum gathered participation from Bangladesh, Botswana, Cameroon, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kingdom of Eswatini, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and United Kingdom. There were 18 Full Member Countries (FMCs) present for the forum, out of the 20 countries in attendance, unfortunately two FMCs were unable to participate in the 59th Council meeting, which resulted in the failure of a quorum with only 16 countries present.

> ❝ *...the ICT industry is relishing unparalleled demand... The economics of running a network remain complex and increased traffic does not necessarily convert into increased profits. Effective regulation is a must in order to protect consumers and facilitate a properly functioning market.*❞

Honourable Mustafa Jabbar, Minister, Posts and Telecommunications Division, Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministry, Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh

The CTO secretariat made efforts to engage all member countries that had not registered, to attend in advance of the forum and 59th Council. CTO offered certain countries international travel support courtesy of funding extended by the government of the United Kingdom.

Funding was extended to Malawi to enable a Council member to attend the meeting in Dhaka. Regrettably, additional members were unable get international travel approval to attend Council, irrespective of the funding being offered. The Sri Lankan High Commission agreeably sent a representative to the Council meeting but arrived too late to resolve the issue of a quorum, by then the Chair had announced there were insufficient numbers to obtain a quorate and the Council meeting continued as an informal meeting of the 59th CTO Council.
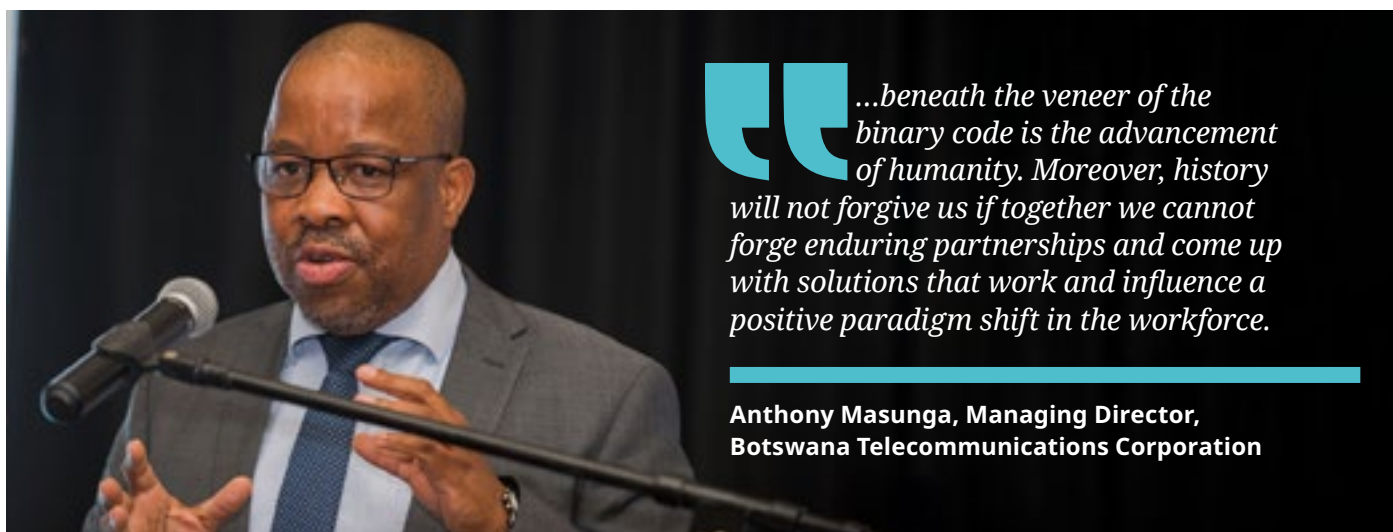
The CTO secretariat wishes to formally thank the government of Bangladesh and the host organisation, the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) for their excellent arrangements and generous hospitality. The venue for the meeting was of outstanding quality and the host country worked effortlessly to ensure the forum and informal Council meeting went without issues. Feedback from the forum delegates reflected this, with an 88% overall satisfaction rating, with an average overall score of 4.4 out of 5 marks.

The final conclusions of the meeting include the following:

- Regulators must work in collaboration with policy makers to reconsider tax and tariffs to make broadband affordable.
- Transparent Universal Service Fund (USF) policies could finance Broadband infrastructure as well as content and application development.
- Regulators need to calculate the annual cost of spectrum to ensure that spectrum pricing is sustainable and does not slow down the 5G momentum.
- All countries should have a National Emergency Telecommunication plan as part of their National and local disaster risk reduction strategies.
- All countries should address cybersecurity issues while promoting regional cooperation and collaboration.

Key outcomes of the informal meeting of the CTO Council:

- Since the Council meeting was informal, Clause 5.1 of the CTO Rules of Procedure on election of the Chair, First Vice Chairperson and Second Vice Chairperson were not applied and therefore respective EXCO positions will continue until the next Council meeting in 2020.
- The Secretariat would review measures to ensure Council members commit to support future Forum and Council meetings.

> *...beneath the veneer of the binary code is the advancement of humanity. Moreover, history will not forgive us if together we cannot forge enduring partnerships and come up with solutions that work and influence a positive paradigm shift in the workforce.*

Anthony Masunga, Managing Director, Botswana Telecommunications Corporation

Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum 2020

⊘ **Gaborone, Republic of Botswana**

🗓 **11–12 February 2020**

The Commonwealth Human Resources and ICT Forum 2020 took place on the 11–12 February 2020 at the Avani Gaborone Resort & Casino, Gaborone. The forum was organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation and hosted by Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) and Botswana Fibre Networks Ltd (BoFiNet) as diamond sponsors, with endorsement under the auspices of the government of Botswana. The forum further benefited from the support of the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) who hosted the gala dinner. Held under the theme of The Changing Shape of the Workforce, the two-day forum was followed by the Annual meeting of the Liaison Officers of the CTO's Programme for Development and Training (PDT).

The Managing Director of Botswana Telecommunications Corporation, Anthony Masunga opened the conference. He voiced a wish to see more women in ICT leadership positions and that the focus should be to see more women in executive teams. He remarked that Botswana's human resource strategy focuses on the development of human capital in the knowledge-based economy that the Government of Botswana, led by His Excellency President Mokgweetsi Masisi, envisions at the national level.

The Botswana Fibre Networks (BoFiNet) was represented by Mpho Koolese, the Acting Chief Executive Officer, he was joined by dignitaries from BOCRA, the British High Commission with CTO and BTC providing opening remarks during the opening ceremony.

The Forum was attended by approximately 100 delegates, with international delegations from Botswana, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago and Uganda in attendance. The event helped further strengthen member engagement in Botswana, a country that had been a key advocate of reform to the PDT membership structure, thus ensuring greater member benefits, a change to supporting consultancy terms and conditions, and upholding best practices. This review of the PDT membership took place during the financial year 2019–20.

The CTO secretariat wishes to formally thank the government of Botswana and the host organisations, the Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) and Botswana Fibre Networks Ltd (BoFiNet) for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements and additional thanks to Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) for hosting the memorable gala dinner, that showcased the best of Botswanan hospitality.

The final conclusions of the meeting include the following:

- There is need to promote HR as a key enabler for competitive advantage. Sourcing people with relevant skills will equip and empower digital companies to greater transformation.
- It is important to change the traditional, cultural, and political outlook for women in workplaces by equipping them to perform through ICTs. The proportionality ratio of women and men in companies may well be a key driver to innovation and the success of that company long term.
- Digital technology to be used to enhance HR to make it more efficient and HR should consider having mixed teams of coders and data analysts as well as finance, mathematicians, and operations to remain agile, accountable and recognisable.

Commonwealth Digital Economy Forum 2020

⌖ **Jamestown, St Helena, South Atlantic**

🗓 **23–27 March 2020 (postponed)**

The Government of Saint Helena Island was due to host this first ever forum of this kind, in partnership with the CTO. The theme for the 2020 forum was "Shifting landscapes and trends" with planned presentations and workshops to focus on a globally connected South Atlantic region, the global Digital Economy, Broadband Development and Usage, national ICT policy development and implementation, universal broadband access, Cybersecurity, Data Protection and e-applications to name a few.

The agenda for this forum is particularly pertinent for St Helena as they move closer to the landing of the subsea cable which will unlock numerous opportunities and promote widespread digital usage. Hosting this event on Saint Helena will bring several benefits for the Island, including increasing knowledge in this area, forging strategic partnerships, capacity building, creating, and extending networks and increased awareness of Saint Helena as a tourism, research, and investment destination.

Regrettably, this event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that this event will be rescheduled, and CTO is working with the host nation to identify suitable dates in the future to make this possible. The CTO Events Division will communicate revised dates in good time.

Capacity development and training

Commonwealth ICT roundtable series

This roundtable series is a key pillar of CTO's four-year strategy to assist member countries in their efforts to improve their regulatory environments for ICTs. Appointed board members of regulatory agencies often come from different specialist backgrounds, but often with little or no prior experience of ICTs. For them to succeed they must fully understand the complexities of ICT regulation in its wider context. It is also paramount for board members to recognise opportunities and challenges that ICT regulation poses within the sector. The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, with its long history of capacity building, is ideally placed to equip these senior decision makers with the know how to deliver on their core responsibilities as board members.

In 2019–20, three roundtables were held in the month of April, September, and December respectively. Forty-five participants from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean attended the workshops. The highest number of delegates were recorded in April and September, and this was due to the appointment of new board members from member organisations.

Delegates also took part in site visits to GSMA, Ofcom, Huawei, and Inmarsat. The positive feedback received from participants is a clear indication that there is a need to offer this service on a regular basis to CTO clients and stakeholders.

The ICT roundtables target government ministers, board members, policy, and law makers of national regulating authorities. They also provide other high-level delegates in ICT, such as members of parliamentary committees on ICTs, with an opportunity to better understand ICT regulation. The programme focuses on addressing current issues participants and their organisations face and includes presentations and discussions on areas such as Internet governance, spectrum management, Universal Service Funds (USFs), Broadband development, Cybersecurity and Emerging technologies. Experts from the ICT sector work with delegates to identify the key challenges faced by the sector and develop solutions that can be easily implemented.

These roundtables are traditionally held in London, UK, although they can be remodelled to be hosted in other member countries and include industry visits to organisations such as the UK regulator Ofcom, GSMA, Huawei, and Avanti. The visits give delegates an overview of the work of these organisations and the opportunity to learn about the latest policy, regulatory and compliance initiatives they are developing.

Programme for Development and Training

The Programme for Development and Training (PDT) Course Catalogue was reformed with an additional 110 new training programmes introduced. The refreshment of the course catalogue was mainly to ensure that the catalogue features the latest industry trends i.e., Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, Spectrum Management, Big Data etc. The course catalogue shall be reviewed every six months to ensure relevance of the training programmes on emerging subject matters as they become available.

A survey questionnaire has been formulated pending administration. The questionnaire shall be used as a tool for determining the training needs of member organisations. The questionnaire shall be administered once on an annual basis.

Supplier engagement framework has been developed and approved by Liaison Officers. The framework is a process that seeks to address governance issues in that it defines how the CTO brings suppliers on board. It also ensures that training programmes are quality assured.

6th Annual Meeting of PDT Liaison Officers 2020

The Annual Meeting for PDT Liaison officers (LO Meeting) for 2020 was held in Gaborone, Botswana. Twenty-two Liaison Officers attended. The event was held alongside the HR&ICT Forum 2020. The elections were also carried out with eight member organisations represented. Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), Nigeria was elected PDT Chair while Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA), Mauritius was elected first Vice Chair .and Botswana Fibre Networks (BOFINET), Botswana was elected second Vice Chair. The results and achievements from the meeting are noted above in the Executive Summary.

Training activities implemented for the cycle 2019–20

During the reporting period, CTO conducted several training workshops amongst its member countries as listed below.

Risk management and business continuity planning

🏢 **Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)**

📅 **4–8 March 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◎ **South Africa**

This five-day course gave insight into the factors associated with risk management and business continuity planning. Identifying potential risks to a business, how to assess these risks and put a plan in place to manage and deal with them should they arise.

Developing a High Impact Learning Culture

🏢 **Independent Communications Authority of South Africa**

📅 **11–15 March 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◎ **South Africa**

The programme provided a detailed view of the various aspects of developing learning culture, organisational learning, and its significance in making an organisation a learning one.

Introduction to Big Data Analytics

🏢 **Communications Authority**

📅 **4–10 April 2019**

▦ **7 days**

◎ **Kenya**

This course examined the growth and potential of Big Data and Advanced Analytics. There is real business and societal value to be derived from big data and advanced analytics, for private and public sector organisations, analysis of real-time data can lead to smart decision making.

Artificial Intelligence

☷ **Communications Authority**

📅 **1–4 April 2019**

▦ **3 days**

◉ **Kenya**

The programme focused on Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and associated applications in functional, non-technical terms. This includes expert systems, speech recognition and translation and machine vision.

ICT regulators and nations must be engaged intrinsically in global discussions about rules and regulations governing ethical development and deployment of AI.

Performing a Regulatory Impact Assessment

☷ **Independent Communications Authority of South Africa**

📅 **13–17 May 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **South Africa**

This course provided participants with the necessary tools and methodology to perform ICT regulatory impact assessments. Licensing, consumer interests, quality of service, competition, and other key regulatory areas were analysed and reviewed from a social and economic impact viewpoint.

Regulatory Approaches on New Emerging Services such as OTT, IoT, etc

☷ **Recipient: Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority**

📅 **13–17 May 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Tanzania**

This five-day course provided the tools and methodology to perform ICT regulatory impact assessments (RIA). Licensing, consumer interests, quality of service (QoS), competition, and other key regulatory areas were analysed and reviewed from a social and economic impact viewpoint. The programme of this in-house course is combined with a pre-assessment of the national policy and regulatory environment of communications services.

Consumer Protection and Child Online Protection

☷ **Communications Authority**

📅 **27–31 May 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Kenya**

This course introduces the need for consumer protection frameworks, highlighting why consumer protection is invaluable in market-led sectors. The course content covers and highlight's types of "consumer harm", including financial and physical. The course highlights the needs of protected groups such as the disabled, older people and children.
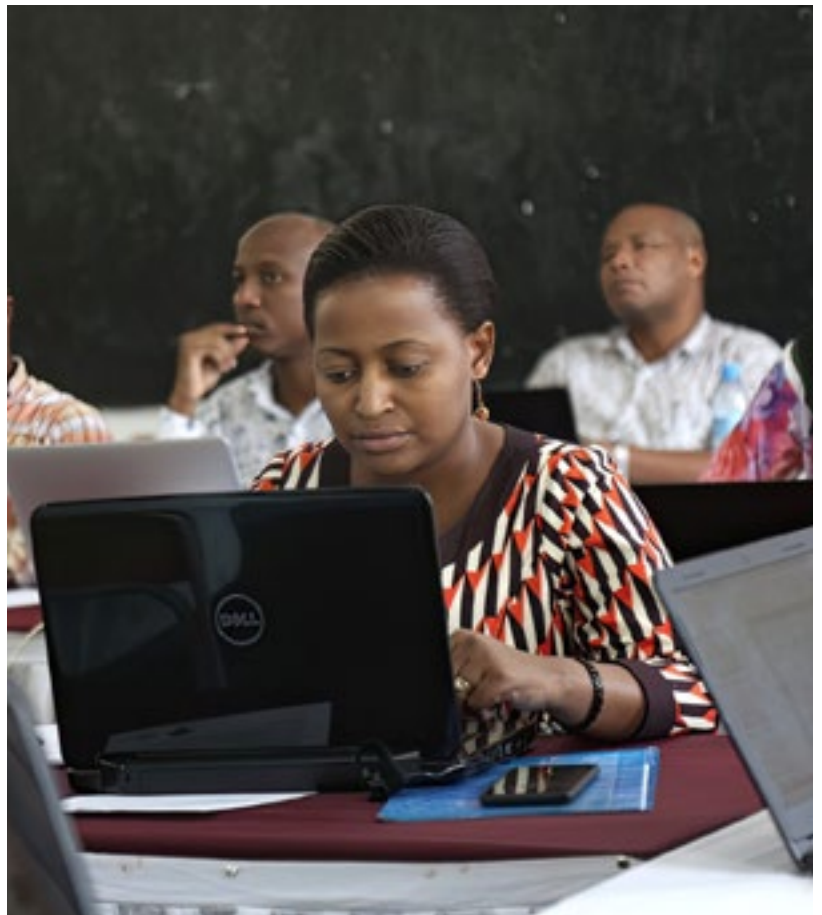
Talent and Knowledge Management

▣ **Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority**

📅 **17–21 June 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Tanzania**

This Talent and Knowledge Management course is designed to help both senior and aspiring managers develop a strategic approach to talent management to get the best from their employees. The value of a talent and knowledge management system is the investment in human capital resources. A highly experienced consultant worked to assist delegates to develop a profile of their organisation, identifying the need to value talent and knowledge management across the organisation. This provided a focus for investment in human capital and the need for change management in a dynamic environment.

Cryptographic Techniques in Relation to Cybersecurity and Cyber Criminality

▣ **Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)**

📅 **17–21 June 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Nigeria**

This five-day course focused on implementing cybersecurity and had software, hardware, and human components. This course reviewed the importance of Cryptography and encryption on cybersecurity models.

Fibre Optic Access Network

▣ **Botswana Fibre Networks Ltd (BOFINET)**

📅 **17–21 June 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Botswana**

This course was designed to introduce participants to optical fibre fundamentals, including, optical fibre access network architectures and standards, designing and building of optical fibre access networks, and applications of optical fibre access networks.

Digital Sound Broadcasting Standards

▣ **Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority**

📅 **24–28 June 2019**

▦ **5 days**

◉ **Tanzania**

Analogue sound broadcasting using AM and FM has been deployed around the world since 1930s. The scenarios for consumption of broadcast sound have evolved from fixed wireless sets to portable devices. With an increase in broadcast services there is continued need to further evolve sound broadcast technology from analogue to digital.

Cybersecurity at the National level CERT/CSIRT

- National Agency for Information and Communications Technology (ANTIC)
- 9–20 September 2019
- 10 days
- Cameroon

The course delivered insights into the best cybersecurity governance practices at the national level, including methods, practical examples and lessons learned. All teaching material was based on illustrative real-life cases, lectures, case studies, and roundtable and group play methods. In addition, the participants benefitted from two site visits, one to the Digital Government facility and another to the state-of-the-art Tier 4 data centre.

Diploma in Telecommunications Management Studies (DTMS)

- Telecommunications Regulatory Board
- 16 September–25 October 2019
- 6 weeks
- Cameroon

The fast-moving telecommunications industry driven by rapidly changing technologies, evolving services and complex consumer demands, generate new business challenges, requiring the professionals in the industry to be constantly updated. This six-week course was designed to provide participants with tools that will enhance their ability to master the changes in the business and technical environment, to assure operational and business success for their organisations. This course examined essential elements of technology evolution, the changing institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks, and the challenges of creating value through enterprise and effective management practices. Essential management theories and frameworks are adopted to suit the ICT sector. The course offered a practical, hands-on approach to change management designed to be challenging and thorough.

End to End Quality of Service Planning for Fibre to the Home/Building Services

- Nigerian Communications Commission
- 7–11 October 2019
- 5 days
- Nigeria

This course looked at the requirements to successfully plan and implement a fibre optic system. It covered topics such as, what are the Quality-of-Service requirements for triple play services (voice, data & video), and IP core networks.

Interconnection

- Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR)
- 13–17 January 2020
- 5 days
- Jamaica

The course addressed the regulatory obligation of the dominant network operator to interconnect with competing networks. It covered the technical aspects of interconnections, and the commercial opportunities, as well as the regulatory requirements and their limitations, explaining the pertinent agreements and other requirements.

Big Data Analytics

- Vodafone Ghana
- 20–24 January 2020
- 5 days
- Ghana

This specialisation introduced big data analytics for all business professionals, including for those with no experience. Participants learnt how to identify, predict, and make informed business decisions in the specific areas of marketing, human resources, finance, and operations. To build awareness of data literacy and nurture an analytical mindset helps informed strategic thinking, enabling decisions based on data.

Business Intelligence

- Vodafone Ghana
- 27–29 January 2020
- 3 days
- Ghana

Business Intelligence (BI) is defined by the tools and systems that are used in the strategic planning process within an organisation. It also incorporates the approaches and techniques used by organisations for tactical and strategic decision making. Business Intelligence leverages technologies that focus on counts, statistics, and business objectives to improve business performance.

Financial information

Reference and administrative information

Executive Committee Members
Honourable Manoa Kamikamica
Dr Jones Killimbe
Mr Tuaha Mote
Mr Gilbert Peterson SC
Mr Peter Tladinyane
Mr David Harmon
Mr Philémon Zo'o Zame

Senior Management Team
Ms Bernadette Lewis

Principal address
64–66 Glenthorne Road
London W6 0LR

Website
www.cto.int

Independent Auditor
Buzzacott LLP
30 Wood Street
London EC2V 6DL

Banker
Coutts
Trinity Quay 2
Avon Street
Bristol BS2 0PT

Report of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Council present their annual report and financial statements for the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) for the year ended 31 March 2020.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Principal activities

The principal activities of the CTO are to provide technical and consultancy support, deliver programme on capacity development and trainings and organise events for its members in the areas of ICTs.

During the year, consultancy project on the development of Strategic and Business plan was complete for Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation. The total project was amounting to $230,431.

Further, three successful ICT roundtable conferences were held in the UK in the month of April 2019, September 2019 and December 2019 and Diploma course on telecommunication management was successfully delivered in Cameroon during September 2019.

The CTO organised events such as Spectrum Management Forum in June 2019 (UK), Heads of Regional and International organisations in July 2019 (UK), Commonwealth ICT Forum August 2019 (Sierre Leone) and CTO Forum in October 2019 (Bangladesh). Digital Economy Forum was scheduled to take place in St. Helena in March 2020 that was cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution
The Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation has adopted the constitution and rules of the procedures as approved in 52nd Council Meeting held in 2002 in Mauritius.

Recruitment and Appointment of new Council members
Appointment of new Full member Country: The Government of any Commonwealth Member Country wishing to become a Full Member Country shall notify the Secretary General and will be appointed a new full member country of the CTO according to para 1.1 – Member countries of the rules of the procedures of the CTO.

Appointment of new ICT Sector Members: Any entity wishing to become an ICT Sector Member shall apply in writing to the Secretary General and will be appointed as an ICT sector member according to para 1.2 – ICT Sector members of the rules of the procedures of the CTO.

Organisational structure
The main organ of the CTO comprises of

a. the CTO Council.

b. the Executive Committee.

c. the CTO Forum.

d. the PDT Management Committee or its successor; and

e. the Secretariat.

The function, role and responsibilities of all the organs of the CTO are described in para 7 to 11 of the Constitution of the CTO.

Pay-Setting Policy for Key Management Personnel
The remuneration of the Key management personnel of the CTO is decided by the Executive Committee based on the approved salary structure of the organisation. The Key management personnel includes Senior manager, Director and the Secretary-General.

Risk management

The Council is responsible for risk management. Financial year 2019-20 was a challenging year due to the leadership vacuum, some potential legal challenges to the CTO and start of COVID-19 pandemic. The CTO sought legal advice to address the issues of potential legal cases. The process of appointment of the new Secretary-General was complete during latter part of the year.

Financial review

Financial report for the year
The total income for the financial year under review was £1,418,797 (2018-19: £1,521,569). Of this, the Organisation's core funding streams included contributions from the Government/national body represented on the council (51%) and Programme for Development and Training membership contributions (13%) with the balance coming from other sources such as sector membership contributions and technical support and consultancy.

Total expenditure during the reporting period was £1,374,171 (2018-19: £1,859,089), is made up of operational expenditure totalling £309,602 (23%), Council expenditure totalling £301,062 (22%) and headquarters expenditure totalling £763,505 (56%) In 2018-19, these were £540,643 (29%), £687,996 (37%) and £630,450 (34%), respectively.

At 31 March 2020 the net book value of tangible fixed assets was £1,347,442 (2019: £1,357,652).

At the end of the financial year the Organisation's reserves amounted to £1,387,076 (2019: £1,342,450).

The Organisation has not obtained an actuarial valuation for the pension scheme as at 31 March 2020 and has not adopted the accounting and disclosure requirements of FRS 102 relating to the defined benefit pension scheme. However, some information is given in note 18. At the time of approving these financial statements, an amount of £44,913 included within debtors has not been received. The financial statements have been qualified as a result of these matters.

Statement of Council's responsibilities

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with the accounting records and satisfying the requirements of the Council's Rules for Financial Control.

In preparing these financial statements, the Council are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.

- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

- State whether applicable United Kingdom accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Organisation will continue in operation.

Approved by the Council on 24 February 2023 and signed on their behalf by the present-day Secretary General and Chairman:

....

Ms Bernadette Lewis
Secretary General, CTO

....

Eng. Othman Sharif Khatib
Chairman, CTO Council

Independent auditor's report to the members of the CTO

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation ("the Organisation") for the year ended 31 March 2020, which comprise the income and expenditure account, the statement of financial position, the statement of cash flows, the accounting policies and the notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matters described in the Basis for qualified opinion paragraph, the financial statements:

• give a true and fair view of the state of the Organisation's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and

• have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Basis for qualified opinion on the financial statements

As explained in note 18 to the financial statements, the Organisation operates a defined benefit pension scheme. FRS 102 sets out the accounting and disclosure requirements for defined benefit pension schemes and requires recognition of a defined benefit liability or asset and associated pension costs together with detailed disclosures. As disclosed in accounting policy note 1.1, the Organisation has not adopted the pension accounting or disclosure requirements of FRS 102 in preparing the financial statements in either the current or preceding financial year, although the liability based on the most recent actuarial valuation is disclosed in note 18.

Had the pension accounting requirements of FRS 102 been followed, then a provision should have been made in the financial statements as at 31 March 2020 to reflect the defined benefit liability as at that date. Provision should also have been made in previous years. The most recent actuarial valuation showed a liability of £1,731,000 and had

provision been made for this amount at 31 March 2020 the statement of financial position would have shown a net liability position of £343,924. The actuarial valuation was performed as at 1 April 2019 and we were unable to determine whether the liability at 31 March 2020 materially differs from this amount.

We have not received evidence of the recoverability of £44,913 of the debtors balance of £481,554 included in the statement of financial position and a provision for doubtful debts has not been made in relation to this. Had a provision been made for this doubtful debt, the debtors at 31 March 2020 would have been £436,641 and the operating deficit for the year would have been £287.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organisation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Material uncertainty related to going concern

We draw attention to the information set out in the going concern accounting policy. This relates to the material uncertainty arising from the Organisation's financial position and staff resources. The members' conclusion is that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis notwithstanding these circumstances as there is a recovery plan.

Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Other information

The members are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report and financial statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

Other than the matters noted in the basis for qualified opinion on the financial statements section above, which impact on the disclosures given in the financial review section of the report of the Council, we have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of members

The members are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the members are responsible for assessing the Organisation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the members either intend to liquidate the Organisation or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at **www.frc.org.uk/ auditorsresponsibilities**. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Organisation's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Organisation's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Organisation and the Organisation s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Buzzacott LLP
130 Wood Street
London EC2V 6DL

Buzzacott is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the companies Act 2006.

CTO Income and expenditure account

Income for year ended 31 March 2020

	Notes	2019–20 £	2018–19 £
Contributions from the Government/national body represented on the Council: Full membership contribution)			
Bangladesh		25,000	25,000
Barbados		25,000	25,000
Botswana		25,000	25,000
Cameroon		25,000	25,000
Fiji		25,000	25,000
Ghana		25,000	25,000
Grenada		6,250	6,250
Guyana		25,000	25,000
India		25,000	25,000
Jamaica		25,000	25,000
Kenya		25,000	25,000
Lesotho		25,000	25,000
Malawi		25,000	25,000
Malaysia		25,000	25,000
Mauritius		25,000	25,000
Mozambique		25,000	25,000
Nigeria		25,000	25,000
Pakistan		25,000	25,000
Rwanda		25,000	25,000
Samoa		6,250	6,250
Seychelles		6,250	6,250
Sierra Leone		25,000	25,000
South Africa		25,000	25,000
Sri Lanka		25,000	25,000
St. Kitts and Nevis		6,250	–
Swaziland		25,000	25,000
Tanzania		25,000	25,000
Tonga		6,250	6,250
Trinidad and Tobago		25,000	25,000
Tuvalu		6,250	6,250
Uganda		25,000	25,000
United Kingdom		25,000	25,000
Vanuatu		6,250	6,250
Zambia		25,000	25,000
Total of Full membership contribution		**718,750**	712,500

Income and expenditure account

Income for year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

	Notes	2019–20 £	2018–19 £
Affiliate membership contribution		25,000	18,750
Sector membership contributions		100,000	125,000
Technical support and consultancy	2	128,622	230,401
Programme for development and training membership contribution	3	190,000	255,000
Portfolio of courses and commercialisation	4	111,911	104,000
Income from events		96,035	66,818
CTO parking fees		6,500	6,500
Interest receivable		3,419	2,600
Other income		33,760	–
Commonwealth co-ordination		4,800	–
Total income		**1,418,797**	1,521,569

Expenditure for year ended 31 March 2020

	Notes	2019–20 £	£	2018–19 £	£
Operational expenditure					
Capacity development	6	**128,504**		285,089	
Events		**63,702**		70,879	
Technical support and consultancy	7	**82,166**		156,020	
Membership and support		**35,230**		28,655	
Total operational expenditure			**309,602**		540,643
Council					
Contribution for Defined Benefit Pension Scheme		**145,659**		135,437	
SG's emoluments		**97,420**		115,442	
Council expenditure		**16,226**		11,416	
Bad and doubtful debts		**41,757**		425,701	
Total Council expenditure			**301,062**		687,996
Headquarters					
Staff	8	**535,465**		572,284	
Buildings	9	**73,320**		64,488	
Communications		**11,002**		9,468	
Publications and website		**4,229**		5,927	
Travel		**53,154**		52,086	
Equipment		**39,915**		30,358	
Professional		**52,743**		30,674	
Loss/(gain) on foreign exchange		**1,539**		12,221	
Other		**(7,860)**		(147,056)	
Total headquarters expenditure			**763,507**		630,450
Total expenditure		**1,374,171**		1,859,089	
Operating surplus (deficit) for the year	19	**44,626**		(337,520)	

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations. There are no recognised gains and losses other than those passing through the income and expenditure account. No statement of comprehensive income or statement of changes in equity is included in these financial statements as all movements are reflected in the income and expenditure account and statement of financial position.

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2020

	Notes	2020 £	£	2019 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**5**		**1,347,442**		1,357,652
Current assets					
Debtors	**10**	**481,554**		660,610	
Cash at bank and in hand	**11**	**873,205**		935,300	
		1,354,759		1,595,910	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**12**	**(798,508)**		(1,012,366)	
Net current assets			**556,251**		583,544
Total assets less current liabilities			**1,903,693**		1,941,196
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	**13**		**(516,617)**		(598,746)
Net assets			**1,387,076**		1,342,450
Reserves					
Main reserve			**1,387,076**		1,342,450
Total reserves			**1,387,076**		1,342,450

Statement of cash flows for year ended 31 March 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash provided by operations	A	**34,787**	194,305
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**(14,753)**	(972)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(14,753)**	(972)
Financing activities			
Repayment of long-term bank loan		**(82,129)**	(80,446)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(82,129)**	(80,446)
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents		**(62,095)**	112,887
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		**935,300**	822,413
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		**873,205**	935,300

Notes to the cash flow statement		
Cash provided by operations	**2019–20**	2018–19
	£	£
Operating surplus (Deficit)	**44,626**	(337,520)
Depreciation of tangible assets	**24,963**	25,885
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	**179,056**	531,438
(Decrease) in creditors	**(213,858)**	(25,498)
Cash provided by operations (A)	**34,787**	194,305

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020

1   Accounting policies

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the accounting records and satisfying the requirements of Council's Rules for Financial Control. The principal accounting policies are set out below.

1.1   Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Ireland" (FRS 102) with the following modifications:

- The latest retirement benefit triennial valuation deficit has been disclosed by way of a memorandum note (Note 18). FRS102, section 18 Retirement Benefits, has not been applied.

- The organisation has taken the exemption under FRS 102 not to include a Statement of Changes in Equity. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the organisation. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

1.2   Accounting basis of preparation

These financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis, under historical cost convention.

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in the process of applying the organisation's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements are disclosed in note 1–11.

The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.3   Going concern

The members have at the time of approving the financial statements, assessed that there is a material uncertainty arising from the organisation's financial position and staff resources which may severely curtail its work and/ or threaten its going concern status. They continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements. The members acknowledge and recognise the financial and resourcing challenges facing the organisation, in part caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A recovery plan has been drawn up to address the financial and operational challenges and the members are of the opinion that the organisation will have sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

1.4   Contributions from Governments represented on Council

Contributions are primarily mandatory, payable by Governments and/or National Bodies, in accordance with the approved budget in order to meet Council's administrative expenses and expenditure. These contributions are accounted for as Income on a receivable basis.

1.5   Programme for Development and Training (PDT)

PDT income is recognised in the period in which a requesting partner commits to receive courses. PDT expenditure is recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the organisation to make a payment, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

1.6 Building fund contributions

The organisation received income in the form of contributions towards the cost of purchasing its freehold property in the year ended 31 March 2009. In accordance with Statement of Standard Accounting Practice 4 "Accounting for government grants" which also applies as best practice to grants and assistance from other sources, the organisation has deducted the amount of the contributions, £388,000 from the purchase price of the freehold property.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets other than freehold land are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Land and buildings freehold 2% straight line (excluding land)

- Computers and peripherals 15%-33% straight line

- Fixtures and fittings 30% straight line

1.8 Foreign currency translation

The approved budget for contributions receivable and PDT expenditure is in sterling. Contributions receivables are made in sterling; PDT expenditure in foreign currency is translated at the exchange rate ruling at the date of the transaction.

1.9 Financial Instruments

Financial assets
Basic financial assets, including trade and other debtors, cash and bank balances are initially recognised at transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Other financial assets are initially measured at fair value, which is normally the transaction price. Such assets are subsequently carried at fair value and the changes in fair value are recognised in profit or loss.

Financial assets are derecognised when (a) the contractual rights to the cash flows from the asset expire or are settled, or (b) substantially all the risks and rewards of the ownership of the asset are transferred to another party or (c) control of the asset has been transferred to another party who has the practical ability to unilaterally sell the asset to an unrelated third party without imposing additional restrictions.

Financial liabilities
Basic financial liabilities, including trade and other creditors, and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Fees paid on the establishment of loan facilities are recognised as transaction costs of the loan to the extent that it is probable that some or all of the facility will be drawn down. In this case, the fee is deferred until the draw-down occurs. To the extent there is no evidence that it is probable that some or all of the facility will be drawn down, the fee is capitalised as a pre-payment for liquidity services and amortised over the period of the facility to which it relates.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Trade Creditors are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the liability is extinguished, that is when the contractual obligation is discharged, cancelled or expires.

1.10 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

1.11 Critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In the application of the organisation's accounting policies, the members are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The items in the financial statements where judgments and estimates have been made include Assessing the recoverability of membership contributions outstanding at the year end and the amount of provision needed for bad and doubtful debts.

In addition to the above, the full impact following the emergence of the global coronavirus pandemic is still unknown. It is therefore not currently possible to evaluate all the potential implications for the organisation's activities, partners, members, suppliers and the wider economy. Estimates used in the financial statements, are subject to a greater degree of uncertainty and volatility.

As set out in these accounting policies under "going concern", the members have considered the impact of the pandemic on the organisation and have concluded that although there may be some negative consequences, it is appropriate for the organisation to continue to prepare its financial statements on the going concern basis.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

2. Technical Support & Consultancy	2020 £	2019 £
Income from Consultancy Projects	128,622	230,401
Total	128,622	230,401

3. Programme for Development and Training Membership Contribution	2020 £	2019 £
Income from Requesting Partner	190,000	175,000
Income from Offering Partner	–	30,000
Income from Additional Contribution	–	50,000
Total	190,000	255,000

4. Portfolio of courses and Commercialisation	2020 £	2019 £
Income from Portfolio of courses	111,911	62,604
Income from Commercialisation	–	41,396
Total	111,911	104,000

5. Tangible fixed assets	Land and buildings freehold £	Computers & peripheral equipment £	Fixtures & fittings £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2019	1,574,222	43,414	5,141	1,622,777
Additions	–	14,753	–	14,753
Write-offs		(33,413)		(36,192)
At 31 March 2020	1,574,222	24,754	2,362	1,601,338
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2019	221,250	40,140	3,735	265,125
Write-offs	–	(33,799)	(2,393)	(36,192)
Charge for the year	22,125	2,484	354	24,963
At 31 March 2020	243,375	8,825	1,696	253,896
Net book value				
At 31 March 2020	1,330,847	15,929	666	1,347,442
At 31 March 2019	1,352,972	3,274	1,406	1,357,652

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

6. Capacity Development

	2020 £	2019 £
Expenditure for PDT	56,375	222,210
Expenditure for POC & Commercialisation	72,129	62,879
Total	128,505	285,089

7. Technical Support & Consultancy

	2020 £	2019 £
Expenditure on Consultancy Projects	82,166	156,020
Total	82,166	156,020

8. Staff

	2020 £	2019 £
Staff Salary & benefits	455,840	502,402
Insurance	24,584	29,350
Training & other costs	10,411	10,382
Recruitment	44,629	30,150
Total	535,465	572,284

9. Buildings

	2020 £	2020 £
Bank loan	18,264	19,947
Service charges	34,572	37,305
Building repairs and reinsurance costs	20,484	7,236
Total	73,320	64,488

10. Debtors

	2020 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	1,705,593	1,047,003
Prepayments	20,073	12,273
VAT recoverable	49,563	20,813
Other debtors	–	6,222
Total debtors before provision	1,775,229	1,086,311
Less: provision for bad & doubtful debts	(1,293,675)	(425,701)
Total	481,554	660,610

All debtors, apart from prepayments, are financial instruments measured at present value.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

11. Cash at bank and in hand

	2020 £	2019 £
PDT account	79,971	100,999
Current account	15,576	71,669
Deposit account	757,598	757,598
US Dollar account	7,060	(77)
Pensions fund impress account	12,525	4,661
Petty cash	475	450
Total	873,205	935,300

The above are all financial instrument measured at present value

12. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2020 £	2019 £
Bank loan	100,393	100,393
Credit cards	805	1,256
Trade creditors	111,150	167,764
Accruals and deferred income	586,160	742,923
Total	798,508	1,012,366

All creditors are financial instruments measured at present value.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

13. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2020 £	2019 £
Bank loans	516,617	598,746
Analysis of loans		
Not wholly repayable within five years by instalments	617,010	699,139
Included in current liabilities	(100,393)	(100,393)
Total	516,617	598,746

The above loan is a financial instrument measured at present value. The loan is secured by a charge over the organisation's freehold property. The term of the loan is over 20 years and interest is payable at 2.05% per annum.

14. Secretary General's emoluments

	2020 £	2019 £
Emoluments for qualifying services	97,420	115,442

15. Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel listed as below, received emoluments including benefits in kind totalling £205,151 (2019: £203,136).

Secretary General;
Director of ICT Development;
Senior Manager Membership and Communications (2019 only).

16. Related parties

There are no related parties in 2020 or 2019.

17. Legal status

Under the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the CTO dated 30 March 1983, (article 3) the CTO has legal personality.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (continued)

18. Pension costs

The group operated a defined benefit scheme until 31 October 2002, namely the Commonwealth Telecommunications Bureau Pension and Life Assurance Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme provided benefits based on total service and final pensionable pay. The assets of the Scheme are held separately to those of the CTO in an independently administered fund. At 31 October 2002 the Scheme was closed to new members and also closed to additional benefits to existing members. A full actuarial valuation was carried out at 1 April 2019 by a qualified independent actuary.

The charge to the income and expenditure account in respect of the defined contribution scheme was £145,659 (2019: £135,437)

The major assumptions used by the actuary were:	At 1 April 2019 %	At 1 April 2016 %
Value of assets invested assumption	2.15–2.90	1.65–2.90
Inflation assumption	4.10	3.30

The values of the assets in the scheme are as follows:	At 1 April 2019 £	At 1 April 2016 £
Total market value of assets	2,985,594	2,268,032
Present value of scheme liabilities	4,716,594	4,756,032
(Deficit) in scheme	(1,731,000)	(2,488,000)

Contributions up to 31 October 2002 were charged to the Income and Expenditure Account to spread the cost of providing pensions over employees' working lives. The contributions were determined by a qualified actuary on the basis of triennial valuations. Previously, the triennial valuations indicated that the Scheme was over funded and therefore CTO was able to take a pension-fund contribution holiday. Following problems experienced with Equitable Life, the Scheme insurer, it was identified that the Scheme was significantly under-funded. A new money purchase scheme, the Commonwealth Pension and Life Assurance Scheme (2002) was therefore established with effect from 1 November 2002, with the funds being managed by St James Place.

19. Statement of movements on Income and Expenditure account

	Main Reserve	
	2020 £	2019 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	1,342,450	1,679,970
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	44,626	(337,520)
Balance at the end of the year	1,387,076	1,342,450

20. Taxation

Under the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the CTO dated 30 March 1983, (article 7) within the scope of its official activities, the CTO and its property and income is exempt from all direct taxation.