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### Message

The World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WT&ISD) is been celebrated annually on 17<sup>th</sup> May, marking the foundation of ITU and signing of the first Telegraph Convention in 1865, to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of Internet and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as to develop technical standards that make it easier to spread the benefits of ICT worldwide. IETE, being one of the leading technical and Scientific Institutions, celebrate this day every year. This year IETE will be celebrating its 51<sup>st</sup> WT&ISD on the theme “Bridging the Standardization Gap” chosen by International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Access to ICT standards is a critical factor in a country’s global economic competitiveness. These standards can provide a common platform on which innovation can proceed, giving developing countries the opportunity to create products for a world market. Global ICT standards are not only necessary for ensuring interoperability and connectivity within a universal information infrastructure; their use can also have significant impact on the economic development and technological innovation of a nation.

However, there is a disparity between developed and developing countries in how far they are involved in the process. Such inequality is a factor in the persistence of the digital divide. All countries need to be able to help determine standards, and know how to implement them, in order to reflect their interests and enjoy better opportunities for the comprehensive development of the country. In India too, a lot of efforts are being reflected from the various initiatives taken by the government and private sectors for bridging the digital divide.

I hope the deliberations on the selected theme, on this day, at all our centres, will enlighten us with effective ideas and solutions to overcome the obstacles, to enable us to frame a global standard policy so that even the developing countries can actively participate in the standardization work and can benefit economically and socially by bridging the gap.

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