Communication and IT sectors witness rapid growth with Saudi govt support

Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) Gov. Abdulaziz Al-Ruwais speaks at the Regulatory Telecommunications and Information Technology Summit 2017 in Riyadh on Wednesday. (AN photo)

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RIYADH: Abdulaziz Al-Ruwais, governor of Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC), said the rapid development taking place in the sector is a result of the great support extended by King Salman.

Al-Ruwais was inaugurating the Regulatory Telecommunications and Information Technology Summit 2017 under the theme "Driving the Digital Transformation in the Region" at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in the capital on Wednesday.

He pointed out the Saudi market is considered the largest in telecom and IT in the Middle East. Total spending in this sector alone nearly hit $35 billion (SR131.25 billion) during 2016 at a growth rate of 8 percent compared to figures of 2015.

The penetration rate of broadband services through the mobile telecom network reached nearly 75 percent, he said.

The event was organized by SAMENA Telecommunications Council and sponsored by CITC and Saudi Telecom Company (STC).

Izhar Ahmed, SAMENA's director for Industry Affairs, said the primary aim of the Regulatory Summit is to help understand imperatives in the public sector and private sector cooperation in view of Saudi Arabia's national ICT vision as well as realities and transformation trends in regional digital development.

"The Regulatory Summit will serve as a platform for the regional industry's leadership to convene and bring the future of mobile market competition, technologies and services, and stakeholder priorities into perspective," he said.

"Such areas have to be looked into diligently and should accommodate the imperatives to also address underlying industry needs that revolve around digital services, data regulation, spectrum allocation and the industry's financial obligations."

By conducting this regional stakeholder activity in Riyadh, he said SAMENA looks forward to supporting the Saudi Vision 2030 in all ways possible, while representing the needs and issues of the private sector of Saudi Arabia and surrounding GCC markets.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Saudi Telecom Company Dr. Abdullah Al-Abdulqader, Chairman of the Board of Directors and CEO of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) of Kuwait Engineer Salem Al-Azaynah, Director of Development Office of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Brahima Sanou, Adviser to CITC Minister Sultan Al-Malik and heads of the licensed communications and information technology companies were also present during the opening ceremony.

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