

# Telecom secy outlines challenges and opportunities in telecom

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

The “brutally challenging” Indian telecom market has only seen the beginning of many disruptions, but offers ample growth potential to draw massive investments as well as ensure profitability, telecom secretary Aruna Sundararajan said today.

Ms Sundararajan said that \$100 billion sectoral investment enshrined in the national digital communications policy is not an over-estimate and may well turn out to be less-than-adequate in the wake of new-age technologies and advent of 5G.

Ms Sundararajan said that while the Indian telecom market is “vibrant and exciting”, it is also “brutally chal-

lenging”.

“I think we have only seen the beginning of disruption and I am sure there will be many more disruptions to come but this is a market which is big enough, has enough growth potential for us to attract those kinds of investments and yet make investments profitable” she said.

Speaking at a panel discussion on “Digital Infrastructure for Transforming India” organised by Broadband India Forum, she pointed out how China and the world at large are committing huge investments in the digital communications space, given that nearly everything ~ from education and health-care, and livelihoods to entertainment ~ will be delivered

on the digital highways.

“The global spend on telecom is expected to touch \$4 trillion, and China is spending around \$188 billion every year on digital communications infrastructure...For 5G alone, China's budget is expected to be of the order of \$500 billion. Estimates suggest that impact of 5G on global GDP can be potential doubling of GDP and so countries are infusing investments in telecom infrastructure,” she said.

Ms Sundararajan asserted that digital infrastructure has to be the crux of India's growth strategy as no other sector has the ability to match its positive spin-off on productivity and individual well-being.

“It is time for decision-

makers to engage in serious conversation on how to enable \$100 billion investments in digital communications infrastructure,” she said.

Ms Sundararajan added that a workshop will be organised soon to sensitise the states on their roles in India's digital narrative.

“The workshop will be held to sensitise the states on what is expected of them, how to benchmark states on and the key parameters thereof,” Ms Sundararajan pointed out.

Addressing the event, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said digital transformation would hold the key for India to aspire for 9-10 per cent economic growth sustained over three decade period or more.