



**26-27 November 2009**  
**Minsk, Belarus**

**27 November 2009**  
**Original: English**

## **Connect CIS Summit Outcomes Report**

The Connect CIS Summit took place in Minsk, the Republic of Belarus, 26-27 November, and gathered some 353 participants from 18 Member States, including five Heads of State and Government and one First Deputy Prime Minister. The administrations of 10 countries from the region were represented, including 7 at the Ministerial level. Some 40 leading ICT companies, development banks, international organizations and other stakeholders participated in the Summit.

The Summit was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Mr Alexander Lukashenko and was organized by the International Telecommunication Union in partnership with the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications, the Commonwealth of Independent States Executive Committee, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development. Sponsors included the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, ZTE and Mobile Payments.

Following an Opening Ceremony, an Opening Plenary session, "Beyond the Crisis: ICT as an Engine for Economic Growth" and two interactive panel sessions, "Building a Broadband-Enabled Future" and "Fostering an Enabling Environment" were held. At the end of the day, the Heads of State and Government present, including Armenia, , Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, addressed participants in a special session entitled, "Leaders' Statements and Summit Declaration: Towards a Sustainable Information Society", in which each Head of State and Government outlined their vision for the Summit and pledged their full support to the Connect CIS initiative. The following day four more panel sessions and a Closing Plenary session were held in which the participants discussed issues related to the themes of "Strengthening Public Services through ICTs", "Strengthening a Knowledge-based Society", "Building Trust and Confidence in the Use of ICTs" and "Moving from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting". Expert overview papers were presented at each session and are available [here](#). Meeting Notes are attached in Annex 1.

The aim of the Summit was to mobilize the human, financial and technical resources required as well as to identify priority areas and build political support for a rapid, region-wide transition to digital infrastructure and services, widely recognized as the engine of future employment, growth and social and economic development. In doing so, the Summit will help accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and in turn, support the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 in the CIS region, building on and reinforcing existing activities, such as the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau's (BDT) flagship initiatives: [Connect a School](#), [Connect a Community](#), [Connecting Villages](#), [ITU Academy Partnership](#), [ITU-IMPACT Collaboration on Cybersecurity](#), [ITU Mobile Health Initiative](#) and [ITU Wireless Broadband Partnership](#).

To reinforce the need to accelerate the implementation of the WSIS targets in the CIS region, the Heads of State participating in the Summit issued the Connect CIS Declaration, attached in Annex 2. To help realize this vision, a number of partners announced commitments and projects, which can be found on the [Summit website](#).

## Connect CIS Summit Meeting Notes

### Introduction

The Connect CIS Summit took place in Minsk, the Republic of Belarus, 26-27 November. The Summit was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Mr Alexander Lukashenko, and was organized by the International Telecommunication Union.

These notes give an account of the discussions and conclusions of the Summit.

### Opening Ceremony.

The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), followed by opening remarks made by H.E. Igor Shchegolev, Minister, Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications, the Russian Federation; Mr Jan Kubis, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe; Dr Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union; H.E. Victor Burya, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Belarus and a video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

**Mr Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid**, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, focused his remarks on the increasingly important role of broadband Internet access for the overall economy. He said, "Broadband is no longer a luxury. It has become the core infrastructure of the modern economy, which is needed to support advanced applications and services for governments, businesses and consumers. If we take the right steps together now, broadband networks will serve as a platform in the coming years for innovation, growth and development across the CIS region." He emphasized that now is the time to make commitments and put into place the enabling environment required by the connectivity. Mr Al Basheer also highlighted a number of "ITU Flagship Initiatives" to connect the unconnected, which are designed to leverage the unique contributions of various global and regional partners, including governments, the telecommunication/ICT industry, development banks and international and regional organizations.

He highlighted the aims and objectives of the CIS Summit and emphasized that this Summit is a multi-stakeholder initiative which intends to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and in turn, support the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 in the CIS region.

**H.E. Mr Igor Shchegolev**, Minister of Telecom and Mass Communications, Russian Federation, The Minister noted that large scale projects fostering access to the ICT and respecting the market mechanisms are needed. He emphasized strategic importance of digital transition from analog to digital TV, accelerated process of the convergence fostered by progressing migration towards NGN, which set the new standards for the modern information society. He identified a number of challenges including cybersecurity, data protection and privacy, intellectual property rights, shortage of storage capacity and information management systems, additional spectrum allocation, capacity building of staff, high pressure on the users. He emphasized an important role of the regulatory framework to promote broadband, and noted the importance of the ITU Global Symposium for Regulators as an efficient platform to share best practices between the regulators, private sector and academics. He indicated importance of the internet governance and announced that Russian national domain, .rf has been registered.

**Jan Kubis**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, He underlined that the UNECE is carrying out several ICT related activities in the regions, recognizing the strategic meaning of these technologies for socio-economic development and to help implement WSIS outcomes. In the context of economic downturn he observed that promoting the ICT investments has become much more challenging. Nevertheless he noted the initiative of European Commission to invest 1.2 billion EUR to achieve 100% broadband coverage in the rural areas within the European Union. This summit has a similar

goal which is to close the broadband divide between Europe and CIS, he added. He underlined that the infrastructure and content are vital for achieving the inclusive information society and transition towards knowledge based economy. In order to make it happen, broadband connectivity is indispensable.

**Dr Hamadoun Toure**, ITU Secretary-General noted that the Connect CIS Summit is the second in a series of regional events in our global programme, Connect the World. Like Connect Africa, this Summit brings together high level participants from the public and private sectors to stimulate ICT growth in the region. He emphasized that the CIS region is the fastest growing mobile sector in the world, having achieved mobile density of 107 per cent, and adding that the next challenge is to promote widespread broadband communications, which is a necessary platform for the provision of diverse e-services. He also recognized emerging challenges, including cybersecurity, USD 1 trillion in stolen intellectual property, and cyber-attacks on governments. ITU plays a leading role in coordinating measures to address these challenges, including through the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda and ITU IMPACT Collaboration on Cybersecurity. He urged greater cooperation and coordination among partners through these ITU initiatives. He further noted the positive impact of widespread broadband access for social and economic development and to mitigate the impact of climate change. He made a call to all ITU Members to ensure that ICT is included in the final text of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, being held in Copenhagen in December. In closing, he called for commitments to develop the broadband infrastructure, skills and education required for a knowledge-based economy.

**H.E. Victor Buruya**, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Belarus, noted that this Summit gives an opportunity to discuss real actions strengthening the role of the ICTs as an enabler for socio-economic development. In all of its actions, Belarus builds upon international foundations of information society laid down at the World Summit on the Information Society. Following its 2015 development plan, Belarus directs significant efforts towards liberalization of the economy, promotion of competitiveness, encouraging research, and development of the Information Society, which should improve living standards in Belarus. This happens in particular through expansion of telecommunication networks, broadband infrastructure, human capacity building, ICT services. Mr Buruya underlined that the coming five years will be very intensive due to the enhanced focus on the research on software development, introduction of new frequency bands, designing new e-products which bring strategic value for the country, such as e-health, e-employment, national e-content. He also noted that Belarus is preparing for the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting. In closing he underlined that the Connect CIS Summit is an important opportunity for all stakeholders to focus on identifying strategic issues for the region and initiating new projects, with the involvement of the Belarus companies.

In his video message to the Summit, **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** said, "Unequal access to ICT impedes productivity and innovation." Asserting that this directly affects efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, he added, "we want to enhance digital opportunities for all, and find new ways for these remarkable technologies to advance economic and social development." Many countries still face hurdles, lack of infrastructure, human capacity and weak enabling environment. He stressed that UN is fully committed to supporting Member States through policy advice and capacity building to bridge the digital divide.

#### **OPENING PLENARY – Beyond the Crisis: ICT as an Engine for Economic Growth**

Despite signs of economic recovery in some countries, the return to growth is likely to be slow, weak and uneven. In telecommunications, the global economic slowdown is threatening telecommunication revenues and demand and has imposed major funding constraints on industry and governments alike, at a time when massive investments are needed for the upgrade to digital infrastructure. And yet, ICTs can play a major role in generating long-term economic growth, with ICTs featuring in many of the stimulus plans announced to date. The financial crisis has thus revived broad debate over the role of government in the provision of telecommunication services, with government closely involved in the funding and roll-out of new telecommunication networks.

The Opening Plenary examined the implications of the financial crisis for the CIS region, including the degree to which CIS countries have been affected by the financial crisis, in particular its impact on the telecommunication sector and the technologies that have been most severely impacted. It discussed whether broadband stimulus plans are relevant to CIS. It also looked at the role policy-makers play in

strategic decisions about investments in national infrastructure considering that CIS economies usually have a high degree of state involvement in the planning and funding of new infrastructure. The Opening Plenary identified some of the key policy options for investing in the digital future.

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in the Opening Plenary were:

- The CIS region is one of the regions the most affected in the world by the financial crisis.
- One of the major consequences of the financial crisis is capital constraint.
- The CIS region has seen a drop in capital investment from USD 106 to 21 billion. Nevertheless, the telecommunication sector, along with the oil and gas sectors, continues to receive capital inflow.
- Another consequence of the financial crisis is a drop in merger and acquisition activity.
- As a result, new business strategies are needed, including joint ventures, infrastructure sharing, and increased energy efficiency in order to reduce operational expenses.
- Combining network deployment with other infrastructure projects is another strategy to cut costs. For example, countries can build roads and lay fibre backbone networks at the same time. Laying a fibre network in this fashion may cost only 3–4 percent of the entire project but bring huge benefits later.
- Investing in civil works has also been shown to act as a financial stimulus for the economy as a whole.
- Broadband stimulus packages, another strategy developed to mitigate the financial crisis, have been announced by some 50 countries around the world, and ITU is monitoring these through a series of reports.
- Further market liberalization can also attract investment; indeed benefits arise when regulation and investment are done together.
- International gateway liberalization and infrastructure sharing are regulatory measures many countries are adopting.
- Foreign investment is important as is domestic investment.
- The larger the service sector makes up of a country's gross domestic product, the less likely an economy is to be impacted by the financial crisis. ICT is the quintessential service sector.
- Some economies in the region are still industrial based and are eager to move to knowledge-based economies.
- Large incumbent operators are often close to a club of banks and have capital reserves; smaller competitors can be squeezed out.
- Thus there is need to provide financing for the smaller operators just as small and medium sized businesses, which have been hardest hit by the financial crisis, also need financing since they are often innovators in economies.
- Consumers, even in the financial crisis, value broadband services. Broadband, like children's education, are among the last expenses families hit by the financial crisis have abandoned.

## **PANEL 1 – Building a Broadband-Enabled Future**

This panel examined the current status of broadband infrastructure in CIS countries in regional and national backbone and access networks. It considered the potential opportunities offered by high-speed broadband networks, as well as some of the challenges associated with their deployment. Broadband Internet access can enable a host of exciting advanced online services, but availability and affordability are key issues for realization of the full benefits. Above all, this panel will examine how governments, industry, financial institutions and other stakeholders can most effectively stimulate and leverage public and private investment in broadband infrastructure and services across the CIS region. The panel also highlighted the ITU BDT Flagship Initiatives [Connecting Villages](#) and [ITU Wireless Broadband Partnership](#).

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- Development of broadband strongly depends on tariff policies applied by the service providers. Subscribers' needs are diverse and it is necessary to ensure flexibility in terms of the offerings.

- Long term investment strategies play an important role in the development of sustainable business models for broadband infrastructure. Focus on geographical coverage and affordability will require use of diverse technologies.
- Introduction of broadband services directly depends on the licensing process, which in some countries caused delays. High prices of licenses directly affect prices of services.
- Wireless technologies have the potential to bridge broadband divide. The example of Finland demonstrates that it is possible to provide broadband connectivity and services, which will meeting the needs of the communities leaving in remote areas at the affordable price.
- Worldwide growth in fibre broadband accessibility is growing and there is much potential for more.
- There is a need for discussing new options for financial mechanisms which would generate financial streams from the content operators, to be directed to infrastructure development.
- Satellite technologies may also help in bridging digital divide. They offer broad spectrum of services including broadband access, emergency communications and others. They might be much more investigated by all CIS countries in the future.
- Transition from IPv4 to the IPv6 wins strategic meaning for CIS region, in particular taking into account recent estimates showing that in year 2011 the capacity of the IPv4 will be exhausted in the CIS region. In this context it is necessary to start necessary actions in order to address this issue.

## **Panel 2 – Fostering an Enabling Environment**

This Panel reviewed the regulatory frameworks for telecommunications in the CIS region and examined measures that Governments can take to harmonize regulatory frameworks and attract investment. It looked at some of the measures to promote an enabling environment for growth and the expansion of telecommunication networks across the region and how policy-makers can help and industry manage the digital transition. Issues discussed included whether VoIP should be viewed as an opportunity or a threat, the key regulatory approaches that can be adopted for VoIP, whether broadband services should be included in definitions of universal service, and policies that can help broadband services grow and expand. The panel examined the regulatory challenges posed by the transition to digital networks and converged technologies and considered some of the key policy options remaining for CIS governments to consider: notably, in the simplification of licensing regimes and measures to reduce barriers of entry and promote competition.

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- There is a need for a second wave of regulatory reform that would, e.g., open access to bottleneck facilities, create converged regulatory authorities, use technology neutral licenses and more streamlined authorization processes, allocate spectrum for wireless broadband services and promote passive and active infrastructure sharing.
- Some countries in the region have adopted the European Union model of market liberalization while others have adopted a state-owned fixed line operator model. Most mobile operators in the region are privately held.
- Many countries around the world view Voice over IP (VoIP) as a threat; half of the CIS countries have liberalized VoIP.
- New network development is likely to adopt a two-pronged strategy combining effective regulatory strategies and policies with government support, e.g. through public private partnerships.
- Once mobile broadband networks are developed they can support a variety of services including mobile-health, mobile-TV, mobile-banking, and other mobile services.
- There is a need for international standards to support mobile-banking.
- Due to the time required for operators to put together financing and business plans as well as develop new technologies, operators require clear and transparent regulations to allow for the required planning.

- There is need to access spectrum for new broadband services, especially in the band below 1GHz that is expected to be released through the migration from analogue to digital television, or the “digital dividend”.
- Because spectrum in the lower band require fewer towers, it is cheaper to deploy. This can enable lower cost of service to end users as well as reduce the environmental impact.

### **Leaders’ Statements: Towards a Sustainable Information Society**

Each Head of State and Government, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, outlined their vision for the Summit and pledged their full support to the Connect CIS initiative. The Heads of State and Government identified ICT projects in their countries, including national fibre networks, creation of technology parks, data processing centres, research centres, connecting rural areas, villages and post offices, and encouraged participants to invest and partner in their projects, noting their countries seek foreign as well as national investment. They identified measures taken to promote investment, including favorable tax and customs duties and market liberalization. The Heads of State noted that the Summit is a good opportunity to attract resources for new projects, and identified the key role of ITU in promoting ICT development.

### **PANEL 3 – Strengthening Public Services through ICTs**

This panel introduced some of the new and exciting services and applications enabled by high-speed broadband infrastructure. Governments are not only leaders in the adoption of new applications they must also invest in the development of broadband networks and advanced applications. This Panel considered some of the issues surrounding e-government and the transition of public services online and how governments can use interactive services to build relationships with their citizens. It also considered developments in other advanced services and applications, such as telemedicine and e-health, online education and learning and e-commerce. The panel also highlighted the ITU BDT Flagship Initiative, [ITU Mobile Health Initiative](#).

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- International assessment with the use of indexes is an important tool for decision makers focusing on developing e-strategies. Such evaluation, however, should be treated in the relative terms and take into account different countries’ conditions.
- Several examples may be used as possible reference in development of frameworks for e-government, including European Union, Sweden, Finland, Estonia.
- Inventory of state services and its register may facilitate development of the national and regional approaches for e-government, ensuring strong focus on e-citizens. In this context special efforts need to be made by the governments in order to make possible transformation of citizens into the e-citizens. It requires work on awareness, pervasive public access and incentives for using e-services, digital signature, etc.
- Identified challenges include standardization of e-documentation, equivalency between paper and electronic documentation, cybersecurity, pervasive public access to the ICTs, digital inequality, different levels of digitization of public authorities, secured network of data transmission, data processing centers, standardization of technical regulation, regulation, e-payments, authentication, regional rendering of state services, re-engineering of business processes,
- Payment systems are an important prerequisite for the successful introduction of e-government services. Mobile telecommunications provide a potentially attractive platform for efficient payment systems due to their relatively lower costs and the high level of penetration in the CIS region.
- There is a need for international and regional coordination of the rendering electronic services in the CIS region. ITU, with support of other partners might play a leading role in this process. The following has been identified as necessary immediate action: development of recommendations on e-government infrastructure, principles, quality of services, as well as uniform indicators focusing on quality of services for electronic services.
- It was proposed that a special working group dealing with aspects of e-government in the region be created. Cooperation between national governments should be made by RCC and ITU.

#### **PANEL 4 – Strengthening a Knowledge-based Society**

This panel considered some of the essential ingredients for building a knowledge-based society, and examined how CIS countries can best invest in, and build upon, their human capital strengths and advanced skills. This includes investing in a range of on-the-job training activities, skills development and lifelong learning to build ICT literacy in order to become full-fledged members of the Information Society in line with the WSIS objectives. Related to this, the panel also considered how the promotion of broadband connectivity for schools can not only provide a platform for delivering lifelong ICT training and literacy, but can also be used as community ICT centres serving the needs of the community in which they are based. The panel highlighted ITU BDT Flagship Initiatives, [Connect a School, Connect a Community](#) and [ITU Academy Partnership](#).

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- Popularization of ICTs requires development of new human capacity skills, which are very particular for information age, e.g. management of information overload, prioritization, editing of the websites, navigating in the internet and social networking, recognizing the three dimensions of video, audio and text.
- There are several schemes and strategies, which may be applied at the nation level in order to ensure high level of IT education. The example of Portugal's *Magellan* project, and other similar initiatives, shows that the children can become effective teachers for their relatives at home when provided with laptops.
- Public-private partnerships are an efficient approach to be applied in human capacity development projects ensuring impact on the process of the knowledge based economy development. It should be not seen as a gift but sustainable strategy of involved stakeholders. Several examples of projects from Kazakhstan, Turkey, Russia, Mozambique, Uganda, demonstrated that it is possible to ensure access and IT training at affordable prices.
- Providers of education services need to reflect specific needs of the countries in order to address their particular requirements. Extensive dialog between both parties is desired.
- In the public sector, the top management needs to direct special efforts towards identification of requirements in terms of the human capacity development and provision of adequate training to the staff. In this context, the staff's resistance to improve e-qualifications will be one of the challenges.
- In many European countries, the public sector started to apply standardized certification schemes forcing staff to enhance their e-qualifications. In many cases job descriptions require already standardized certificates like for instance ECDL, proving basic level of computer skills.
- Strategy for strengthening knowledge based society may relay on four pillars as follows 1) access (applying bundling strategies internet may foster popularization of laptops), 2) connectivity (wireless technologies may dominate in the region), 3) skills, 4) creative thinking.

#### **PANEL 5 – Building Trust and Confidence in the Use of ICTs**

This panel considered the risks and challenges associated with the emerging Information Society and "Building Trust and Confidence in the Use of ICTs." As the Information Society grows, so too have the menaces and dangers associated with the online world. The Internet offers a borderless environment in which cyberthreats can be instantly launched and transmitted. Cyberthreats can arise anywhere, at any time, causing immense damage in a very short space of time, before they are tackled. This Panel considered how the dangers and risks associated with Internet access can be mitigated and how best to promote cybersecurity and in particular, the well-being and protection of children, one of the most vulnerable groups online in the virtual world. The panel highlighted ITU BDT Flagship Initiative [ITU-IMPACT Collaboration on Cybersecurity](#).

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- The strategic meaning of Cybersecurity goes beyond the discussion on the critical infrastructure. It has an economic dimension, which should be much more addressed in the future.
- As cybersecurity impacts the efficiency of e-services, including e-business, e-commerce, e-government, it is vital that countries focus on the development of an international framework, in order to ensure a safe and trusted environment in cyberspace.

- So far, botnet attacks are the main threats in cyberspace. 85% of the traffic is Spam. Every quarter of a second one PC is attacked. In year 2002, more than 20,000 viruses were identified. In 2008, it was already 1.6 million. And, in 2009, it is expected that 3 million viruses will be identified.
- The growth of internet users, increasing popularity of social networks, and broad availability of e-services is the reality. In this context more attention needs to be paid to the cybersecurity which is not about software engineering but about people, process and technology.
- Once designing ICT infrastructure, from the beginning it is necessary to ensure that security aspects are reflected in the projects, including operational structures and qualified technical staff.
- It is necessary to discuss separately two issues, namely cooperation on trust in exchanging the data between the CIS countries and cybersecurity. Internet is not designed to be secure. Therefore, CIS countries need to join forces to provide a high level of trust in the countries as well as between countries, provided in one package. In this context it is also necessary to work on development of the human capacity, in order to let individuals be confident in the e-services.
- Create the domain centers of mutual trust, proper legal basis for use digital signatures and regulatory documents on recognition of digital documents. It should be done on an international basis. It is necessary to identify a set of pilot projects in order to start advancing the creation of a safe and trustful environment for e-services.
- Even though the technologies are known very well, it remains challenging to ensure regional coordination on the development of a common understanding and regulation regarding cybersecurity.
- The establishment of national CIRT centres in the CIS region is vital and support of the ITU in this respect is necessary.
- An international framework, including cyber-legislation will play a key role. International cooperation is key, as there are no boundaries in cyberspace. In this context, within the framework of the Global Cybersecurity Agenda, IMPACT is the platform for cooperation between those actors who monitor the networks countering any cyberthreats.

#### **PANEL 6 – Moving from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting**

This session examined the issues associated with the digital switchover and releasing radiocommunication spectrum for the “digital dividend”. ITU’s GE06 Agreement (Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting Plan) provides for a deadline for the digital switchover of 2015, Europe is aiming at 2012 and other countries have already made or are making the transition (e.g. Austria, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States). In many cases, the government strategy for managing the digital switchover has included considerable subsidies to support the effort. This Session examined the issues and timetable for CIS countries in making the switchover.

The main topics of discussion and key ideas identified in this Panel were:

- The transition to digital broadcasting systems is a complex process and will take time. It should be a smooth transition which, depending on the countries’ conditions, may be implemented in very different ways. Rapid change is not desired as it is in common interest to establish reliable infrastructure.
- Exchange of experiences in field of transition plays an important role and needs to be further encouraged. In particular, frequency plan development, transition strategies, and business models are complex and require much more analysis. Bilateral and regional cooperation in this respect could bring value. In this respect, there is an important role for the ITU and RCC to play in the future.
- The transition period requires that it is done in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. This is an important issue in particular for border areas in order to avoid interference and noise. In this context there is a need for cross-border coordination.
- There is a significant need in terms of human capacity development in field of the digital broadcasting. In this context transition from analog to digital systems should become an integral part of all academic programmes and industrial training.

- Particular strategic decisions related to the transition from analog to digital systems need to be made at the national level, therefore there are several differences between the CIS countries in particular in terms of stages of transition or applied business models.
- Coverage may become a problem in many countries. Substitute technologies should be taken into account, like for instance satellite technologies.
- Planning of frequencies needs to be properly implemented, otherwise the whole digitalization will be a failure.
- Digital dividend is desirable and real. It should be addressed in the context of interactive and convergent infrastructure offering new opportunities to the modern information society.
- Environmental and health aspects should be much more investigated. For the time being it is still not known what will be impact of the digitalization.

### **Closing Plenary: Towards a Digital Future**

The Summit officially concluded with final statements from Mr. Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid Director, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), followed by remarks of Nurudin Mukhitdinov, Director General, Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications, Dr Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union and H.E. Nikolai Pantelei, Minister of Communications and Informatization, Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Sami Al Basheer, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) thanked Belarus for their extraordinary hospitality. He also thanked the participants and sponsors. He commended the Summit for its high-level multistakeholder participation, which highlighted the importance of coordinating ICT for Development issues at a regional and international level. He said that ITU was proud to provide a platform to bring everyone together for such discussions. Stating that the Summit covered a lot of ground in two days, he highlighted the main issues that emerged, in particular, the role of ICT and especially broadband networks to help restart economic growth, the need for regulatory environments that stimulate investment, strengthening public services, human capacity, cyber security and finally, strengthening the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Mr Al Basheer highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in the CIS region to further the development of ICT in the region. He informed the Summit of ITU's flagship initiatives, which were designed to foster such collaboration. He noted that the delegates called for more regional coordination in e-government, including the proposal to establish a special working group on this topic and for preparations related to IPV6 to support e government services. Mr Basheer applauded partners for their commitments announced during the Summit. Mr Al Basheer closed his speech by congratulating the Summit for identifying common priorities, which were backed by administrations, including participating Head of State and Ministers.

Mr. Nurudin Mukhitdinov, Director-General, Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications, informed participants about the role of the RCC, including its participation as a key partner of ITU in preparation of the CIS Summit. He reported that the high-level working group headed by Deputy Minister of Communication, Republic of Belarus along with specialists from ITU had successful, interactive sessions that produced a successful agenda for Connect CIS. Mr Mukhitdinov congratulated participants on a successful summit, thanked the Government of Belarus and thanked all the participants present for attending the summit.

Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union thanked the hosts, Belarus Government and its people and partners, RCC and Heads of State from Armenia, Belarus, Krigistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan . Dr Touré complimented the region for having an educated workforce, good engineers and good telecom infrastructure. He added that this summit recognized the challenge to prepare for the next wave of change in ICTs, including broadband and transition from analogue to digital technology. Meeting this challenge would include an effort towards harmonizing policy and fostering cross border cooperation in these issues. He highlighted the role of public private partnerships to tackle these issues. Dr Touré said he was thankful for the commitment from Heads of State to take the steps necessary to expand access to ICTs, and he emphasized ITUs commitment to work with member states, private sector and with all interested parties to seize the opportunities that lie for the CIS region.

Finally, on behalf of CIS administrations, including the participating Heads of State, H.E. Nikolai Pantelei, Minister of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus read the Connect CIS Summit [declaration](#)<sup>1</sup>, which called for an inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and recognized “the important contribution of ICTs in stimulating economic growth, employment and broader sustainable development in the region.” In the Declaration, the CIS leaders also recognized the “essential role of governments in devising national e-strategies and establishing an enabling policy and regulatory framework to foster ICT investment”. And, they reached out to other partners to “achieve the vision and goals of the World Summit on the Information Society in the CIS region.”

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/cis/documents/Final\\_Declaration\\_APPROVED-RCC\\_24nov.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/cis/documents/Final_Declaration_APPROVED-RCC_24nov.pdf)



---

## Connect CIS Declaration

### *Towards a Digital Future*

1. **We, the leaders of the peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, assembled in Belarus from 26-27 November 2009 for the Connect CIS Summit, have come together to forge a common future of prosperity for our region by leveraging the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs).
2. **We reiterate our common desire** to build an inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where people can achieve their full potential and improve their quality of life.
3. **We recognize** the important contribution of ICTs in stimulating economic growth, employment and broader sustainable development in the region, and in turn, their potential to help achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
4. **We further recognize** the essential role of governments in devising national e-strategies and establishing an enabling policy and regulatory framework to foster ICT investment.
5. **We reaffirm our commitment** to achieving the internationally agreed vision and goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003; Tunis 2005).
6. **We note** the key proposals and initiatives brought to the attention of the Connect CIS Summit by the International Telecommunication Union and various partners.
7. **We reach out** to partners including those from the telecommunication/ICT sector, development banks and financial institutions, international and regional organizations and civil society to mobilize human, financial and technical resources for these and other initiatives, which help achieve the vision and goals of the World Summit on the Information Society in the CIS region.