



**18 February 2008**

## **Regional Cybersecurity Forum**

**Doha, Qatar  
18-21 February 2008**

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Assalam Alaikom Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barakatoh

Your Excellency Dr Hessa Al-Jabber,  
Distinguished Guests  
Dear Colleagues,

I am honoured to be present here at the opening of this important event. I am particularly pleased to have my dear friend Dr. Hessa with us here today as it confirms the importance and commitment given to this topic by ictQATAR.

I am also thrilled to see so many distinguished speakers from the region as well as experts who have travelled from afar to gather for this meeting. The list of speakers and participants is very impressive and I am sure this event will be beneficial to everyone and contribute to a deeper understanding of this very interesting subject.

Cyber-threats have become increasingly sophisticated since the early 1980s, when the first known case of a computer virus was reported. Today, cybercrime has become an organized underground economy reaping vast financial rewards using sophisticated software tools that threaten users and information infrastructures in all countries. Sometimes the biggest threats are simple accidents. This was demonstrated only a few weeks ago when

millions of users in this region were impacted by cuts in undersea optical cables – said to be caused by an adrift boat anchor. Access to the Internet, voice calls, corporate data and video traffic were all impacted. It has been said that experience is the hardest teacher because she gives the test first and the lesson afterwards. Whatever the cause, whether intentional or not, whether cybercrime or a mundane accident, the lesson we take away is that every nation needs to organize itself to take coordinated action related to the prevention of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from cyber incidents.

This is one of a series of regional cybersecurity forums that the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector is holding in response to requests made by our membership during the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) that took place here in the wonderful city of Doha in 2006. Allow me to say that each time I come to Doha, I am impressed by the extremely advanced state of development. In hosting the WTDC in 2006, Qatar had shown the world that it is serious in its support for the activities of the ITU. This is further reinforced by the hosting of this regional cybersecurity forum by Q-Cert and ictQATAR and I wish to relay our special thanks to Dr. Hessa's team and her collaborators who have worked closely with us to assure this event would be a success. We recognize that ictQATAR and Q-CERT have played an important national and regional leadership role in cybersecurity and we are delighted to partner with such prominent organizations and hope to work even more closely with you in the future.

Dear Colleagues,

The ITU is committed to ensuring that we meet the needs and requirements of our membership of 191 Member States and over 700 private sector members. In the ITU's Development Sector, this is done through our programmes and initiatives that were developed at the WTDC here in Qatar and approved at our Plenipotentiary conference in Turkey in 2006. We are aware that the issues raised by our membership are real needs that require close cooperation from both the public and private sector to ensure that that all the citizens of the world can have improved access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) – which hopefully will improve their lives and economical and social status.

It is typically youth who are usually the first to embrace the use of ICTs. In this regard, we are extremely honoured that Her Royal Highness Shaikha Al-Mayassa Bint Hamad Al-Thani is the ITU's Honorary Patron for the Youth, an initiative launched last year to provide

support through scholarships and internships to promote access to ICT education and work opportunities for young people. We are very grateful to Her Royal Highness for this patronship which will enable us to make a difference in the lives of many young people.

Our world is moving at a very fast pace. At the start of the 21st century, modern societies have a growing dependency on ICTs that are globally interconnected. This global interconnectivity creates new interdependencies and risks that need to be managed at national, regional and international levels. The formulation and implementation by all nations of a national framework for cybersecurity and critical information infrastructure protection (CIIP) represents a significant first step in addressing the challenges arising from globally interconnected ICT infrastructures.

Practically, the ITU Development Sector's activities in assisting developing countries in this regard is being implemented through two interrelated pillars. The first pillar is an ITU Study Group that is developing a *Report on Best Practices for a National Approach to Cybersecurity*. This Report outlines a *Framework for Organizing a National Approach to Cybersecurity*. During this event, you will hear much about each element of this framework which includes:

- 1) Developing a national cybersecurity strategy;
- 2) Establishing national government-industry collaboration;
- 3) Creating a national incident management capability;
- 4) Deterring cybercrime; and,
- 5) Promoting a national culture of cybersecurity.

The second pillar you will hear about is our *Cybersecurity Work Programme to Assist Developing Countries* which sets out a detailed description how we are working with ITU Member States to develop cybersecurity capacities.

As you all know, cybersecurity is a broad and complex topic. The goals and tasks ahead of us are huge and resources are limited. However, all of us at the ITU are committed to coming to a common understanding in our membership of the importance of promoting a global culture of cybersecurity.

I do not want to take too much of your precious time, so I will conclude now. But before I do so, I thank you all in advance for your participation and contributions to this event. I would like to again thank the Government of Qatar represented by Dr. Hessa and all her team at the ictQATAR and Q-Cert for their never-ending efforts and generous hospitality, a mark of tradition of the Qatari people.

I wish you all a successful event, an enjoyable time in wonderful Doha and a safe return home.

Shukran, wa al salam alaikom

Number of words: 1049