



Opening Remarks 7 October 2008

ITU Regional Cybersecurity Forum for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States¹

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,

Around 25 years ago, Bulgaria was probably the first country in Europe to produce microprocessors and personal computers on an industrial scale, in a city not too far away from Sofia, which gave its name to these computers, the Pravetz 8 series. It is therefore no surprise that we gather in Bulgaria today, since the challenges facing our industry are similar to the ones we were facing at that time.

Cybersecurity issues are indeed a complex mix of technological, political, and cultural challenges. With a long scientific tradition, with a political experience established during the various eras of its history, with an extremely rich culture, Bulgaria has all the ingredients to inspire your work during this Forum.

¹ See the ITU Regional Cybersecurity Forum for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) website at www.itu.int/ITU-D/cyb/events/2008/sofia/

With the number of mobile cellular subscribers about to reach 4 billion and the mobile penetration rate estimated to reach 61 per cent by the end of this year, I hardly need to remind you of the key role that Information and Communication Technologies play in our lives. Access to ICTs has become essential for social and economic development and ICTs have provided solutions to a wide range of everyday problems, sometimes in unexpected ways. Today's new generation take for granted the role that ICTs play in their education and their private lives, welcoming the new technologies that are appearing at an impressive rate.

However, as new technologies are developed and access to ICTs expands, threats to their security are also developing and expanding. These threats are global in nature, with attacks in one country having an impact on another, while the individual generating the attack could be sitting physically in a third country. Therefore, to safeguard our cybersecurity we have to take a global approach and come to a common understanding on how we can address the needs of all countries, including least developed, developing and developed countries. Only by working together to elaborate strategies and identify best practices, can we address these global challenges.

Those who were not convinced until recently by the need to have international cooperation, who by example considered that the markets could regulate themselves, have finally understood. But at what price? International cooperation should therefore be proactive, rather than reactive.

ITU is paving the way for this global cooperation. With its 191 Member States and more than 700 Sector Members, including leading industry players, it is well placed to provide the forum for international cooperation on cybersecurity. Because of our long experience in cybersecurity, ITU was

entrusted by world leaders at the World Summit on the Information Society to take the lead on action line C5, that is, to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs. ITU, through its three Sectors, Radiocommunications, Standardization and Development, is working towards a global, coordinated and harmonized approach to achieving cybersecurity.

In 2007 the ITU launched the Global Cybersecurity Agenda as a mechanism to cooperate internationally, building synergies and coordinating ITU's efforts. As part of these efforts, the Telecommunication Development Bureau, which I have the privilege to lead, is providing expertise through a specific work programme with initiatives and projects designed to respond to the needs of the Member States for assuring safer ICTs. This work programme includes the organization of regional forums, such as this one here in Bulgaria, to build the necessary capacity for countries to tackle cyberthreats efficiently. We are also producing various guides and manuals, such as the Cybersecurity self-assessment toolkit, or the botnet mitigation toolkit, to assist countries in developing national plans, according to the strategy defined in the ITU Cybersecurity Agenda.

The BDT is also implementing recent initiatives on Child Protection, Organizational Structures and incident response that have been established to face emerging risks to cyberspace.

I see you have a busy and interesting programme over the next three days. I am glad to see you all here at this Forum, which provides a good opportunity to bring together Europe and CIS, and regional and international organizations to exchange experiences and share best practices. ITU is organizing this seminar in collaboration with European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) and the European Union and will continue to work with them and other

partners and ITU Members to assure the security that is needed in cyberspace for everyone to be able to benefit safely from the information society.

Ladies and gentlemen, some eleven hundred years ago, under the reign of Boris the first, the Cyrillic alphabet originated here, in Bulgaria. Under such auspices, I am confident your cooperation will help the world define the new cybersecurity alphabet and write a creative page in the history of our industry.

Thank you.