Dear Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the Joint Regional Conference organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the League of Arab States (LAS) and a number of other United Nations Agencies in cooperation with the Arab Academy for Science & Technology & Maritime Transport (ITU-D sector member). The event is on "Disaster: Relief and Management: International Cooperation & Role of ICT", Alexandria, Egypt, 14-17 April 2007.

The event comes in the aftermath of many natural disasters that affected many countries around the world in recent years such as earthquakes, tsunami, floods, etc. and different environmental, health and other humanitarian disasters faced by many countries in the region such as Algeria, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon. As part of ITU’s effort to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, this regional event is being held in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS) and different UN organizations, including WHO and UNEP, and other regional organizations such as the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE). It is hoped that this event will provide more guidance on technical, policy and institutional issues in the development of networks, systems and strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms in the area of communications for disaster management, with emphasis on emergency situations in developing countries and particularly in the least developed countries within the Arab Region.

Specific objectives of the Conference are to:
- Provide an update on on-going activities related to disaster communications in Arab countries;
- Enable potential donors to present their activities and projects to potential recipients;
- Identify suitable technologies, features and technical options for disaster communications;
- Enhance institutional and human capacity on utilizing telecommunications for disaster management using case studies, lessons learned and experiences drawn from other countries;
- Develop a common framework for the development of National Emergency Telecommunication Plans;
- Raise awareness on the importance of the Tampere Convention, its ratification and implementation;
- Explore possible regional cooperation mechanisms for sharing information and practices required for international response to disasters.

Delegations from the participating Arab Countries and particularly those who have in the past been affected by disasters are kindly invited to submit country papers that provide a background of major natural disaster threats, national disaster management practices and relevant response initiatives taken in the area of disaster communications, along with an overview of current regulatory arrangements in place and highlight particular challenges currently being faced by each country.

Countries from the Arab Region, which have acceded to the Tampere Convention namely Morocco, Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, and those that have signed this treaty i.e. Sudan and Mauritania, are kindly invited to submit papers reflecting their views and experiences with this Convention.

Arab Member States/Administrations and National Regulatory Authorities are kindly invited to extend this invitation to related bodies in their countries i.e., health, environment, disaster management, foreign affairs, civil protection, immigration, customs, etc.

The participation of your country is very important and we count on your presence at the conference. We are pleased to inform you that ITU will provide one full fellowship or two partial fellowships to delegates from each participating least developed country Administration and to those from Developing Countries within the Arab Region that will be presenting papers.

For further details and documents such as Draft Agenda, Registration Form, Fellowship Request Form, Information Note, Hotel Reservation Form, please visit the ITU Arab Regional Office website at: www.ituarabic.org/Disaster-Relief and ITU-D website www.itu.int/itu-d/emergency/telecoms/events.

Please complete the hotel registration form and the full/partial fellowship request form as appropriate as soon as possible and return them before the dates indicated on each form by e-mail (mail@itarabic.org) or by fax (+202 26 222 74).

I look forward to your positive response and active participation in this conference.

Yours faithfully,

Sami Al-Basheer
Director