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FIRST MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 1: GENEVA, 10 - 12 SEPTEMBER 1998

FIRST MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 2: GENEVA, 7 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1998

STUDY GROUPS 1 AND 2

SOURCE: TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (BDT)

TITLE: REPORT ON THE TDAB SUBGROUP DEALING WITH PRIVATE SECTOR ISSUES (GENEVA, 2 SEPTEMBER 1998)

1 Introduction

In opening the first meeting of the SubGroup of the TDAB of the Private Sector, the Chairman noted that the SubGroup was set up by the WTDC-98 in Valletta, Malta and that its purpose and terms of reference were established in Resolution 6 of the Conference.

During his welcoming comments, the Director of the BDT recalled that the Center for Telecommunication Development, a predecessor organization to the BDT, had significant private sector participation through its advisory board and that this factor contributed significantly to the Center's uniqueness. He expressed his hope that this spirit of cooperation will be continued through the new partnership being established with the formation of the SubGroup. The Director went on to explain that one of the goals of the Valetta Action Plan is to stimulate the private sector to join the ITU-D and to have it respond quickly and efficiently to membership requirements. The Director continued by noting that technology, human resources and financing are some of the critical ingredients of development that can be contributed by the private sector and the Sector Members. The private sector needs to be able to transfer this know-how and its business culture.

The chair recognized Ms. Walda Roseman, Chairperson of Working Group 4 of the Task Force on Gender Issues (BDT Programmes 4 and 5), who presented the report of its meeting and the relevance to Programme 5. The Private Sector SubGroup took note of her report for further action when it is completed.

2 Summary of the Meeting's Discussions

The documents to be used in the meeting were introduced. The Chairman then went directly to the approved agenda and led a substantive discussion.

2.1. Survey of ITU Members on Private Sector Interests

One of the principal documents for the meeting was the report on the results of a recent Member Survey that focused on issues in Resolution 6, and particularly on matters related to the private sector. Thirty-six responses were received and the results summarized.

The discussion moved from a simple analysis of the survey results to more general concerns using the responses to the questionnaire as a means of stimulating discussion. A common theme running throughout the discussion was the need to increase the linkages between BDT programmes and the private sector, including Sector Members. Several delegates noted the rapidly increasing number of new operators and the need to reach out to them and to the small and medium-sized telecommunication enterprises. Another common concern was for the BDT to become more relevant to the private sector by providing specific information on BDT projects that provide sponsorship opportunities. This information should include a description of the opportunity, the funds required and its schedule. All opportunities should be offered, where possible, to BDT members for possible sponsorship before they are funded by the BDT from its ordinary budget.

The SubGroup addressed other issues:

- a) There is a need for a world wide data base of new and existing operators listing their primary alliances and strategic partners;
- b) Regional private sector coordinators should be chosen to focus and synthesize regional private sector views on BDT programmes, including Programme 5;
- c) GMPCS was a good example of how the private sector and the BDT can work together. It was noted that the report and recommendations adopted at the WTDC-98 concerning GMPCS need to be followed up;
- d) There is a need to reach out to small and medium sized telecommunication enterprises, especially those that are not yet Sector Members, in developed and developing countries through various means including workshops, colloquia and seminars. The objective of these events would be to introduce and explain the importance of the work of the BDT to companies that otherwise have little or no information about the ITU-D;
- e) The private sector would welcome specific opportunities such as matchmaking events that would combine the needs of developing countries with the technology and expertise of the private sector, especially small and medium sized telecommunication companies;
- f) ITU should enhance its website to create a vehicle that would improve the interaction between the private sector and developing countries;
- g) It would be useful to work with and through trade associations, regional organizations world-wide and the ITU regional and subregional offices to enhance the general awareness of the BDT and its programmes;
- h) The BDT should widely disseminate information about its projects and programmes and act as a general clearinghouse for country, subregional and regional projects; and
- i) The BDT should contribute its expertise (including the introduction of appropriate financing options) to developing countries to act as a catalyst in the establishment of new business relationships.

2.2 Programme 5: Partnership Development and the Private Sector

Another topic of discussion centred on Programme 5 of the Valetta Action Plan that was approved by the WTDC-98 in Malta. As part of this discussion the BDT Secretariat introduced its draft to the ITU-D Operational Plan 1999 - 2002 regarding Programme 5 (linked to Programme 4) of the Valletta Action Plan. Much of the discussion was directly related to Resolution 6. Also Question 11/1: "Factors to create a climate favourable to investment" of Study Group 1 was introduced and noted. It is to be discussed later at the Study Group 1 meeting.

The draft Operational Plan was not discussed in detail since there was not sufficient time. It was accepted in principle, noting that there were no budgetary implications above the ordinary budget. The SubGroup Chairman noted that the Valetta Action Plan states that "The subgroup of the TDAB on private sector issues would be expected to advise on the details of Programme 5." He indicated that the SubGroup would provide detail comments once the document is circulated to the members.

3 Conclusions

The meeting was highly successful in addressing the issues important to the private sector. It was emphasised that progress has been made and that the momentum should be maintained. The second meeting of the SubGroup is proposed to take place at the time of the next TDAB in February 1999. However, discussions will be continued by means of e-mail, fax and other forms of communication between meetings. In addition to the comments on the Operational Plan, other proposed agenda items suggested were the formation of teams of specialists to assist in partnership development, the establishment of a private sector focal point in each Sector Member, and a review of the BDT budget and plans.

The Director closed the meeting stating that action is necessary rather than another plan. A wide communication strategy and teletraining, among other methods, to implement the action may be used immediately. The meeting agreed to send this report to the TDAB.

4 Recommendations

Specific recommendations of the Subgroup of the TDAB on Private Sector Issues are as follows:

It is recommended that:

- a) the BDT continue in its work of developing a database of new and existing operators world wide listing their primary alliances and strategic partners;
- b) regional coordinators be appointed to focus and synthesize regional private sector views on BDT programmes, including Programme 5;
- c) the ITU-D should continue to play a catalytic role for introducing and implementing new technologies and services (i.e. IMT 2000, GMPCS, Internet, etc.);
- d) the ITU-D make a greater effort to reach out to small and medium sized telecommunication enterprises, especially those that are not yet Sector Members, in developed and developing countries through various means including workshops, colloquia and seminars;
- e) the BDT create specific opportunities such as matchmaking events that combine the needs of developing countries with the technology and expertise of the private sector, but special consideration should be given to small and medium sized telecommunication companies;

- f) the BDT enhance its website to create a vehicle that would improve the interaction between the private sector and developing countries;
- g) ITU-D work with and through trade associations, regional organizations world-wide and the ITU regional and subregional offices to enhance the general awareness of the BDT and its programmes;
- h) the BDT more widely disseminate information to encourage involvement in its projects and programmes and act as a general clearinghouse for country, subregional and regional projects;
- i) the BDT contribute its expertise (including the introduction of appropriate financing options) to developing countries to act as a catalyst and assist the establishment of new business relationships;
- j) the BDT endeavour to ensure that it is reaching the appropriate office/department in Administrations/organisations with each Sector Member to keep them informed of BDT development opportunities;
- k) the BDT provide the following information in a synthesised and readily applicable form for decision makers on its partnership opportunities and post them on its web site: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/>
- a summary of the opportunity, its geographic location and contacts in a format that can be searched;
 - a detailed description of the opportunity including funds required and schedule; and
 - a list of interested parties for each opportunity.
- l) the BDT circulate electronically and in paper format this report as well as the draft Operational Plan for Programme 5 for comments.
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