

## **OPENING REMARKS**

### **Workshop on Telecommunication Policy & Regulation for Competition**

National Telecommunications Commission,  
Bangkok, Thailand, July 11~15, 2005

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Dear honorable Mr. Rianchai Reowilaisuk, Commissioner of the National  
Telecommunications Commission,  
Ms. Jiraporn Bhongsatiern, Deputy Secretary General of National  
Telecommunications Commission,  
Distinguished participants and experts,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Telecommunication Union, ITU Development  
Sector in particular, I am very much honored to organize the ITU workshop on  
telecommunication policy and regulation for competition here at the NTC  
today.

I believe this is timely since the NTC has been recently established to ensure  
the development of telecommunications and ICT industry as well as the rights  
of consumers for affordable services with quality and choices.

As we are all experiencing today, the paradigm has been shifted towards an  
information society driven by technological evolution – if not, revolution, where  
knowledge and information are critical to the transformation of countries in the  
globalized digital or ICT era. However, technology itself is not the main driver  
for such a transformation but appropriate policy, transparent regulation and  
efficient management suitable for each individual country.

Indeed, since the mid-90s, liberalization policies encouraging competition have stirred up the telecommunication sector, which had been a state-run or monopolized sector over a century. As a result, in many countries today, there are multiple players in the telecommunications sector which now forms part of the converged information and communications sectors. The introduction of multiple players and the presence of competition require countries to put into place a whole host of policies and regulations on a variety of issues such as interconnection, licensing, quality of services, universal service obligation, and especially competition policy.

These tasks have fallen largely on telecommunications regulators. In fact, since the early 80s, the number of telecommunication regulators world-wide has grown dramatically. Currently, there are 130 regulators worldwide, of which 20 are in the Asia-Pacific region. Of these, some are even converged regulators and policy-makers for information technologies, telecommunications and broadcasting.

However, we must remember that there is no single policy and regulatory model that fits all countries. Each individual country should develop its own policy and regulation, while drawing from the best practices or even mistakes from other countries to meet their own local circumstances.

In developing appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, many regulators face challenges that range from corruption to legal disputes over decisions, not only from the industry but also from consumer bodies. Many others also need to tackle internal and/or external political and financial pressures showing the importance of establishing a truly independent regulator with transparent and non-discriminatory regulatory frameworks.

In this regard, ITU has provided State and Sector Members with assistance on telecommunication and ICT policy and regulations based on case studies, statistics, human resource developments, workshops, seminars to direct hands-on consultancies. It is important to bear in mind that our activities and

assistances are based on the needs from our members, just like this workshop starting today.

One of the utmost vital lessons learned from the various activities for the development of telecommunications in any country is the importance of human resources – in particular, local staff equipped with the appropriate knowledge, experience and skills.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that this workshop will provide NTC and the other regulators here with the opportunity to strengthen your skills and competencies. I look forward to continued cooperation with the ministry of information and communications technology and the national telecommunication commission in Thailand.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the MICT and the NTC for your efforts in hosting this workshop, the MCMC, Malaysia for your support and participation, and ITU experts for your expertise and efforts, without which we won't be able to open this workshop today with and for you – over 130 participants – from mainly the NTC and the MICT in Thailand and even from Oman.

Wish the workshop on telecommunication policy and regulation for competition all the best success.

Thank you very much.