

GLOBAL STANDARDS COLLABORATION (GSC-2) MEETING

OTTAWA, 6-8 June 1995

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Communiqué

Second Global Standards Meeting Ottawa, 6-8 June, 1995

Ottawa was host this week to discussions on the Global Information Infrastructure, the convergence of radio communications and telecommunications and the work of forums and consortia. A meeting of the Global Standards Collaboration brought together senior representatives of the world's telecommunications standards organizations for a three day meeting, June 6th through 8th.

The meeting was the second of the Global Standards Collaboration, and the fifth in a series that have worked to further of "the Spirit of Melbourne", which grew out of the 1988 Melbourne CCITT Plenary Assembly. The goal is to further the informal linkage among senior officials from the national, regional and international standards bodies in support of the work of the International Telecommunication Union. The meeting was hosted by the Telecommunications Standards Advisory Council of Canada.

The Global Standards Collaboration provides a framework for the exchange of information, especially as it will accelerate the process of global standards development to promote interconnectivity and interoperability. Fifty three representatives from the Participating Standards Organizations (PSOs) attended, including the founding members, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), the Committee T 1 from the United States, the Telecommunication Technology Committee (TTC) from Japan and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). These have been joined by participants from the Telecommunication Technology Association (TTA) of Korea, The Telecommunications Standards Advisory Council of Canada (TSACC) and the Australian Telecommunication Standardisation Committee (ASTC), with guest observers from the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) of the United States and the ATM Forum and from participating countries and regions.

The group endorsed the continued role of the Global Standards Collaboration in promoting communication and co-operation in support of the ITU and among the Participating Standards Organizations. It heard reports from two meetings held prior to the Global Standards Collaboration, one on Electronic Document Handling and the other of the informal group on global RAdio STandardization (RAST).

Some of the major areas of discussion concerned approaches to the convergence between radio communications and telecommunications, the third generation of mobile communications worldwide, and the sharing of information about working methods of the Participating Standards Organizations in order to further reduce delays in the production and distribution of standards.

New developments within the ITU designed to ensure greater efficiency were reviewed, and information was provided on the ITU subscription-based dissemination of standards through the ITU On-Line service.

The meeting discussed the status and promotion of collaborative work within each of the Participating Standards Organizations on the High Interest Areas (Broadband ISDN, Intelligent Networking, Telecommunications Management Network, Universal Personal Telecommunications, Synchronous Digital Hierarchy/SONET and Multimedia), approaches to conformance assessment, and quality of standards, and consumer and user involvement in standardization.

A principal topic was the Global Information Infrastructure, and more particularly the role of standards and standards organizations in promoting its use as a backbone for commercial trade on a global scale unhampered by differing national implementations. Emphasis was given to encouraging dialogue and convergence of ideas at the international level and to promoting the leading role of the ITU and other international standards organizations, as sources of expertise and support for the Global Information Infrastructure.

Another important area concerned the role of forums and consortia. The meeting heard useful reports on two forums, ATM and the Multimedia Communications, and delegates were also provided with a comprehensive survey on forums and consortia prepared by TTC of Japan. Further sharing of information will take place. It was agreed that the exchange between the forums and consortia and the standards organizations is essential to support identification of user needs and, in some cases, to contribute to the development of standards.

The meeting supported the initiative of working with the International Herald Tribune to produce a special series in October 1995 on "Tracking Telecoms". Each Participating Standards Organization is associated with this project and will contribute.

Discussion about the Global Information Infrastructure, conformance assessment, quality of standards, the existing and possible new High Interest Areas will be continued at the next meeting, which will be held in Seoul, 2-6 September, 1996, hosted by the Telecommunication Technology Association of Korea. In the interim, members will exchange information on several key issues discussed at the Ottawa meetings. As the outgoing host of the meeting, TSACC will provide support for these information exchanges.

Global Collaboration Brings Information Highway One Step Closer

The information highway moved one step closer to reality this week with an international summit that brought together the world's major telecommunications standards organizations. "Standards are the roadbed of the information highway," said Art Reilly, chairman of the US Committee T1 and participant in the meeting. "It makes no sense to talk about the new technologies for the information highway without speaking about the connections between them. Standards are also the on-off ramps for the highway, and without them, there will be no traffic on the highway."

New international mobile communications technologies alone should serve a market of more than a billion people by the year 2010, as many as now have regular telephone service. People can expect to receive many different services, delivered by cable, satellite as well as phone lines and broadcasting. "We can't afford to have fragmented markets. It won't matter to the user how these services are delivered, as long as the user has seamless communication. Collaboration among the standards organizations makes that possible," said Dr. Theo Irmer, Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union.

The meeting was the second on Global Standards Collaboration. Delegates from international, regional and national telecommunications standards bodies met in Ottawa for three days, June 6th through 8th. The meeting compared notes on how to deal with the global information infrastructure, and the role of standards within it and how to promote its use as a backbone for commercial trade on a global scale unhampered by differing national implementations. Delegates came from Europe, United States, Korea, Japan, Australia and Canada.

The meeting reflects a change in how standards organizations operate. They are no longer technology driven but operate effectively according to market needs on a global level. More and more, they co-ordinate activities and policies with each other, as well as with forums and consortia, to support the efforts of the International Telecommunication Union. Some of the larger organizations are now producing more than one standard a day.

Delegates shared information about the convergence of radio communications, telecommunications and information technology, intellectual property rights, and working methods designed to speed up the standards process dramatically. Subject areas of high interest were identified - such as broadband ISDN, intelligent networks and multimedia - where information is shared among the standards organizations. Emphasis was given to the important role of standards in the global information infrastructure.

Delegates elaborated new methods for working with consortia and forums, exchanging information about user needs and technical specifications. Finally, delegates examined a new road map for the third generation of international mobile communications.

“Standards are the key to open markets. They represent freedom of choice for the user,” stated Mike Israel, head of the Canadian delegation and chairman of the meeting.

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Background Information

The Global Standards Collaboration is the successor to the International Telecommunication Standards conferences first instigated in 1989. It draws together the following standards bodies:

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

and the

Australian Telecommunication Standardisation Committee (ATSC)

European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)

Committee T1 Telecommunications United States (T1)

Telecommunications Standards Advisory Council of Canada (TSACC)

Telecommunications Technology Association of Korea (TTA)

Telecommunications Technology Committee of Japan (TTC)

All these standards bodies aim to build on, and contribute to the worldwide standardization process. The pre-eminent role of the ITU in this regard is recognized. All organizations contribute to accelerating the international standardization process that will result in harmonized and competitive worldwide markets for telecommunications products and services.

Observers at the Global Standards Collaboration included representatives from the ATM Forum and the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) of the United States.

The meeting was hosted in Ottawa by TSACC, a partnership between industry and government. TSACC will remain as the secretariat until the next meeting which will take place in Seoul, Korea, September 2-6 1996.