



ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré meets Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin reaffirms the Russian Federation's support for ITU

■ Global access to the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) was at the centre of the discussions in Geneva on 15 June 2011, when ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun I. Touré met Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

Prime Minister Putin, during a historic visit to Geneva, held bilateral meetings with a number of Chief Executives of the United Nations agencies. He reaffirmed the support of his country to ITU and underlined the important role which the Union plays in fostering the development of the ICT sector worldwide. Recalling that ITU is one of the oldest international organizations, the Prime Minister said that "Russia was one of its co-founders and intends to be an active member".

There are many issues on the global agenda that require international cooperation. Citing the Internet in particular, Prime Minister Putin said: "If we are going

to talk about the democratization of international relations, I think a critical sphere is information exchange and global control over such exchange. This is certainly a priority on the international agenda."

Dr Touré said that political and technical support from the Russian Federation has contributed to the adoption of many ITU resolutions and decisions, which in turn have helped deliver social and economic progress worldwide. He lauded the Russian Federation on its stellar progress in the ICT sector, pointing out that the Russian population enjoys 166 per cent mobile cellular subscriptions — more than twice the global average.

Dr Touré shared his views on the future development of the Internet and highlighted the importance of international cooperation on cybersecurity. To enjoy the many benefits of an interconnected world, people need to feel confident that the networks, services and

From left to right: Valery Timofeev, former Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau (2003–2010); Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Chief of the ITU Strategic Planning and Membership Department; Houlin Zhao, ITU Deputy Secretary-General; Dr Hamadoun I.Touré (fifth from left), ITU Secretary-General; Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation; Valery Lochtchinin (eighth from left), Ambassador of the Russian Federation; Igor Shchegolev (ninth from left), Minister of Telecom and Mass Communications, Russian Federation; and the Russian delegation during a meeting at the United Nations Office in Geneva



applications they use are secure. With more than 2 billion Internet users worldwide today, the Internet is a growing common resource — vastly increasing the opportunities but also the dangers online, especially for children.

Prime Minister Putin emphasized that one of his priorities is protecting children online, which is also one of ITU's key areas of focus. ITU's Child Online Protection (COP) initiative brings together partners from all sectors of the international community with the aim of creating a safe online experience for children everywhere.

COP's key objectives are to identify the risks to children in cyberspace and improve awareness of the dangers, as well as to develop practical tools to help minimize risks and share knowledge and experience in applying them.

The meeting took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Dr Touré was accompanied by Houlin Zhao, ITU Deputy Secretary-General; Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Chief of the ITU Strategic Planning and Membership Department; and Valery Timofeev, former Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) from 2003 to 2010.



ITUW. Martin

Russia's scientific contribution to the global community at a glance

Noting that the Russian Federation joined ITU on 1 January 1866, Dr Touré praised the country for its long and distinguished record in telecommunications. "Russia's scientific contribution to the global community, in particular to space exploration and radiocommunication, has helped us meet our objectives to connect the world", said Dr Touré, citing the launching of the first space satellite and the first manned

space flight by Yuri Gagarin 50 years ago.

Earth's first artificial satellite: The space age began on 4 October 1957, when the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik-I. The world's first artificial satellite was 58 cm in diameter, weighed 83.6 kg, and took 98 minutes to orbit the Earth. That Sputnik launch changed the political, technological and scientific landscape throughout the world.

"Here we go": In the morning of 12 April 1961, the 27 year old Yuri Gagarin was in a space capsule atop a 30m-high booster rocket at the Tyuratam test range in Kazakhstan — now the Baikonur Cosmodrome. As the rocket blasted off into space at 0907 local time, Gagarin said "Poyekhali" ("here we go").

Gagarin saw the Sun rise as he was moving over the South Atlantic, and was struck by the view through



Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968) inside the capsule of the Vostok-1 spacecraft. Gagarin made the first manned space flight on 12 April 1961

the capsule's window, commenting on the Earth's "beautiful aura" and the striking shadows cast by clouds on our planet's surface.

From his space capsule, he kept mission control updated on his condition using a high-frequency radio and a telegraph key. But the spacecraft was controlled from the ground, because of concerns about the unknown effects of weightlessness. If control from the ground was lost, Gagarin was to open a sealed envelope containing codes that would allow him to use a crude on-board computer to assume command of the spacecraft. "I was never nervous during the space flight — there were no grounds for it", said Gagarin later.

Radio waves and a radio link: A plaque at ITU headquarters in Geneva commemorates the work of Russian physicist and radiocommunications pioneer Alexander Stepanovich Popov. Born in March 1859, Popov first worked at St Petersburg University, where he had been a student. In 1883, he became a teacher at the Russian Navy's Torpedo School at Kronstadt. Electrical power was being introduced into ships, and he investigated the practical applications of high-frequency currents and the electromagnetic (including radio) waves

they produced. In 1894, he finished making a device to generate electromagnetic waves, but he could only detect them over a few metres.

At that time, electromagnetic waves were received with a "coherer". Popov improved the coherer's sensitivity and invented a mechanism to automatically re-set the device. He used this equipment to monitor lightning — a serious danger to lives at sea. By attaching an antenna to one end of the coherer and grounding the other, he detected electrical discharges in the atmosphere many kilometres away. It was the first time that such an antenna had been used to receive radio waves.

Popov demonstrated his invention to the Russian Physical and Chemical Society on 7 May 1895. Then, at a meeting of the Society in March 1896, Popov showed how his work could be used in general for sending and receiving information by radio. By 1899, Popov had developed a way to send radio signals to and from ships up to 30 km away. And by January 1900, a 47-km radio link had been established between Hogland Island in the Gulf of Finland and the coastal town of Kotka. ■