

DRAFT OPINION B

Actions to assist Member States and Sector Members in adapting to the changes in the telecommunication environment due to the emergence of IP Telephony, including analysing the current situation (e.g. by case studies) and formulating possible cooperative actions involving ITU Member States and Sector Members to facilitate adaptation to the new environment

The third World Telecommunication Policy Forum (Geneva, 2001),

considering

that, for several years, technology analysts have observed a tendency for telephony services and other forms of communications to converge and that, in recent years, IP appears to have emerged as the unifying platform,

noting

- a) that several global communications operators have announced that they are migrating their traffic to IP-based platforms;
- b) that liberalization introduces competition within the telecommunication market, to the benefit of the consumer;
- c) that ITU, in its service definitions, has been careful not to imply or specify any particular implementation technology,

conscious

- a) that increasing access to the Internet is a policy goal in almost all Member States;
- b) that cost-effective voice services can be added to the range of services already available over IP-based networks, taking into account that IP Telephony applications are still developing;
- c) that IP technologies offer opportunities for the development of new multimedia applications, including voice,

encourages Member States

to share experiences in developing new methodologies and approaches that recognize the market conditions of advanced technologies, such as IP Telephony, including, but not limited to:

- (i) approaches towards making any sector-specific regulation technology-neutral;
- (ii) the application of domestic competition laws as part of a pro-competitive policy designed to establish a level playing field;
- (iii) establishing sustainable bases to generate financing for universal service,

invites the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux

1 to promote understanding of the benefits of IP-based technologies and IP applications and of the benefits of a liberalized market and, within existing budgetary resources, to assist Member States and Sector Members, particularly in developing countries:

- (i) by updating previous IP Telephony case studies and carrying out further country case studies, as required;
- (ii) by carrying out cost studies and establishing a process to assist members in performing cost-benefit analyses in order to plan for investment in converged telecommunication and data networks on IP platforms, on request;
- (iii) by helping to attract private sector investment and promoting the use of international lending and donor organization resources;

2 in the pursuit of the above, to conduct regional workshops in partnership with the private sector, complementing existing ITU activities, on the following basis:

- The workshops should provide forums on:
 - (i) how telecommunication infrastructure build-out and the evolution of existing networks can be facilitated by deployment of IP-based technologies;
 - (ii) technologies that can support IP Telephony;
 - (iii) how to create an environment that will attract investment in infrastructure development.
- ITU may call upon voluntary contributions from Sector Members and other industry participants to support such activities.
- The workshops should bring together incumbent and new entrant network operators, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), equipment suppliers, consumers and consumer organizations and government officials responsible for economic development, in addition to those dealing with telecommunication issues.