United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 29, 2007

Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré
Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union
Place des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Ref: DM-07/1003: Planning Schedule for the fourth World
Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) on convergence and emerging
policy issues

Dear Dr. Touré:

The United States of America appreciates the invitation to submit
materials relevant to the first draft of your Report to the fourth World
Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF). Accordingly, we offer our view
of the agenda and structure of the Forum.

Bearing in mind that we view access to the benefits and resources of
the information age to be one of the greatest challenges and worthy goals for
the ITU and its members, we propose that the WTPF consider the themes
listed below. Given the phenomena of convergence, these themes call on the
ITU membership to address access issues from a broad range of new
perspectives:

- new standardization issues (given the emergence of Next Generation
  Networks),
- broadband,
- challenges to capacity building,
- cybersecurity, and
- new challenges to policy making.

Discussion and exchange of views will sharpen our common
exploration of the many new dimensions of promoting access to the global
community so that all peoples of the world, especially youth, are brought

closer to harnessing the full potential of information and communication technologies (ICT).

At the Plenipotentiary Conference 2006 in Decision 9 (Fourth World Telecommunication Policy Forum), the ITU Membership decided to hold a Forum with the mandate to discuss and exchange views on a broad range of topics associated with next generation ICTs.

The United States agrees that the structure and output of the WTPF must be guided by Resolution 2 (Marrakesh 2002) (excerpted):

- The world telecommunication policy forum shall neither produce prescriptive regulatory outcomes nor produce outputs with binding force; however, it shall prepare reports and, where appropriate, opinions for consideration by Member States, Sector Members and relevant ITU meetings;
- The world telecommunication policy forum shall be open to all Member States and Sector Members; however, if appropriate, by decision of a majority of the representatives of Member States, a special session may be held for Member States only.

Themes

1.   Next Generation Networks: Is Global Standardization Possible?
The ITU has a mandate to "facilitate worldwide standardization of telecommunications…" (CS/Art. 1). With the emergence of converged networks, there are pressing new standardization issues that will have an effect on meaningful access to the benefits of the Information Age. In addition, following the Plenipotentiary in Antalya, Resolution 123, the ITU has an important new initiative to "bridge the standardization gap." The WTPF could highlight the ITU's implementation of Resolution 123, and discuss complementary ways to further bridge the gap so that all ITU Members can participate and benefit.

2.   Broadband: How Far, How Close? We believe that there are important success stories of countries providing their citizens with increased access to the benefits of converged networks. Each of these is an example of a possible solution to a unique set of circumstances, and each of them offers a practical example of how access can be extended and how the benefits are experienced. Some countries are just now experiencing the benefits of affordable local access and are seeking to improve and increase the affordability of local access to their citizens. We propose that the WTPF

attendees be invited to share these success stories and discuss the lessons learned from their experience. These discussions could build on some of the information contained in the ITU <ICT Success Stories> page, see: http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/wsis-themes/ict_stories/index.phtml.

3. **Cybersecurity: At What Price?** Cybersecurity depends on a dynamic and flexible response to continuously changing threats rather than a fixed state of security. Development of national frameworks for the application of available technical, legal, regulatory tools by end users, industry, and Government is fundamental to the creation of a culture of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity includes Governments' interest in the protection of their critical information infrastructures and cyberspace as an essential aspect of their national security and economic well-being. Information infrastructures and cyberspace are interconnected across industry sectors and national borders, and their protection at the national, state/provincial, and local levels requires coordinated national action to prevent, respond, and recover from incidents. At the international level cybersecurity requires cooperation and coordination with international partners.

4. **Capacity Building: The Essential Element?** In this era of convergence, increased access is creating new opportunities for socio-economic development and collaboration. Rapid technological advances underscore the need from many countries to harness training opportunities and skilled human resources in order to utilize emerging technologies and related technological trends. In this regard, the United States believes that building capacity in ICT for development, particularly ICT human resource capacity, will create new socio-economic opportunities, improve knowledge acquisition and application, and enhance skills and productivity. These discussions should recognize that convergence and other aspects of Next Generation Networks have transformed requirements for capacity building.

5. **Policy Making in the Era of Convergence: What Next?** An informed and forward looking policy maker will be well equipped to address the challenges created by converging networks and an environment that promotes access to local and global information resources. The WTPF could provide an important venue for discussion of how to create a legal and regulatory environment that facilitates access both locally and globally in the face of rapidly changing technologies and convergence. As policy makers struggle with these challenges, regular dialogue among them will be critical to strengthening their capacity to develop and further access programs. In this vein, the WTPF agenda should include discussion of mechanisms for

policy makers to increase exchange of views and experiences and share information to strengthen their legal and regulatory regimes. The Global Symposium for Regulators is one example of an existing ITU program promoting dialogue and information sharing.

We look forward to continued discussions with our ITU colleagues on WTPF planning, as well as discussions and exchanges of views at the WTPF itself.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Richard Beaird
Senior Deputy U.S. Coordinator
International Communications and Information Policy
U.S. Department of State