

FRENCH REPUBLIC

Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry and Employment
Directorate-General of Business
Division of Information Technology and the Information Society

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

Dear Sir,

May I begin by thanking you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the second version of your draft report to the Fourth World Telecommunication Policy Forum, to be held in Portugal in April 2009.

As stated in Resolution 2 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Marrakesh, 2002), the purpose of world telecommunication policy forums is to provide a framework for the exchange of views and information among the various players concerned and to develop a common vision in regard to general policy issues arising from the emergence of new services and new technologies. We therefore believe it is essential for WTPF-09 to examine all the themes on its agenda without prejudice and as openly as possible. Other gatherings such as the Internet Governance Forum have demonstrated that forums which bring together all concerned players are able to achieve significant progress in moving discussions forward. One of the keys to the success of WTPF-09 will be ITU's ability to bring together all information society stakeholders (academics, researchers, civil society, the media and so on), in addition to those players that make up the Union's membership today, and to involve them all in drafting the report and pursuing the discussions to take place in April 2009.

Advances in information and communication technologies are going to play a decisive role in the future of our economies and our societies. This is particularly true of the Internet, whose evolution is as swift as it is profound. After coming into widespread use in society barely 15 years ago, the Internet has evolved from a network of computer systems to a network of people and services (the

so-called Web 2.0 and Web 3.0). The Internet of devices, which will make it possible to interconnect billions of physical objects, is now well along in development, while the Internet of the future is the focus of a major international research effort on the part of academia and industry alike. This is why we believe that the Fourth World Telecommunication Policy Forum has to examine the most important technological advances being developed today, which are expected to bear fruit by 2015 to 2020, so that work can begin on examining, among other things, the potential public policy implications.

The Fourth World Telecommunication Policy Forum should develop views in regard to the four themes on its agenda (convergence, including Internet-related public policy issues, next-generation networks, the International Telecommunication Regulations, and new and emerging issues). Beyond public policy issues, we believe that the implications of these developments should also be examined in regard to their potential impact on ITU, its organizational structure, its activities and its membership. Indeed, given the ever swifter pace of technological change and evolution of the value chain, ITU faces a twofold challenge: to remain focused on its internationally recognized core technical mission, and to make the necessary adaptation to the information society. This adaptation has to be carried out cautiously and of its own free will, taking into account the work and activities of other international and intergovernmental organizations (in such areas as cybercrime and privacy). The work of WTPF-09 will provide an opportunity for this to be discussed.

In addition to these general comments that I wished to share with you, France will shortly be sending some proposed editorial amendments to the second version of your draft report, through the expert group you have set up.

We recognize that the forthcoming Fourth World Telecommunication Policy Forum will surely be one of the key events on ITU's calendar for 2009, and we wish to underscore the importance that France attaches to the event.

Yours faithfully,

[Signed]

Emmanuel GABLA
Head, Division of Information Technology and
the Information Society