



ITU Workshop on Internet Governance

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Good Morning,

As we look back to the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society attended by 11,000 participants including 44 Heads of state or government and vice-presidents in December 2003, we can be proud of our collective accomplishments. The Geneva phase clearly placed the issue of ICTs on the agenda of world leaders and produced consensus on the importance of shaping the Information Society in a constructive manner beneficial to all citizens. Leaders also agreed on the importance of ICTs in addressing many of the major social, political and economical problems and the important role that ICTs can play as an essential tool in reaching many of the goals expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

The Geneva phase identified two major issues to be resolved under the auspices of UN Secretary General, namely Internet governance and financing mechanisms. The ITU has organized this workshop to contribute to the ITU process that will prepare its inputs and position vis-à-vis the UN Secretary General's working group on Internet governance that has yet to be established. In that regard, all discussions and results from this workshop will be compiled into a Chairman's report and communicated to the entire ITU Membership as well as submitted to the appropriate ITU decision-making bodies for their further consideration.

The workshop will provide a forum for invited experts to exchange views and make analytical studies on definitions, viewpoints and visions on Internet governance from

several aspects, including legal, technological, administration and commercial issues. The format is one of the ITU Strategy and Policy Unit's New Initiatives workshops held since 1999 in line with ITU Council Decision 496. This format is intended to foster efficient and effective discussion among experts on specific topics. In this regard, we have invited approximately 30 experts in Internet governance issues to speak from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and views.

In closing, I want to say that we appreciate very much the time and effort these experts have made to come here to Geneva and share with us as well as the entire ITU Membership their expertise. In your discussions over the next 2 days, I would strongly urge you to look for areas of common interest, and not to focus on the inevitable areas of disagreement. The ITU looks forward to working with all of you in this exciting and important undertaking.

On a separate, but very important matter, every ship needs a good captain to find its way and have a successful voyage. I have asked Mr. Shyamal Ghosh to serve as the Captain to chair this meeting. His achievements are far too numerous to list here but I might mention that he was Chairman of Telecom Commission & Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Government of India. As Chairman and as Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, he has led the Indian delegation to ITU's World Radio Conference-2000 at Istanbul and participated in the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity Conference on 'Digital Divide' at Tokyo in 2000. He led the Indian delegation for the World Telecom Development Conference in Istanbul in 2002, where he was elected as a Vice-Chairman of the Conference. He also led the Indian delegation to the preparatory Conference for World Summit for Information Sector organized by ITU in Geneva in 2002.

Thank you very much and please let us welcome Mr. Ghosh.

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