



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**ITU NEW INITIATIVES WORKSHOP ON
THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT
FOR FUTURE MOBILE MULTIMEDIA
SERVICES**

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Opening Remarks

Matthias Kurth: President of the Federal Network Agency, Germany

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Time to make friends”. This is the theme of the FIFA Worldcup taking place in Germany now. In this spirit I like to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this Workshop on the Regulatory Environment for Future Mobile Multimedia Services. I’m delighted and honoured by the request of the ITU to host this event at the premises of the Federal Network Agency and to see so many of you here today. And I should like to thank in particular all those who have not been put off by a long journey. I hope you have some additional time available to enjoy the special flavour of the atmosphere in Germany surrounding the worldcup. On Friday one of the major public events starts Mainz, the so called “Johannisnacht”, to honour the inventor of the first printing machine Johannes Gutenberg, born in Mainz around the year 1400. His invention was a that time the breakthrough to bring information to the public at large scales and formed the most advanced “media service”. In 1998 American Journalists elected Gutenberg to be the “Man of the Millennium”. So Mainz is well suited to discuss the future of multimedia services.

My authority and I by myself recognise the importance of the ITU in overcoming the challenges posed by globalisation in the area of telecommunications and new information technologies and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The world of telecommunications is experiencing ever more dynamic change and is one of the main engines of growths and innovation worldwide. The ITU facilitated and will facilitate this process through coordination of the different national interests and is the internationally recognised platform for the development and harmonisation of the telecommunications market through its efforts and the efficient, targeted integration of sectoral cooperation. This workshop is one activity to reach these goals.

The ITU plays an important role in the further development of the global information society. Promoting global dialogue and cooperation between member states and sector members fosters the introduction and spread of modern communication systems for the benefit of society at large, while paying particular attention to the special needs of developing countries.

The ITU has always played a vital role in helping to level technological disparities. As set out in the Tunis Commitment for the Information Society and its action lines, the ITU should – together with other UN Agencies – participate actively in engaging governments, the private sector and civil society to bridge the digital divide and commit to achieving a truly inclusive information society.

The topic for this workshop is the regulatory environment for future mobile multimedia services. The convergence of technologies and services places a number of crucial questions to the necessary regulatory

circumstances, for example how to provide sufficient spectrum for innovative technologies in time for their introduction and how to ensure the interests of the consumers in the future environment.

This development can be attributed to an ever increasing popular demand for mobile telecommunications services. It is not least the resulting new technical possibilities and the further spread of the internet that will contribute to greater demand for higher transmission rates in connection with greater mobility in the near future. This development promotes and accelerates the creation of an “always on” scenario, where everyone has access to the services and information important to him – anywhere, anytime. Especially the FIFA Worldcup has pushed this debate in Germany because there was and is a great interest to provide innovative multimedia services around the worldcup using the tremendous public interest to be part of the event anywhere.

We must therefore do everything in our power to best promote the international regulatory framework for the introduction of new technologies that will benefit society, without including unnecessary barriers that lead to delays which are counterproductive to our society and economy. The mental reconstruction of the regulatory framework as a preparation for and basis of future decisions and market liberalisation is one of the most pressing tasks. The greatest challenge in this debate is to define that narrow path between appropriate flexibility and necessary regulation.

I do hope that this Workshop will help us to develop a common understanding and possibly point us along the way to achieving this goal.

I wish all of you a very nice time in Germany and good success for the workshop.