

Development

DEV.3 : Rethinking regulation in emerging markets
Thursday, 08 October 2009, 09:00 - 10:30, Room C

Developing countries are in the midst of both a technological and economic communications transition with the rapid growth of Internet Protocol (IP) and mobile networks at the heart of this revolution. There is a wide recognition that the most successful national ICTs strategies have always tackled two interrelated elements: infrastructure and an enabling environment. The latter is typically seen as synonymous with an enabling regulatory framework that encourages competition, privatization and market liberalization. But for emerging economies, this is clearly too simplistic. Emerging markets present particular starting conditions that cannot be addressed by blindly copying regulatory frameworks from developed countries that have completely different historical contexts and telecom infrastructures in place. Generally, the right regulatory environment means finding a balance between creating competition, improving access (whether to basic services or to broadband) and attracting investment (in the case of developing countries, typically FDI). But emerging telecom markets typically differ greatly from mature markets. Usually the fixed-line penetration is substantially lower while mobile penetration is much higher. Yet, build-out of wireline infrastructures is seen by many as the most "future proof" solution for longer term ultra-broadband access. Particularly in a troubled global economy with capital markets tightening up, finding the right balance means that regulators have to juggle between promoting investment in infrastructure versus promoting service-based competition. This session considers whether a 'rethinking on regulation' needs to take place in developing economies, particularly when a national ICTs infrastructure has become an underpinning layer of networked economies and information societies.

Moderator

* Mr Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ITU

Panellists

* Mr Robert McDowell, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission, United States

* Dr Joseph S. Kilongola, Director, ICTs, Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA), Tanzania

* Prof. Eli M. Noam, Professor of Finance & Economics and Director, Columbia Institute for Tele-Information, Columbia University, United States

* Ms Karen Rose, Director, Access and Development Initiatives, ISOC , ISOC

* Mr Ahmed Khaouja, Directeur de la concurrence et du suivi des opérateurs, Agence Nationale de Réglementation des Télécommunications (ANRT), Morocco