

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON TRADE IN TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES FOR THE ARAB STATES

Tunis, Tunisia 25 – 27 October 2000

BACKGROUND

International trade, and in particular trade in telecommunication services, has grown exponentially since the signature of the GATT agreements and the creation of WTO. In addition, the tremendous growth of technologies based on IP protocols such as the Internet undermines the economic model on which all recent investments were based, perhaps threatening the medium-term viability of traditional telecommunication network operators. Yet is this a threat or an opportunity?

What will be the telecommunication services of tomorrow?

What does convergence of technologies mean in practical terms for a telecommunication network operator?

How to manage the transition? In which technology should telecommunication operators invest today?

What will be the impact of global mobility on local markets?

Are the current tax laws adapted to the new mobility?

How are the rules that currently govern national and international trade between telecommunication service providers likely to evolve?

What needs to be done to make the policies of universal service, interconnection and promotion of fair competition compatible?

What weight do the WTO agreements on trade in telecommunication services carry?

How to reconcile the various modes of market access with the need for fair competition?

What are the respective legal responsibilities of the different players in electronic commerce?

These are some of the questions on which the seminar will be focusing, in order to encourage fruitful exchanges between executives of the region and other experts from the industry and from ITU.
