

**Development Symposium for Regulators
Geneva, 20 – 22 November, 2000**

**OPENING REMARKS
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It is my pleasure to welcome you to the ITU for this first ever, global meeting of the world's telecommunication regulators. At the start of the 1990s, there were just 12 telecommunication regulatory agencies around the world. We could have held a meeting in one of our larger offices here at the ITU. Today, national regulatory agencies number almost 100 and we have set aside the largest ITU meeting room to gather you all together. Some 20 more ITU Member States are contemplating establishing independent regulatory agencies in the coming two years and, if we hold this meeting again in the future, we will have to look for a bigger room!

It is a particular pleasure for me to be able to open this meeting. Since I was elected in 1998, I have made it one of my goals to boost the ITU's role in providing a forum for the discussion of issues of a policy and regulatory nature. I want to ensure that ITU continues to adapt to the changes in the nature of our membership.

In the old days, when national "administrations" covered both regulatory and operational functions, there was often just a single interface between ITU Members and the ITU. As our Member States began to separate the functions of policy-making and service provision, the ITU formally recognized this by distinguishing between Member States and Sector Members.

Arguably, there are many activities of the ITU that now address the needs of private Sector Members, notably in the Standardization Sector or through the TELECOM events which are held throughout the world. Equally, traditional functions of governments are addressed, for instance through the treaty-making activities of the Radiocommunication Sector or the Plenipotentiary Conference. But our goal now is to do more to address the needs of the newly-created regulatory agencies. The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate a global dialogue between the world's regulators. I believe ITU has an important role to play in serving the needs of regulatory agencies.

ITU can play an important role in helping to strengthen regulators through three main vehicles:

- First, the ITU can provide a **forum** for regulators to discuss the most current issues. To take one example, 3G mobile services under the IMT-2000 family of standards, will be launched in several countries around the world next year. Regulatory issues such as circulation of terminals, roaming agreements and interconnection arrangements, as well as competition policy issues, will be common problems addressed by regulators in most countries. Sharing experiences should greatly assist regulators.
- Second, through these discussions ITU can provide a type of **knowledge centre**, or a repository of global expertise. ITU has already established a leading position as a source of telecommunications market data, and we are expanding that coverage to incorporate regulatory and tariff data. This year, for example, the ITU held a workshop on fixed-mobile interconnection. The final report of this workshop is available on our website. Other ITU products and services, such as the newly-launched series of Internet case studies, the regulatory website, the ITU World Telecommunication Regulatory Database and other products and services -- notably the release for this meeting of the "Trends in Telecommunication Reform 2000/2001" report -- are good examples of the type of added value that ITU can bring.
- Then, thirdly, ITU can serve as a conduit for the **transfer of regulatory expertise**, between our Member States. Transfer of technical expertise has traditionally been one of the main roles of the Development Sector. The demand from our Member States is now less for technology transfer and more for regulatory expertise and know-how. This is one of the goals of the ITU's Centres of Excellence programme, but we would like to improve the ITU's ability to respond to requests from our Members.

These are my ideas as to the role that ITU could play in the future. But I am more interested to hear from you, the world's regulators, as to the type of problems where ITU could provide support, and whether an international forum of this nature could serve as adequate instrument to tackle some of the challenges you are facing today as markets worldwide become increasingly open to competition.

I am delighted to be sharing this opening session with some distinguished regulators from different regions of the world, including the oldest independent regulatory agency of them all, the FCC. I look forward to hearing their views.

The topics that we will be discussing over the next three days, notably interconnection, regulatory strategies to increase Internet connectivity, convergence and the establishment of regulatory bodies, are of vital importance, not just to the health of the telecommunications sector, but also to the health of the world economy.

To conclude, I would like to wish you every success in your deliberations over the next few days and I hope to receive constructive feedback as to how the ITU can better serve its membership in the field of co-operation between regulatory agencies.

Thank you.