

H.E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansoori, UAE Minister of for the Development of Government Sector

In the Name of God Most Gracious Most Merciful

Your Excellency Dr. Hamadoun Toure, Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union

Mr. Sami Al Basheer, Director of ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau

Chairman of the 7th Global Symposium for Regulators,

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, It is with pleasure that I inaugurate the 7th Global Symposium for Regulators as I am equally pleased to welcome you in your second home, the United Arab Emirates, wishing you all continued success in your endeavors.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the International Telecommunication Union for the fine organization and management of this important symposium with the cooperation of Telecommunication Regulatory Authority.

The UAE believes in an open global economy and its role in elevating our local emerging economy by applying the best practices and by making use of other countries' economic experiences throughout history. Telecommunications and information technology represent important sectors whereby the Government of the United Arab Emirates has taken great strides in these two sectors acknowledging the imperative role that they play in pushing the wheels of economic, social and intellectual development.

Hence, we seek to invest in new developing sectors in the UAE, such as telecommunication and information technology acknowledging the imperative role these sectors play in the country's social, educational and economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UAE adopted a superior strategy for the telecommunications industry to support and develop the non-oil economic sectors including trade and commerce, financial services, education, transportation and healthcare services in addition to increased independence on technology and supporting economic development while protecting economic and social stability and increasing the size of national participation and activating the highest caliber of policies to build a comprehensive strategy to diversify the economic platform

In 2006, mobile phone usage in the UAE has surpassed 125 percent and the government is currently studying new regulations to increase broadband services. As for the internet, usage has exceeded 60% whereby the government is planning to shortly utilize the best technology available on fixed land lines via Next Generation Network (NGN).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Arab Emirates has adopted a strategy to sustain the economy by developing the infrastructure of telecommunications and information technology and utilizing the most advanced modern networks.

The theme for this year's symposium is "The Road to Next Generation Networks: Can Regulators Promote Investment and Achieve Open Access?" whereby the three day meeting brings together heads of national regulatory authorities and senior executives from telecommunications companies from around the world to achieve consensus on the best way to address the challenges brought about by the migration of next generation networks.

The discussion will mainly underline:

- How close are we to a Next Generation Network (NGN) world?
- Understanding the difference between NGN and telecom worlds
- Investment in an NGN world
- Interconnection in an NGN world
- Pricing and interconnection in and NGN multi-platform world
- Competition in an NGN world
- Consumer protection, quality of service, and cyber security issues, what can be done?
- Universal access and service
- International internet interconnection
- Speed exchanges
- The way forward

Finally, the participants from telecommunication regulatory authorities, international telecommunication companies and strategy makers will hold informal discussion over round tables. They will be moving from table to another to reach the best from exchanging views and expertise.

Distinguished Guests,

The United Arab Emirates is keen to enhance the role of the International Telecommunication Union and we strongly encourage implementing the best practices to bridge the digital divide between the countries all over the world.

The government will drive the technology forward in the UAE in every way possible and will support all plans and activities to achieve this purpose especially those of the International Telecommunications Union. Although the symposium is in its seventh year running, this is the first time that it is acknowledged by governments of the member countries as an official annual meeting organized by the International Telecommunication Union that results in significant contributions

Finally, I hope that this global symposium will yield fruitful results and contribute in developing the telecommunications and information technology sectors in the world.