



OPINION (XX) To foster an enabling environment for the greater growth of high-speed broadband connectivity

The fifth World Telecommunication Policy Forum (Geneva, 2013),

Recalling

- a) The Third World Telecommunications Policy Forum (Geneva, 2001) and the Secretary-General's Report on IP-Telephony. Draft Opinion A on the general implications of IP Telephony for the ITU Membership with respect to:
- the telecommunications policies and regulations of ITU Member States;
 - the implications of IP Telephony for developing countries, particularly with respect to policies and regulatory frameworks, as well as technical and economic aspects;
 - the impact of IP Telephony on the operations of Sector Members, notably in terms of the financial challenges and commercial opportunities it presents.

Considering

- a) That broadband is a central element of the infrastructure of the Information Society;
- b) The role of high-speed broadband connectivity in attaining the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- c) The importance of Broadband capacity to facilitate the delivery of a broader range of services and applications, promote investment and provide Internet access at affordable prices to both existing and new users;
- d) That the deployment of IP-based networks and applications has the potential to benefit users, industries, and the economy at large, because it fosters technical and market innovation, diversity, productivity, and growth in the economy;
- e) That these new enhanced communication capabilities contribute to the development of other service sectors, and to the production and distribution of goods and services in the global economy as a whole;
- f) That with convergence, policy-makers and regulators will continue to promote widespread affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs through fair, transparent, stable, predictable and non-discriminatory enabling legal and regulatory and environments that promote competition, foster continued technological and service innovation and encourage investment incentives; and
- g) The valuable contribution of all stakeholder groups to the evolution, functioning and development of high-speed broadband services.

Recognizing

- a) that an enabling environment, at national and international levels, supportive of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of finance, debt and trade, is essential for economic development, in general and the development of the Information Society, in particular, including for the development and diffusion of the Internet and its optimal use. In particular, the roles of the private sector and civil society as the drivers of innovation and private investment in the development of the Internet are critical. Value is added at the edges of the network in

both developed and developing countries when the international and domestic policy environment encourages investment and innovation, as stated in paragraph 54 of the Tunis Agenda;

Noting

- a) that, progress has been made in access to information and communications technologies, including the steady increase in Internet access to the world's population, and the availability of multilingual content and Internet addresses, and that the international community affirmed its commitment to turning the digital divide into digital opportunity, and to ensuring harmonious and equitable development for all, in paragraph 49 of the Tunis Agenda.
- b) the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and taking note of the report of the Commission prepared in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "A 2010 Leadership Imperative: The Future Built on Broadband", which calls for broadband-friendly practice and policies towards the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Invites

- a) Member States and all relevant stakeholders to focus on enabling environment for the greater growth and use of high-speed broadband connectivity;
- b) Member States and all relevant stakeholders to further efforts to develop policies that encourage the competitive deployment of the infrastructure necessary to enable high-speed broadband connectivity and use and to engage with all their stakeholders in this regard;
- c) Member States to review their current regulatory frameworks with a view to:
 1. encouraging investment, spurring innovation and advancing development,
 2. adopting a competition-oriented approach with respect to IP-based networks in order to achieve clearly defined public policy goals, taking into account, among other things, the concept of technology neutrality; and
- d) The Secretary-General to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society through the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance cooperation in the development of high-speed broadband connectivity.