

International Mobile Roaming Market competition and the ITU LET'S ROAM THE WORLD Initiative

**ITU Regional Economic and Financial Forum of
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AGENDA

- Introduction – the roaming issue today and market competition
- Regulatory aspects of international roaming
- ITU/BDT Director, Mr. Brahima Sanou LET'S ROAM THE WORLD – Building blocks for Strategic Best Practices Guidelines
- The ITU IMR Resources Portal

The Roaming Issue Today*

- International Mobile Roaming incurs additional charges that often are not cost based;
- Action by regulators to counter overcharging for IMR requires that NRAs understand the real cost-based wholesale and retail charges;
- To understand and get clear data on both national MNO costs and those within international wholesale IOTs (inter operator tariffs) international co-operation is required;
- IMR also relies on inter-MNO negotiation and co-operation. In this sense, any IMR counter-measures, by their nature, must be multi-country;
- Roaming alternatives such as OTT services should also be considered when examining policy or regulatory measures;
- It is important to build on the success of ITU-T Recommendation D-98, and subsequent new ITU Recommendation on the way.

Why is roaming so costly?



- Insufficient attention on the part of the consumer at point of purchase



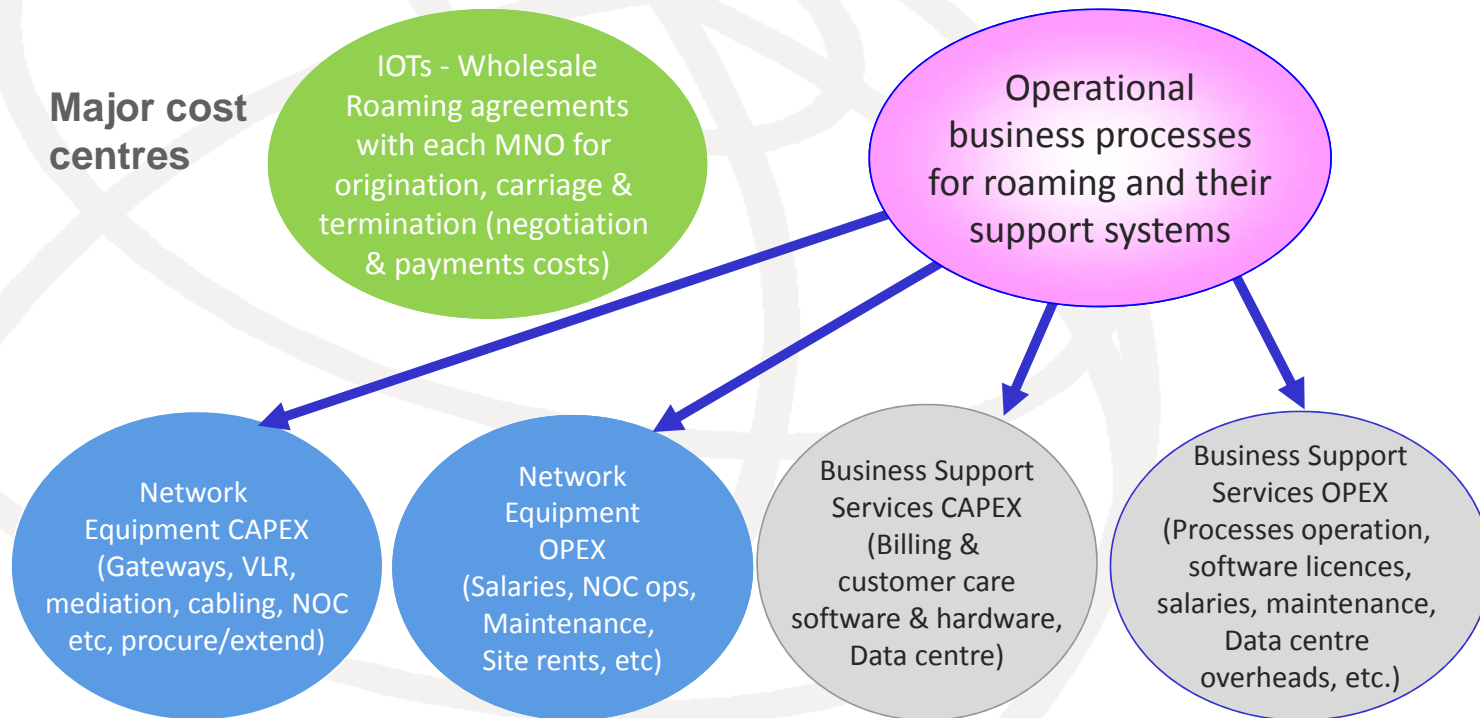
- Low demand-elasticity for **IMR voice** services (changing over time)



- Cross-border nature of the IMR service

International roaming involves the following cost centres

So roaming costs should be just an additional *fraction* of domestic costs



MNO= Mobile Network Operator, FNO= Fixed Network Operator
VLR= Visiting Location Register, NOC =Network Operating Centre, & systems

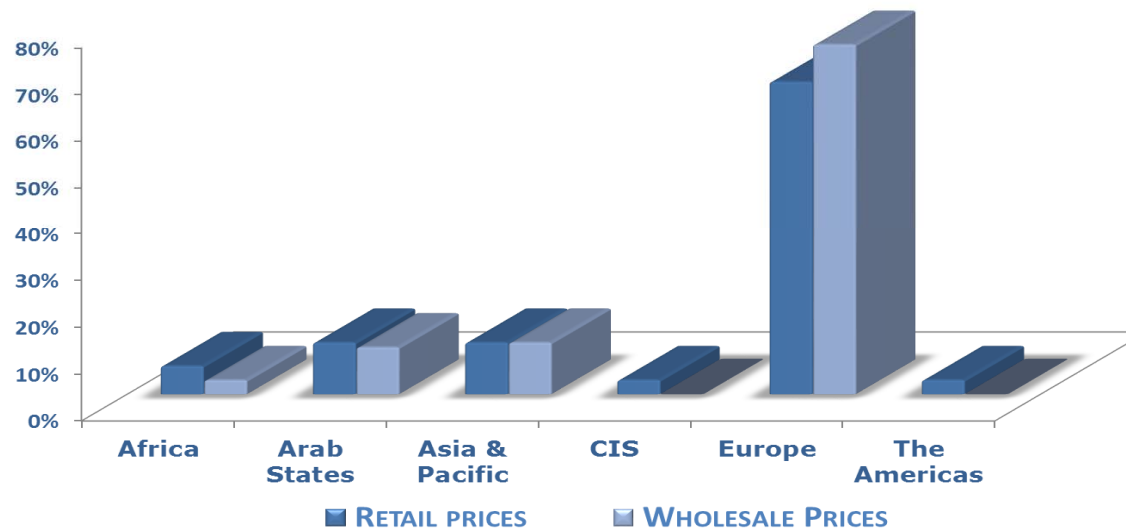
IMR market competition

- The current structure of the international mobile roaming market does not lend itself to the creation of long-lasting competition
- For users it is difficult to compare mobile roaming prices
- The emergence of substitutes has been helpful but most are not close substitutes (e.g. data)
- Technological developments have also helped in lowering prices (e.g. the expansion of MNO with cross-border footprints)
- Maintaining price caps over a prolonged period is not viewed as a desirable option by most regulators
- Structural measures would be required based on the need to open the IMR market to competition.

Regulatory aspects of International Roaming

Are countries regulating IMR prices?

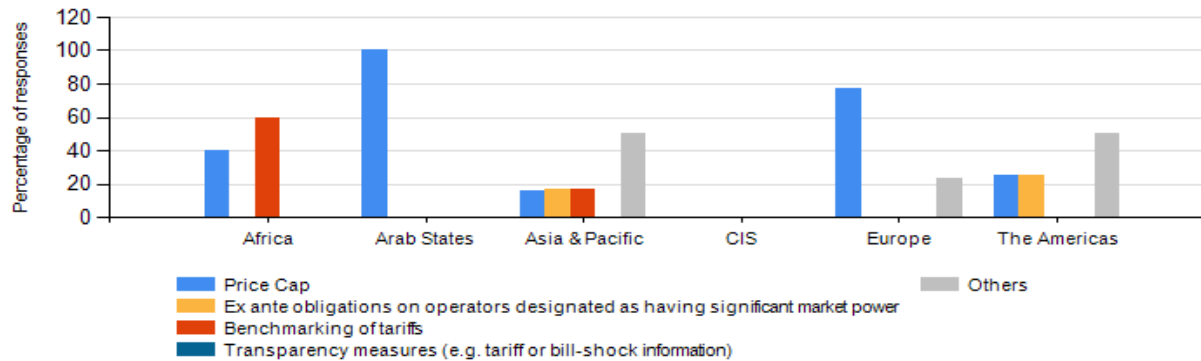
Percentage of countries that regulate IMR prices by Region, 2014



And what are the IMR Regulatory practices applied??

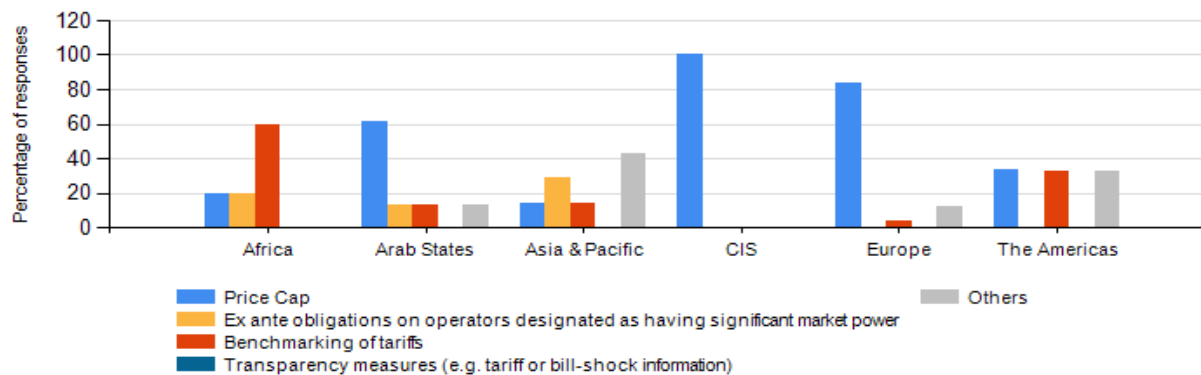
Wholesale services, 2014

If yes, what kind of regulatory practice is applied?, 2014



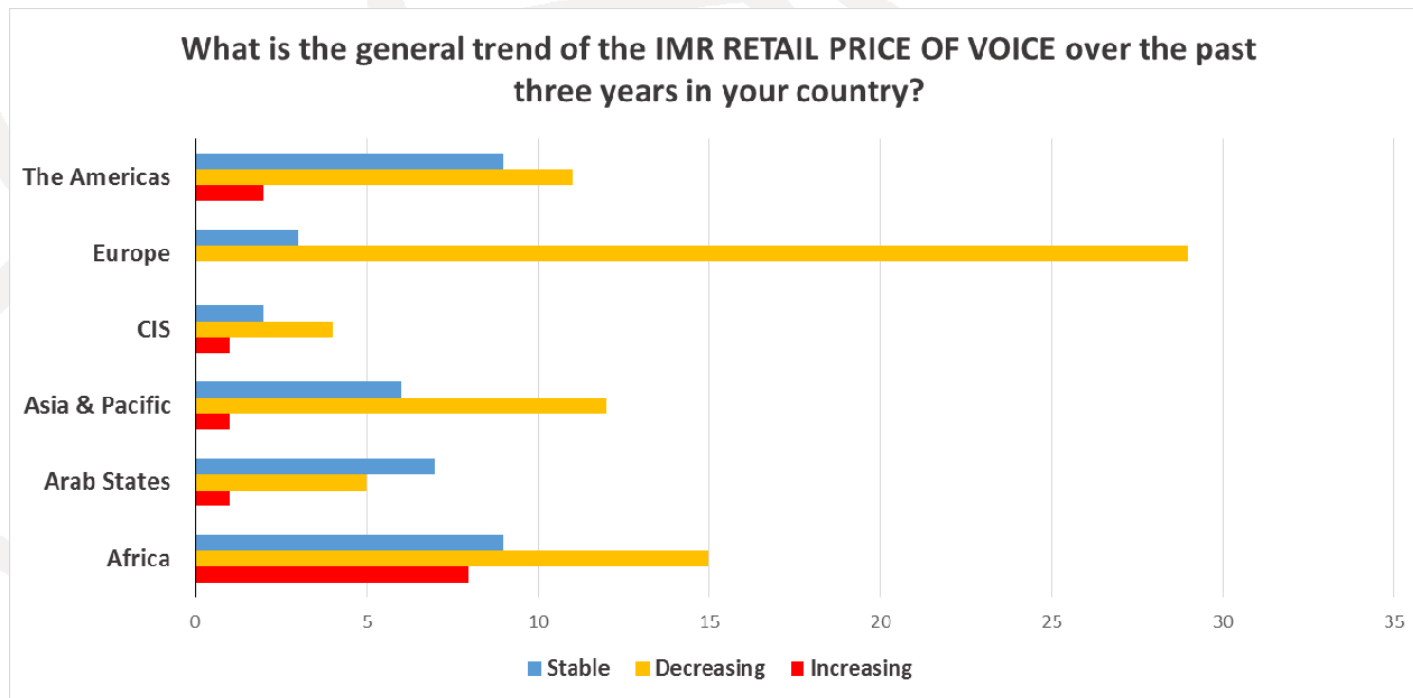
Retail services, 2014

If yes, what kind of regulatory practice is applied?, 2014



Source: ITU Tariff Policies database, ICTEye (www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/)

General trends of IMR Prices over the past three years



Source: ITU Tariff Policies database, ICTEye (www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/)

IMR price still remains a very important issue

- Despite price reduction for IMR
- The emergence of a range of alternative technologies and calling solutions
- Prices still diverge significantly from costs

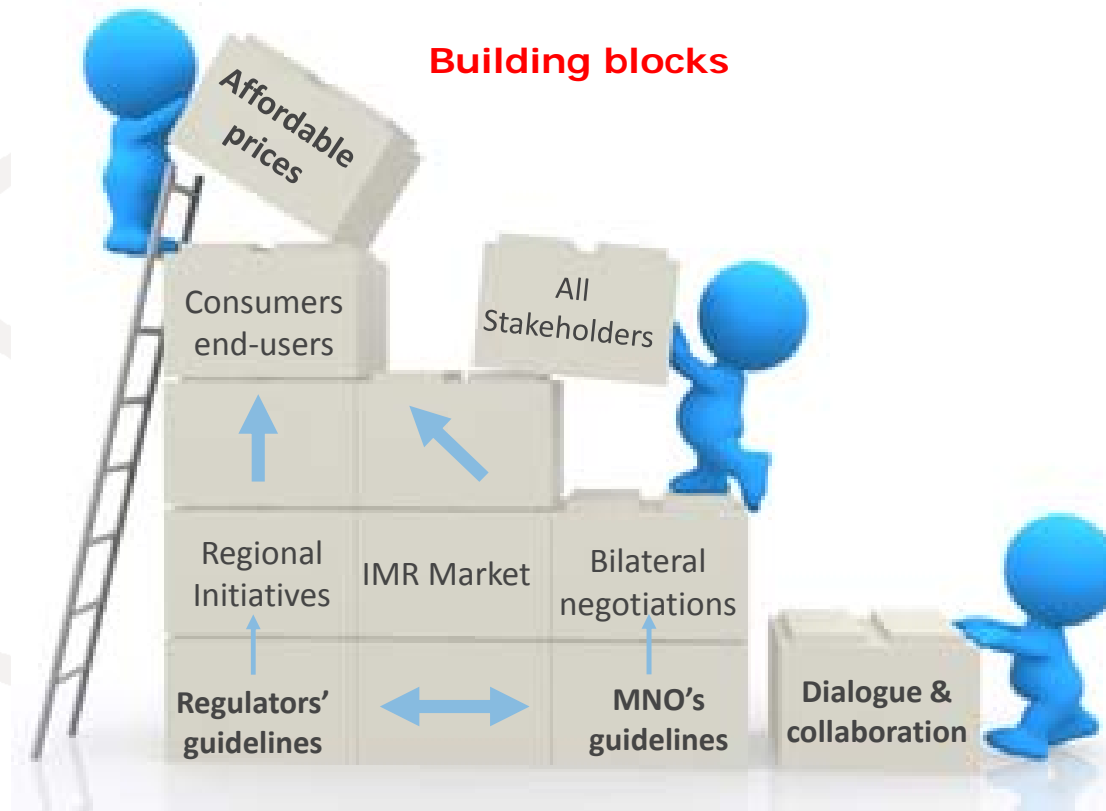
ITU/BDT Director, Mr. Brahim Sanou LET'S ROAM THE WORLD

- ITU is a neutral platform actively working on IMR (research, data collection, studies, development of tools...)
- ITU can enhance dialogue with all stakeholders (e.g. IMR Round-Tables)
- Together all stakeholders to develop “IMR Strategic best practices guidelines” building blocks
- Ensure its high level adoption (through the organization round tables and high Level IMR Meetings)
- ITU can work together with Regional Regulatory Associations (RA) to facilitate the dissemination of the results through various channels, such as:
 - ITU Events;
 - Regulatory Regional Association events, and
 - Capacity building



LET'S ROAM THE WORLD

The ITU Initiative -Roadmap



LET'S ROAM THE WORLD - ITU International Mobile Roaming (IMR) Resources Portal



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ITU successfully organized the **LET'S ROAM THE WORLD: The ITU Global Dialogue on International Mobile Roaming (IMR)** that took place at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 September 2015 in conjunction with the annual meeting of the ITU-D Study Groups (Study Group 2 on 7-11 September and Study Group 1 on 14-18 September) and back-to-back with the Mobile Roaming rapporteur group Meeting of ITU-T Study Group 3 (16-17 September), as part of the **Global Initiative launched in 2013 by Mr Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau** in coordination with the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB).

During the last several years significant policy and regulatory actions have taken place to tackle the problem of high International Mobile Roaming (IMR) service prices at national, regional and international level. The aim has been to reduce what is viewed as excessively high mobile roaming retail prices but also to find longer term solutions to introduce competition in this market which is still viewed as not being contestable. Despite price reduction for IMR and the emergence of a range of alternative technologies and calling solution which, though not always offering close substitutes to roaming, may help in averting some of the challenges, there is a concern that prices diverge significantly from costs and that actions to reduce prices taken place to date across different regions is encouraging a focus on reducing prices to improve the delivery of IMR services to the consumer. The IMR Resources was developed as a one-stop portal for activities done by other regional and international level.

- ITU Guide for NRAs on International Mobile Roaming Cost analysis
- ITU International Mobile Roaming Cost Analysis Tool

Other interesting IMR links | More ITU-D resources | News

- EU First results of the roaming public consultation (March 2016)
- EU New rules on roaming charges and open Internet (October 2015)
- Final Report on the GCC International Mobile Roaming consultation (June 2015)
- Bilateral agreement between Belgian and Luxembourg telecoms regulators (April 2015)
- GSMA - GSM Roaming and Coverage Maps
- African Union (AU) International Mobile Roaming Guidelines (September 2013)
- APT Working Group Report on IMR (May 2012)
- Trans-Tasman mobile roaming - joint Australia-New Zealand IMR investigation
- Symposium on International Mobile Roaming organized by OMC and Australia Delegation, Geneva, Switzerland March 2012

RECENT ITU ACTIVITIES ON ROAMING

- [ITU-BDT Arab Regional Workshop on Mobile Roaming: National & International Practices](#), Khartoum, Sudan, 27-29 October 2015
- [LET'S ROAM THE WORLD: The ITU Global Dialogue on International Mobile Roaming \(IMR\)](#), Geneva, Switzerland, 18 September 2015
- [ITU International Mobile Roaming \(IMR\) Cost Analysis Tool](#)
- [ITU Guide for NRAs on International Mobile Roaming Cost analysis, Technical Paper](#), September 2015

FOR BEST PRACTICES

- International Roaming: Analysis of the impacts of "Roam Like at Home" (RLAH) - December 2014
- International Roaming BEREC Benchmark Data Report, April 2013 - September 2013

ITU developed the **International Mobile Roaming (IMR) Resources Portal** as a one-stop portal to show all the work done by ITU in this area as well as to inform about activities done by regional and international organizations and initiatives at the national, bilateral, regional and international level.

More Information

- Telecommunication Development Sector
 - www.itu.int/ITU-D/
- Standardization Sector
 - www.itu.int/ITU-T/
- Regulatory and Market environment information
 - www.itu.int/treg
- International Mobile Roaming Resources
 - www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regulatory-Market/Pages/Roaming_info.aspx
- International Mobile Roaming Cost Analysis Tool
 - www.itu.int/net4/roamingtool/

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