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■ FTTP Demo to Showcase ITU-T Standards

Supercomm, June 6-9, Chicago, USA will see ITU-T members, and guests stage an interoperability showcase for fibre to the premises (FTTP) related standards.

On show will be passive optical network (PON) equipment built according to the ITU-T G.984 and G.983 series of Recommendations. PON technology is used in the local loop to connect residential and SME end users premises in an all-fibre network.

With PONs, signals are carried by lasers and sent to their destination without the need for active electronics. Carriers can realize significant savings with fiber sharing in the distribution network, equipment sharing in the Central Office and by eliminating the dependence on expensive active network elements.

ITU-T Recommendations in the G.984 series detail gigabit PONs (G-PON), the latest generation of PON technology. Increasing capacity to gigabit levels should more than satisfy foreseeable customer demands, offering video applications, high-speed Internet access, multimedia and other high-bandwidth capabilities. G-PON maintains the same optical distribution network, wavelength plan and full-service network design principles of broadband PONs (B-PON) defined in ITU-T Rec G.983. As well as allowing for increased network capacity, the new standard offers more efficient IP and Ethernet handling.

17 vendors will show B-PON interoperability, products for G-PON, optical distribution network, testing and performance and video service equipment and set-top boxes.

■ ITU-T Ramps-Up Disaster Relief Standards Effort

More technical standards in support of telecommunications for disaster relief (TDR) and early warning (EW) should emerge following a decision by the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG). The decision to create an action plan addressing this topic was also influenced by the joint Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT)/ITU meeting on the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) for disaster reduction held in Bangkok, 28 February 2005.

TSAG encouraged all ITU-T study groups to increase related standardization activity and production of other materials such as handbooks.

ITU-T Recommendations already produced in the field include specifications that allow for preference to be given to emergency calls in a disaster situation. Additionally, ITU-T earlier established a Partnership Coordination Panel on Telecommunications for Disaster Relief (PCP TDR) that includes representatives of different ITU Study Groups, other standards developing organizations (SDOs), intergovernmental agencies and relief organizations, and aims at providing a channel to exchange views and experiences on TDR.

■ Technology Watch to Monitor for New Work Areas

March's meeting of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) agreed on the terms of reference for a new group to monitor academia, industry, research institutes and other SDOs to identify new subjects for study by ITU-T.

To begin with the Technology Watch will use mainly electronic working methods to stimulate discussion, gather information and generate contributions for new work items.

One of the first topics that the group will examine are the network aspects of radio frequency identification (RFID). RFID is the much-touted system that enables data to be transmitted by a tiny portable device, called a tag, which is read by an RFID reader and processed according to the needs of a particular application.

Grid Computing is another area that is being examined for future standardization needs. Grid computing offers a model for solving massive computational problems by making use of the unused resources of large numbers of disparate computers treated as a virtual cluster embedded in a distributed telecommunications infrastructure.

■ NGN Workshop Attracts Sponsorship

The joint ITU-T/Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) workshop on next generation networks (NGN), 1 - 2 May, 2005, Geneva, reported in last month's e-Flash has attracted sponsorship from global networking company, Cisco Systems.

Cisco has agreed - using ITU's voluntary contribution mechanism for donating funds beyond membership fees - to contribute to NGN activities in general, including this and a future workshop.

Jeff Spagnola, VP Worldwide Service Provider Marketing will deliver an address to the workshop outlining the Cisco vision for NGN. Ahead of the event he said: "Cisco is pleased to provide support for this important event, as well as ongoing NGN activity simply because we believe strongly in the value of standardization for NGN and the emerging definitions that will put us on the road to a truly converged ICT world. Cisco has been very active so far in NGN technology, and Cisco will continue to play a key role in this work as we move forward."

■ Group to Oversee Workshop Programme

In response to ITU-T's growing workshop programme the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) has established a Seminar Coordination Committee (SCC). This follows a strengthening of the secretariat team dealing with these events.

ITU-T organizes a number of workshops and seminars to progress existing work areas and explore new ones. The events cover a wide array of topics in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) and attract high-ranking experts as speakers, and attendees from engineers to high-level management from all industry sectors.

The SCC is responsible for coordinating the development of ITU-T's annual programme of seminars and workshops and providing guidelines for the organization and evaluation of these events. Among other things SCC will ensure that the needs of developing countries are taken into account, and that each event produces a report that covers lessons learned and recommended follow-up actions.

The group will work closely with study group management and, where relevant, involve other ITU sectors.

■ Global Carriers Demo ITU-T Standards Interoperability

The Optical Internetworking Forum (OIF) will host an interoperability demonstration at June's Supercomm event in Chicago, USA showing how a suite of ITU-T standards will enable data stream services like Ethernet to be effectively transported over existing SONET/SDH and ASON enabled carrier networks.

Additionally the demo will show how Ethernet can be used to link any number of endpoints in a wide area network (WAN), or simply as a service delivery mechanism (see press release).

The event will include testing of data plane interoperability of next generation transport network functions such as generic framing procedure (GFP), virtual concatenation (VCAT) and link capacity adjustment scheme (LCAS), all supporting technologies to SONET/SDH (and all defined in ITU-T G-series Recommendations).

The seven global telecommunication carriers taking part will provide test facilities, engineering staff and network connectivity.

■ Newly Elected IETF Chief Meets With ITU-T

Underlining the spirit of cooperation in the standardization world today, Brian Carpenter, newly-elected Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Chairman participated on behalf of his organization in the March meeting of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG).

Carpenter discussed liaison and cooperation issues between ITU-T and IETF with the TSAG group responsible for external cooperation.

Speaking at the meeting Carpenter emphasised that he wanted to work with ITU-T to ensure fruitful cooperation while avoiding duplication of work.

■ IPR News

Following a meeting of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Ad Hoc Group ITU-T has issued guidelines on how 'marks' should be used in ITU-T Recommendations. The term 'marks' refers to trademarks, service marks and certification marks. The document will be available: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/othergroups/ipr-adhoc/index.html>.

At the same meeting the General Patent Statement and Declaration Form was updated to reflect the changes made in July (see previous e-Flash story).

■ Asia-Pacific Ties Underlined, Arab Standards Day Celebrated

ITU-T's strong commitment to the Asia-Pacific region was underlined at a recent meeting, the Ninth Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Standardization Program Forum (ASTAP-9), Bangkok, 29 March - 1 April.

Visiting ITU-T representatives gave an overview of recent activities including the results and future implications of last October's World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) and the last Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) meeting. TSAG Chairman, Gary Fishman also expressed gratitude for APT's work, noting the impact of ASTAP's contributions to ITU-T before and since the WTSA.

Participants from some 23 Asia-Pacific countries representing industry, administrations, universities, research centres, regulators and operating companies were joined by Paolo Rosa of ITU-T's secretariat, the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), and Fishman.

In other regional news, the Arab and Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) recently celebrated Arab Standards Day, 25 March. In his message on the day Director Mr Talaat Al Dafir encouraged all workers in Arab standardization bodies and enterprises to mobilize their efforts in all fields of standardization. World Standards Day is celebrated on October 14 every year.

■ Guide for Beginners II

Version two of the publication that aims to help new members acquaint themselves with the working practices and practicalities of ITU-T is available.

The updated Guide for Beginners gives details on the structure of ITU as well as some background history. But its raison d'être is to give participants in the study programme of ITU-T a signposted plan for involvement. So there are details on rules, how study groups are made-up, how Recommendations are approved, electronic working methods, how to join and what to expect at a meeting, among many other things.

An electronic version of the guide is available: <http://www.itu.int/itudoc/gs/promo/tsb/87029.html> in English, translations into other languages will be available later in the year. A handy printed copy is available on request.

■ UPCOMING EVENTS

■ ITU-T Meetings:

- **25 April-6 May 2005**
Study Group 13 – Next-Generation Networks, Geneva
- **25-29 April 2005**
Focus Group on Next Generation Networks (FGNGN), (Geneva)
- **2-6 May 2005**
Study Group 11 – Signalling requirements and protocols, Geneva
- **3-6 May 2005**
Study Group 19 – Mobile telecommunication networks, Geneva
- **16-27 May 2005**
Study Group 15 – Optical and other transport network infrastructures, Geneva

■ Workshops and Seminars:

- **1-2 May 2005**
ITU-T Workshop on NGN in collaboration with IETF, ITU Headquarters, Geneva
- **31 July-4 August 2005**
Advances in the Standard H.264/AVC, San Diego, California, USA