



# Information Session, March 15, 1998 – CICG (Geneva)

**Chairman: Amb. Anthony HILL (Jamaica)**

**11:00 to 13:00**

## **POLICY PANEL 1:**

**GHIC-ITU ROUNDTABLE: IMPLEMENTING  
THE WTO AGREEMENT ON BASIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Chairman: B.K. Zutshi  
Moderator: D. Gilhooly**

**Sponsored by GIIIC**

**13:00 to 14:30: Luncheon**

**14:30 to 16:00**

## **POLICY PANEL 2:**

**ACCOUNTING RATES: TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000**

**Chairman: D. Leive  
Moderator: M. Tyler**

**16:00 to 16:30: Coffee break**

**16:30 to 18:00**

## **POLICY PANEL 3: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES**

**Chairman: B. Rouxville  
Moderator: D. Ypsilanti**

**Cocktail**

# TRADE IN TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

## GIIC-ITU Telecom Regulators Roundtable:

### Implementing the WTO agreement on basic Telecommunications

Co-sponsored by the ITU and the GIIC (Global Information Infrastructure Commission), this Roundtable will be one of the first opportunities for independent telecommunication regulators, many of whom are newly appointed, to share views and experiences. In those countries which have made commitments under the WTO basic telecommunications agreement, independent regulators will have an important role in applying trade principles to the telecommunications sector. They may need to modify existing laws, regulations and administrative guidelines to bring them into line with their WTO commitments and to benefit from the new environment that this agreement creates, or they may need to draft new laws and regulations where these do not exist. These might address key issues such as competitive safeguards, interconnection and universal service. This Roundtable brings together regulators from different countries at different stages of market liberalization.

### Accounting Rates: Towards the Year 2000

The accounting-rate system was established at a time when most international telecommunications traffic was exchanged between national monopoly providers, through correspondent relations. Some three-quarters of international telecommunications traffic now originates in countries that permit competitive service provision. This is already having a profound impact on the accounting-rate system. In particular, operators which are able to establish commercial presence in other countries, will be able to bypass the traditional correspondent relationship arrangements when delivering and receiving calls. Many developing countries that depend on settlements to fund network expansion and universal service goals will be under increasing pressure to reduce their accounting-rates and seek other sources of funding for network development. This panel will explore the impact of changes in the evolving accounting-rate system, drawing on the experiences of a panel composed of operators and regulators from countries at different stages of liberalization.

### Country Case Studies

Part of the second World Telecommunication Policy Forum's agenda includes discussion of "*actions to assist Member States and Sector Members in adapting to the changes in the telecommunications environment including analyzing the current situation and formulating possible co-operative actions ... to facilitate adaptation to the new environment.*" In preparation for the WTPF, and in accordance with Council Decision 475, the ITU has commissioned a series of case studies of a representative range of economies likely to be affected by changes to the international telecommunications environment. Funded by the ITU and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO), in association with the World Bank's *InfoDev* program, the case studies explore the impact of the changing international telecommunications environment on the economies of Bahamas, Colombia, India, Lesotho, Mauritania, Samoa, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. The case studies examine the potential impact of implementing a number of different accounting-rate reform scenarios in each country, including benchmarks, staged reductions, sender-keeps-all, termination charges and revenue stabilization measures. In this panel, the consultants who performed the case studies and representatives from the countries studied will share their insights and explore the potential application of case study lessons for other countries.