

A new world order

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“Broadband is the critical infrastructure of the 21st century – not airports or railways.”

Forum speaker

Many factors combined to make ITU Telecom World 2009 the scene of absorbing debate, not least the fact that the biennial event followed a turbulent 12 months for the global economy. As such, the agenda for discussion was ambitious, one that balanced the demand for innovation in the telecoms industry with the increasingly dynamic role that telecommunications is playing in the wider economy, whether as a stimulus for economic recovery, agent of long-term industrial transformation or catalyst for environmental improvements.

The sense that a new world order is taking shape, one where a second wave of infrastructure investment is reconfiguring society, was palpable. The theme of the event *Open Networks – Connected Minds*, made clear the connection between infrastructure and innovation in the widest sense. With the move to all-IP infrastructure now well underway in both developed and developing markets, challenges have moved beyond ones of technical standardization to consider how infrastructure can be repurposed across a range of industry verticals to foster innovation in a sustainable way.

